

INTRODUCING CASC

The Clinical Audit Support Centre (CASC) was founded in September 2006 and is the brainchild of Tracy Ruthven and Stephen Ashmore. The centre is based in Leicester, although we work across the UK and internationally to help healthcare professionals deliver best practice in clinical audit and an increasingly wide range of quality assurance domains.



CASC offers a new and innovative approach to the delivery of clinical audit and we aim to develop effective audit resources that have a positive impact on patient care. Our stated goal is to “raise the profile and reputation of clinical audit across all sectors of healthcare” and this fits perfectly with the Chief Medical Officer’s general conclusions in 2006 that throughout the NHS “clinical audit is falling short of its potential”.

Although we are a small team, we offer a wide range of tools, materials and training packages that relate to clinical audit and governance. We have developed an extensive training portfolio of accredited courses and we co-ordinate many educational events, including national conferences. We offer support and consultancy to many healthcare teams, helping ensure their work is fit for purpose and providing user-friendly and time saving manual and electronic tools.

Since our inception we have taken a lead role in promoting clinical audit across the UK and our website and bi-monthly newsletter are established features of the clinical governance landscape. Our online podcasting service is also proving increasingly popular and in September 2008 we launched our quarterly E-journal, Clinical Audit Today.

CASC specialise predominantly in providing clinical audit support and we have collaborated with many high profile organisations to help develop audit resources, including: Department of Health, Clinical Governance Support Team and the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain. We also advise the Association of Children’s Hospices and the Community Practitioners and Health Visitors Association on clinical audit matters.

CASC are more than a clinical audit team and we have expertise in many quality assurance domains. For example, our collaborative work on significant event audit with the National Patient Safety Agency has been widely praised and we have also helped NHS Trusts undertake patient surveys and deliver clinical governance resources for academic institutions.

Tracy and Stephen direct the work of the centre and collectively they possess over twenty-five years experience working in quality assurance across all sectors of the NHS. Tracy and Stephen formerly managed Leicestershire Primary Care Audit Group and both hold academic qualifications in audit/governance and nationally recognised teaching qualifications. Their work has been widely published in journals and they are frequently invited to present and speak at international and national conferences.

Whether you are an individual or a large organisation and whether your needs relate to clinical audit or wider clinical governance support, please contact us to find out how we can assist you. We have access to a wide range of associates who are experts in their particular field and we are confident that we can provide value for money off-the-shelf or bespoke packages that will help you move forward.



The Clinical Audit Support Centre excels in the delivery of high quality training courses. We are not only committed to organising courses that are theoretically sound and methodologically correct, but aim to deliver workshops that attendees also find practical, interactive, fun and inspiring. We have developed a range of training courses that cater for healthcare professionals of differing backgrounds, abilities and experience. All of our courses are accredited and all of our trainers possess academic qualifications in the subjects that they teach as well as nationally recognised teaching qualifications.



Tracy and Stephen have been delivering accredited qualifications since 1997 and CASC's courses have been quality assured by the National Open College Network and the Royal College of Nursing's Accreditation Unit. We also work with universities, professional bodies and other training providers to ensure that our courses meet appropriate academic standards. We have long held the view that as we work in quality assurance, it is only right that our work is quality assured and validated by others. In addition by offering accredited qualifications attendees gain the opportunity to enhance their skill-sets, improving their employability and simultaneously helping to professionalise clinical audit.

We offer a range of courses, all of which are delivered centrally in Leicester and can be delivered within your organisation.

Our full portfolio of courses can be found on our website and as we collaborate with other training providers the number of courses we offer will increase. Examples of courses we can provide, include:

- **Clinical Audit: Introductory and Advanced level**
- **Clinical Governance for Junior Doctors**
- **Clinical Audit Dragons Den meets the Apprentice**
- **Clinical Audit for Directors and Managers**
- **Train the Trainer in Clinical Audit**
- **Devising Clinical Audit Projects**
- **Leading Change**
- **Significant Event Audit: Introductory and Masterclass level**

We are also conscious of the fact that not all people can find time to attend training courses and this has led us to establish our Clinical Audit Skills Course on a distance-learning basis. The course is ideal for busy professionals who want to learn how to carry out a clinical audit project in their own time.

