The Royal College of Pathologists
Pathology: the science behind the cure

Job description

Post: Chair of National Quality Assurance Advisory Panel for Genetics

Appointed by: Quality Assurance in Pathology Committee

Accountable to: Quality Assurance in Pathology Committee

Term of office: 3 years (maximum of 2 terms)

The College

This College has a key role in the professional aspects of pathology services in the development and delivery of healthcare. Those holding office in the College provide professional leadership, and thereby contribute at a national level to the maintenance and development of pathology services, and to the standard and quality of care that patients receive.

The College expects its office holders to be proactive, show initiative and to provide leadership not only in their own specialty, but also in pathology in general, in the wider context of health services. The College's influence extends to all sectors of healthcare planning and provision.

Introduction

The National Quality Assessment Advisory Panel (NQAAP) is responsible for promoting, coordinating, and protecting high professional standards in external quality assessment (EQA) and encouraging development of appropriate EQA schemes in support of patient safety.

The NQAAP is accountable to the Quality Assurance in Pathology Committee (QAPC), which in turn is accountable to the Royal College of Pathologists' Professional Performance Committee. The terms of reference for the NQAAP are currently available by clicking here.

The NQAAP is responsible for the following.

- Delivering technical EQA schemes, including:

- setting criteria for performance standards and the management of poor performance
- receiving and processing referrals from all schemes about individuals or laboratories with persistent poor performance. They manage the referrals within an appropriate time scale. If persistent poor performance remains unresolved, they make a referral of the laboratory or individual to the Chairperson of the QAPC.
- resolving complaints from all scheme participants where these have not been resolved by the scheme organisers and making referral to QAPC where not resolved.

Post requirements

The post holder should:

- have advanced theoretical and practical working knowledge of the subject of Genetics or one of the specialties within that area and be able to act as an expert/advisor in the field to national organisations
- have leadership skills, which include:
  - the ability to lead as an expert, nurturing key relationships with senior and high-profile individuals and be responsible for the maintenance of networks with appropriate stakeholders
- the ability to lead a team, nurturing relationships with panel members and the wider team and demonstrating awareness of the pastoral responsibilities associated with this role
- show knowledge and experience of human resources, health and safety risk matters, and healthcare governance issues
- be able to demonstrate an awareness of national legislation relating to implementation of clinical laboratory services in Genetics
- possess high-level communication (verbal and written) skills
- have a proven record of communicating complex information and demonstrating professional influence at a national level

- demonstrate specialist knowledge and reflective practice to the standard of a national expert through continued professional development in Genetics
- be able to provide and receive highly complex, sensitive, or contentious information when communicating with medical and scientific staff

- possess the ability to deliver persuasive negotiating skills particularly where motivation and reassurances are required to reconcile conflicting views when dealing with issues surrounding laboratory performance
- be able to evaluate scientific data that will have clinical impact and communicate such data to/for clinical, nursing and scientific staff
- be able to assess EQA data related to methodological practices/situations and assess the impact of such laboratory investigations on the clinical significance of results and patient treatment(s)
- be able to understand and evaluate statistical analysis of EQA data.

Post purpose

- Review data from EQA providers relating to the performance of clinical laboratories and associated methodologies in Genetics
- Support laboratories and EQA providers in resolving any performance issues for the benefit of patient safety or product quality, ensuring timely escalation of performance issues that cannot be resolved at the NQAAP level to the QAPC.
- Receive and resolve complaints about QA practices from participants or individual practitioners where issues have not been satisfactorily resolved by EQA scheme organisers. This will include onward referral to the QAPC of issues that cannot be addressed and resolved at NQAAP level.
- Act as a channel of communication between EQA providers, NQAAP members and the QAPC.
- Provide expert advice (both written and verbal) and guidance to clinicians and scientific staff

