**Clinical Audit Policy**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Version:** | **Review date:** | **Edited by:** | **Approved by:** | **Comments:** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

**Table of contents**

[1 Introduction 2](#_Toc518399660)

[1.1 Policy statement 2](#_Toc518399661)

[1.2 Status 2](#_Toc518399662)

[1.3 Training and support 2](#_Toc518399663)

[2 Scope 2](#_Toc518399664)

[2.1 Who it applies to 2](#_Toc518399665)

[2.2 Why and how it applies to them](#_Toc518399666) 3

[3 Definition of terms 3](#_Toc518399667)

[3.1 Clinical audit 3](#_Toc518399668)

[3.2 Royal College of General Practitioners 3](#_Toc518399669)

[3.3 National Institute for Health and Care Excellence 3](#_Toc518399670)

[4 Clinical audit process 4](#_Toc518399671)

[4.1 Rationale 4](#_Toc518399672)

[4.2 Audit, research and survey 4](#_Toc518399673)

[4.3 Features 4](#_Toc518399674)

[4.4 Audit cycle 5](#_Toc518399675)

[4.5 Audit cycle explained 6](#_Toc518399676)

[4.6 Structure 6](#_Toc518399677)

[4.7 Ethics 7](#_Toc518399678)

[4.8 Results 7](#_Toc518399679)

[4.9 Additional guidance 7](#_Toc518399680)

[5 Summary 7](#_Toc518399681)

# Introduction

## Policy statement

Conducting clinical audits will enable staff at Park View Group Practice to bring about improvements in both administrative and clinical procedures, in order to enhance the care and experience of patients.

## Status

The practice aims to design and implement policies and procedures that meet the diverse needs of our service and workforce, ensuring that none are placed at a disadvantage over others, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. Consideration has been given to the impact this policy might have in regard to the individual protected characteristics of those to whom it applies.

This document and any procedures contained within it are non-contractual and may be modified or withdrawn at any time. For the avoidance of doubt, it does not form part of your contract of employment.

## Training and support

The practice will provide guidance and support to help those to whom it applies understand their rights and responsibilities under this policy. Additional support will be provided to managers and supervisors to enable them to deal more effectively with matters arising from this policy.

# Scope

## Who it applies to

This document applies to all employees of the practice. Other individuals performing functions in relation to the practice, such as agency workers, locums and contractors, are encouraged to use it.

## Why and how it applies to them

GP practices must ensure that quality improvement activity is undertaken and one such way of doing so is clinical audit. The CQC states that practices should be able to demonstrate that they:[[1]](#footnote-1)

* Consider the quality of the care provided
* Review the care provided in relation to current best practice guidance
* Make changes where necessary or appropriate in order to improve
* Revisit the question to see whether the changes made have resulted in an improvement

# Definition of terms

## Clinical audit

A quality improvement process that seeks to improve patient care and outcomes through systematic review of care against explicit criteria and the implementation of change. Aspects of the structure, processes and outcomes of care are selected and systematically evaluated against explicit criteria. Where indicated, changes are implemented at an individual, team or service level and further monitoring is used to confirm improvement in healthcare delivery.[[2]](#footnote-2)

## Royal College of General Practitioners

The Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) is the professional membership body for GPs in the UK with the purpose of encouraging, fostering and maintaining the highest possible standards in general medical practice.[[3]](#footnote-3)

## National Institute for Health and Care Excellence

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) provides national guidance and advice to improve health and social care.[[4]](#footnote-4)

# Clinical audit process

## Rationale

The purpose of completing a clinical audit is to enable staff at Park View Grto review their individual practice and that of their colleagues with an overall aim of making improvements to benefit the service user.

Clinical audit will:

* Identify and highlight evidence-based practice
* Identify areas for improvement and enhance patient safety
* Provide data that can be used to review the effectiveness of service delivery
* Enhance multidisciplinary team communication
* Improve cross-functional working within the practice

## Audit, research and survey

There is a clear distinction between audit and research. Audit focuses on current practice(s), to ensure conformance to policy, protocol and clinical guidelines, whereas research focuses on the gathering of new facts and knowledge.

Clinical audit differs from a survey because the data in a survey is not presented with reference to criteria or standards.[[5]](#footnote-5)

## Features

The Healthcare Quality Improvement Partnership (HQIP) state that the features of clinical audit are that it:[[6]](#footnote-6)

* Is a circular process system by which clinicians review their own clinical practice, but which can be used organisationally to review effectiveness
* Has a quality improvement intent
* Is systematic
* Is undertaken with active involvement of those directly involved in the care process
* Looks beyond the immediate care process and may encompass resources devoted to a particular care pathway
* Considers processes allied to the direct pathway of care, such as the initial selection of patients for the care pathway concerned
* Uses established and agreed standards, which are in themselves proxies for good quality care leading to better outcomes
* Compares actual practice to these standards
* Confirms compliance with standards or that necessary remedial action is taken
* Re-measures to gauge improvement

## Audit cycle

Below is the process of the audit cycle in diagrammatic form:

## Audit cycle explained

The diagram below shows how the need to audit can be identified:

## Structure

At Park View Group Practice all audits will be structured in the same format and will comprise of:

* Title
* Reason for audit (aim & objectives)
* Criteria to be measured
* Standards
* Method
* Findings
* Summary
* Recommendations

## Ethics

Clinical audits must be conducted in an ethical manner, ensuring that patient confidentiality is maintained at all times in line with the DPA 2018 and the Caldicott Principles. Throughout the audit process, patient data should be anonymised and, where applicable, allocated unique identifiers.

## Results

At Park View Group Practice, all audits will be discussed at clinical meetings on a monthly basis, thereby ensuring that all staff are aware of ongoing audits as well as having the opportunity to discuss the findings of audits and how the changes will be implemented across the practice.

## Additional guidance

Detailed guidance regarding clinical audit can be found using the hyperlinks at footnotes 2, 5 and 6.

# Summary

Quality improvement, specifically clinical audit, can enhance the level of care provided to the entitled patient population at Park View Group Practice. All staff are to be involved in the audit process if it is to be effective, which in turn can support clinical staff with the appraisal and revalidation process, but ultimately it will lead to improved patient outcomes.

1. [CQC Quality Improvement Activity](https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-providers/gps/nigels-surgery-4-quality-improvement-activity) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [NICE Principles for Best Practice in Clinical Audit](https://www.nice.org.uk/media/default/About/what-we-do/Into-practice/principles-for-best-practice-in-clinical-audit.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. [RCGP](http://www.rcgp.org.uk/about-us/the-college/what-we-do.aspx) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. [NICE](https://www.nice.org.uk/about) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. [RCGP Quality improvement for General Practice](http://www.rcgp.org.uk/-/media/Files/CIRC/Quality-Improvement/RGCP-QI-Guide-260216.ashx?la=en) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. [HQIP – Clinical audit: A simple guide for NHS Boards and partners](https://www.good-governance.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/clinical-audit-a-simple-guide-for-nhs-boards-and-partners.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)