In addition to conventional workshops and distance-learning formats, Tracy and Stephen have also worked with organisations such as the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain and the Healthcare Quality Improvement Partnership to develop online training resources.

Overall, we are proud of the courses that we deliver and we frequently evaluate and audit our own work to make sure that course materials are up-to-date and of the highest possible quality. During our first two years in business 100% of learners who attended our training stated that they would recommend it to others and that they found it value for money.

Please contact us if you would like to know more about any of the courses listed. Alternatively, if you need training in a particular field not listed, please contact us as we can develop bespoke packages for you.

Members of the CASC team can provide a wide range of support in relation to the delivery of clinical audit and quality assurance work. Whether you are a large NHS Trust that requires strategic support or an individual clinician who needs help, we are here to support you.



Our skills and expertise are diverse and we recommend that you contact us directly so that we can discuss your precise needs to ensure that the support we deliver fits your exact requirements. We have a reputation for delivering high quality, cost effective solutions and many organisations have benefited from collaborating with us.

We specialise in supporting the delivery of clinical audit and have worked with teams to help them recruit audit staff, ensure that their audit programme is fit for purpose and meets national requirements, evaluate the way audit is delivered, develop bespoke training packages, overcome resistant staff, bid for national funding, etc. We are particularly skilled in developing large-scale audit projects and have developed a range of electronic audit tools that have helped teams collect useful clinical data far faster than was previously the case.

Furthermore, with the growing commercialisation of healthcare we have worked closely with a number of private and NHS organisations to help them develop ideas for the marketplace. As a limited company with former NHS managerial staff in our team we are in a unique position to advise on how tools and materials may be developed for a wider audience.

CASC offer exceptional value for money support. Indeed some of our clients that have developed small service level agreements with us are now finding that we save them money as their costs have been reduced.

The following two case studies provide excellent examples of the type of support we have provided:

CASE STUDY 1

Clinical Audit Support Centre were approached by a PCT to review their clinical audit programme and strategy as part of a wider Service Level Agreement. Initial work identified that the programme needed improvement to ensure that it was fit for purpose and to meet regulatory needs; alongside colleagues at the PCT the CASC team were able to re-develop the audit programme to meet these objectives. The clinical audit strategy was also reviewed and a number of developmental areas identified and implemented.

We have also developed a training package for the organisation and run regular education sessions for healthcare professionals in the Trust. The partnership has evolved further with the development of a generic clinical governance assessment tool and a process to assess and implement NICE audits. Individual Service Level Agreements are designed to ensure a bespoke service for the organisation and enable a mixture of strategic, training, project and patient focused initiatives to be achieved.

CASE STUDY 2

We worked with a PCT to develop a patient consultation questionnaire for the commissioning of services during Spring 2008. Clinical Audit Support Centre were responsible for the development and design of the questionnaire which was subsequently made available to all patients in the PCT area both via hard copy and an online option.

We also provided analysis and report writing services for this piece of work with an interim report made available to the PCT within 10 days of the close of questionnaire responses. A final report was submitted to the PCT who were able to use the document to plan future commissioning of services in relation to accident and emergency and children services. Using Clinical Audit Support Centre to support patient survey and service evaluation work provides an opportunity for organisations to review and plan services for the future with the assurance of first class support, analysis and reporting.

The key to a successful clinical audit or quality assurance project involves sharing learning and best practice with the wider community. However, we all remember that in 2006 the Chief Medical Officer raised concerns that clinical audit was often carried out in isolation and in secret. From the very moment the Clinical Audit Support Centre was established we made it our mission to “raise the profile of clinical audit” and we do this by sharing our knowledge and expertise of best practice.