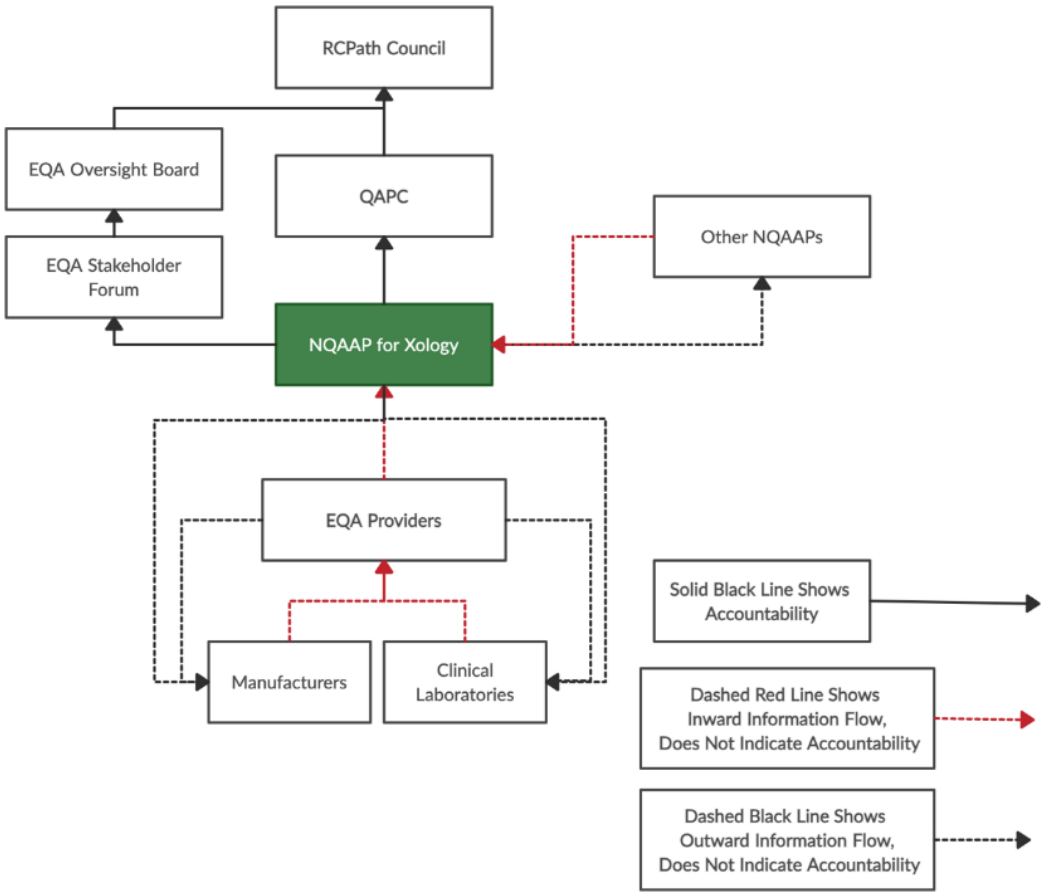
(at national level) relating to persistent poor performance in Genetics and how that impacts on delivering high-quality patient care.

- Provide professional direction and guidance in the operations of the NQAAP for Genetics
- Liaise with other NQAAPs and the QAPC to ensure a consistent and holistic approach to EQA performance resolution while ensuring multidisciplinary issues are identified and prioritised for resolution.
- Investigate methodological issues identified by EQA across all EQA providers and highlight any findings to the QAPC.

Autonomy exists for the provision of the NQAAP for Genetics services when dealing with performance issues to avoid any conflict of interest.

Relationship of NQAAP for Genetics to other organisations and groups

Please note this does not show inter-relationships of all organisations to each other.



Main duties and responsibilities

- To chair NQAAP meetings (minimum 2 per year and additional meetings as required).
- Lead the operation of the NQAAP for Genetics to ensure an effective EQA oversight system is in place for the benefit of patient safety.
- Ensure the NQAAP for Genetics operates in an autonomous manner ensuring impartiality for the EQA programmes covered in its operations, regardless of the EQA provider and clinical laboratories concerned.
- Review reported data trends and anomalies identified by the various EQA providers. Interpret such data as to their clinical and laboratory significance and report to any external body such as the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), as appropriate.

- To ensure NQAAP for Genetics adheres to the agreed Terms of Reference in all activities and support QAPC operations including:
  - the escalation of persistent poor performance to the QAPC within 2 weeks of identification ensuring confirmation of escalation is sent to the relevant EQA scheme organiser
  - the escalation of complaints about EQA practices from participants that cannot be resolved at EQA organiser or NQAAP level
  - biannual reporting into the QAPC with a summary of activities including notifications of poor performance and steps taken, escalations, risks identified and learning points for sharing.
- Liaise with external laboratories (UK based) to assist in resolution of technical issues with individual laboratory performance following referral to NQAAP for Genetics
- Resolve any complaints that may arise regarding the operation of NQAAP for Genetics
- Provide expert, appropriate advice on quality assessment to scheme participants (both laboratory-based and non-laboratory staff), steering committees, other NQAAPs, the QAPC, the World Health Organization (WHO), the British Council, the

  National Institute for Biological Standards and Control (NIBSC), the blood service of the relevant nation, industry, professional bodies, and all other relevant organisations (including higher educational establishments) and individuals as required.
- To represent the NQAAP for Genetics in an advisory and educational role at national meetings on quality assurance, and to prepare reports for such meetings where appropriate.