Our website www.clinicalauditsupport.com is an established clinical governance resource with thousands of visitors browsing our site on a weekly basis. The website contains a vast range of resources and materials to assist in clinical audit delivery. Visitors particularly like the community section (which provides details of local quality assurance networks) and the useful resources section. The site is updated on a regular basis and all the latest national news relating to clinical audit is only a mouse-click away!

We also produce a bi-monthly electronic newsletter that has proved an exceptional success with almost 1000 subscribers recorded in the first 18 months. The newsletter is a mixture of national and local audit news and has generated considerable interest across the healthcare community. We now have members from over 40 countries and anyone can subscribe to our free e-News.

Following the success of our e-Newsletter we launched our electronic journal Clinical Audit Today in 2008. This is a free eight-page quarterly journal that helps share best practice in clinical audit with the healthcare community and also features a regular update by the Healthcare Quality Improvement Partnership (who run the National Audit Programme). Anyone can submit an article for Clinical Audit Today, so if you want to tell the audit world what you are doing, please contact the team.

In addition to innovative electronic approaches, we also share our work through more traditional approaches. Tracy and Stephen frequently submit their work to well known journals and have appeared in: Clinical Governance Bulletin, Health Service Journal, British Journal of Community Nursing, Journal of Clinical Governance, Quality in Primary Care, the Pharmaceutical Journal, the Nursing Management Journal, etc.

We run and organise our own annual national clinical audit conference that provides members of the audit community with a platform upon which to promote their work and we speak at national and regional events on a regular basis. CASC also frequently submit work for peer review at international events and we have been invited to showcase our work at the last three International Society for Quality in Healthcare conferences.

Our commitment to sharing best practice has led us to embrace new technologies and our podcasting service has proved a great success. iTunes initially commended this service as “new and notable” in 2007 and we provide regular audio newscasts and blogs. In 2008 we took this work a stage further with the launch of Clinical Audit TV, a service that allows anyone in the world to watch videos relating to clinical audit via our website. We are particularly committed to enhancing patients understanding of clinical audit and quality assurance techniques and this has led us to experiment with new social networking media such as YouTube and Facebook.

The Clinical Audit Support Centre is more than just a clinical audit and quality assurance provider. CASC have an excellent reputation for managing and organising high quality events, such as national conferences, regional workshops and local educational meetings.



Whatever your needs, we have a team that will work with you to help you deliver a truly world-class event. CASC can help plan your event from start to finish or alternatively we can help you with problem areas where you require external support.

The following two case studies provide first-hand accounts of the type of events that we have supported.

CASE STUDY 1

Our first Clinical Audit 2020 conference took place in 2007 and marked a change in direction from conventional national conferences in the field of quality assurance. The event focused on the future delivery of clinical audit and all speakers were encouraged to horizon scan rather than to look backwards. Audit 2020 was held at the National Space Centre and delegates were given many opportunities to take part in the day, including: voting on key issues via hand-held keypads, completing paper-based questionnaires, participating in quizzes and recording their thoughts on video.

The event also featured an inspirational presentation by CASC associate and children's author, Andy Cope, that left delegates enthused and Andy attaining a 95% approval rating. Added to all this, our eco-friendly approach led to all delegates receiving a 512MB memory stick featuring all the presentations from the conference, plus a follow-up E newsletter featuring feedback from the day. Overall the event rated exceptionally highly with delegates and led to the Audit 2020 series becoming an established part of the national conference programme for clinical governance professionals. Value for money is always a consideration for the CASC team and at under £150 per place, 90% of attendees rated the event positively in terms of value for money.

CASE STUDY 2

In 2007 the CASC team planned and organised the Leicestershire Practice Nurse Conference. In collaboration with local nurses and the training department, CASC took the lead role in delivering this event, which was attended by over 100 nursing professionals.

CASC were responsible for developing the programme, booking speakers, advertising the conference, registering delegates, administering the event, etc. This collaborative approach led to an event that evaluated superbly and which proved cost neutral for the NHS owing to the fact that CASC used its network of commercial partners and pharmaceutical companies to resource and fund the day.

So if you need assistance running an event and want advice on how to make it a day to remember, please contact the CASC team. The following comments are taken from events that we have delivered and give you an insight into the typical feedback we generate:

"It was very clear early on that this conference would be good and it was better than good. I have attended many conferences "hungry" and come home unsatisfied. I felt as though Audit 2020 was a real feast!"

"Excellent – best conference I have ever attended"

"The memory sticks were a brilliant idea for storing presentations and they are environmentally friendly"

"Brilliant conference, well organised, great venue, good speakers, I enjoyed the entire day"

"I like the way CASC provide speakers who work outside healthcare. It is usefull to hear about relevant work taking place outside the NHS."

"Hard to know how the conference could have been improved – CASC are the innovators"

Since CASC was established we have worked closely with a wide range of individuals, teams and organisations to help them enhance the way that they deliver clinical governance and improve patient care. We would like to share two examples of our work that illustrate the diversity and effectiveness of how we operate.

CASE STUDY 1: ASSESSING THE QUALITY OF SIGNIFICANT EVENT AUDIT

Significant Event Audit (SEA) is an established part of the GP Contract and all practices are expected to carry out SEA as an educational approach for reviewing care and improving patient safety. In 2007, CASC collaborated with the National Patient Safety Agency and Nottinghamshire County Teaching PCT on a study aiming to review the content and quality of significant event audit reports.

The three organisations involved in the initiative developed a mechanism for assessing SEA reports and CASC reviewers worked with the PCT to review reports from 50 practices. The study found that in most instances SEA reports were sub-standard and that there was confusion among healthcare staff in how to best carry out SEA in practice. The study found only 26% of reports met QOF criteria and evidence indicated patient care could be enhanced by developing a more systematic approach to this work - including analysing data to identify key themes/learning points.

The final report for this study raised many learning points relevant to all primary care organisations. The study was formally presented at an NPSA event in June 2008 and led to further collaborations between those involved and the Royal College of General Practitioners. The PCT have taken steps to improve the learning from significant events and other PCTs are now learning from this initiative. CASC have developed an accredited training programme to help standardise SEA across the healthcare community.

CASE STUDY 2: IMPLEMENTING AUDIT ACROSS THE CHILDREN'S HOSPICE NETWORK

Rainbows Children's Hospice has built up an extensive and innovative clinical audit programme working with the Clinical Audit Support Centre. The organisation now runs an effective clinical audit programme that helps the organisation to meet its regulatory requirements.

We run a system of 'live audits' for Rainbows with the whole team able to participate in collecting data and receiving results almost instantaneously! The process enables staff to see that audits can be simple, effective and make a real difference quickly. All care team staff have received introductory clinical audit training and feel confident with both the audit process and understanding how audit information can be used to make changes within the hospice. Developing a programme of training and an annual audit programme is a cost effective method of providing quality assured work for your regulatory requirements whilst also providing staff with ongoing professional development.



Our work with Rainbow's led to the development of an excellent working relationship with Children's Hospices UK. Children's Hospices are relative newcomers to the concept of clinical audit and Clinical Audit Support Centre have been working to establish an effective approach to quality improvement that is useful, transferable and promotes networking across the organisation. Therefore, Clinical Audit Support Centre are currently delivering an accredited Clinical Audit Skills Course to hospice-based professionals. This has enabled each Children's Hospice to train and accredit a member of their team in clinical audit skills whilst also developing an audit protocol that can be used within their own organisation and shared and utilised by all children's hospices. The model is transferable to other settings and professional groups, with a number of other organisations adopting this approach with us.