Working conditions

Occasionally the post holder may be required to deal with highly emotional issues relating to external laboratory/hospital performance that could impact on compliance with regulatory authorities of the four nations or laboratory ISO15189:2012 accreditation.

Working relationships

Communicate with and/or provide advice/support where appropriate to:

- NQAAP for Genetics members
- EQA programme organisers and managers
- management, scientists and clinicians of UK laboratories

- all relevant medical, nursing and scientific staff
- NQAAP support administrator
- other administrative staff
- other NQAAPs
- professional organisations/stakeholders in EQA (Royal College of Pathologists, Institute of Biomedical Science [IBMS], Department of Health)
- relevant EQA scientific steering committee(s)
- Department of Health and Social Care and related bodies
- outside agencies and other healthcare workers
- national agencies and societies
- diagnostic company product specialists/engineers.

Values

The values enshrined in the NHS Constitution underpin all that we do.

- Respect and dignity.
- Commitment to the quality of care.
- Compassion.
- Improving lives.
- Working together for patients.
- Everyone counts.

NQAAP chairperson specification

Shortlist Criteria relevant to the post	**Essential** Requirements necessary for safe and effective performance in the post	**Desirable** Where available, elements that contribute to improved/immediate performance in post	**Evidence obtained from:** Application – A Skills assessment – S
Qualification (General education/further and professional)	**Scientific panel chairs**: Master's degree or equivalent experience Current HCPC registration **Medical panel chairs**: Current GMC registration with specialist registration in relevant pathology discipline	PhD Professional qualifications such as: FRCPath/IBMS certificate or diploma Statement of seniority in profession Equivalent high specialist training and experience	A
Experience (Previous/current work or any other relevant experience)	Have advanced medical/scientific theoretical or practical knowledge of the specialty/subspecialty sufficient to act as a national expert/advisor in the field to other national organisations Extensive experience of working in the field with highly specialist knowledge that enables interpretation of a range of complex EQA performance data Extensive knowledge of medical testing requirements and/or clinical laboratory testing in specialty/subspecialty	Possess excellent organisational skills to support delivery of a high-quality service Knowledge of statistical analysis of data Knowledge and understanding of local and national NHS agenda in relation to patient safety	A / S

Shortlist Criteria relevant to the post	**Essential** Requirements necessary for safe and effective performance in the post	**Desirable** Where available, elements that contribute to improved/immediate performance in post	**Evidence obtained from:** Application – A Skills assessment – S
Further training (Specialist/ management previous job training)	Extensive experience of working in the field managing and/or interpreting: ● highly complex scientific and technical data with evidence of communicating and interpreting this for colleagues ● EQA data ● solving local and/or national scientific and technical and/or analytical problems.	Management skills: Previous leadership role(s) in quality and safety and/or quality improvement	A / S
Special skills/ aptitudes (Verbal, numerical, mechanical)	Have proven leadership, communication and negotiating skills that allow the timely and efficient delivery of panel aims. These include the skills to communicate to individuals and clinical laboratories what is required to resolve performance issues and the ability to listen to, discuss and influence the views of others who may not agree with them ensuring that the best interests of patients are kept at the heart of discussions. Be able to take an objective stance and looking at complex situations from different perspectives while recognising that ethical decisions cannot be made solely through objective		A / S

	analysis or consideration of data and information but rely on sound judgment and interpretation. Have a strong personal commitment to ensuring the highest standards of care to patients and to improving quality and safety by contributing to a learning culture.		

Shortlist Criteria relevant to the post	**Essential** Requirements necessary for safe and effective performance in the post	**Desirable** Where available, elements that contribute to improved/immediate performance in post	**Evidence obtained from:** Application – A Skills assessment – S
Other factors	Be able to communicate effectively and represent the NQAAP at a national level. Possess the knowledge required to assist, support and communicate with UK stakeholder organisations and other groups such as: ● QAPC ● Royal College of Pathologists ● IBMS ● Association for Clinical Biochemistry and Laboratory Medicine ● EQA providers ● clinical laboratories ● healthcare networks ● MHRA.	Actively involved in the development and promotion of standardisation and harmonisation within national clinical laboratories.	A