

How to Choose an Audit Topic

Focus on areas with the greatest potential for improvement. Consider the following characteristics:

High Risk – procedures or services that could harm patients, donors, staff or the organisation (e.g. incorrect clinical advice, late test results, inappropriate donor selection).

High Volume – frequent procedures or high numbers of patients/donors/users involved (e.g. acceptance of tissue donors).

High Cost – costly activities or highly resource dependent services (e.g. process and issue of autologous serum eyedrops).


Incidents or Concerns – complaints, adverse events, quality incidents.


Wide Variation in Practice – e.g. record keeping, documentation, sample labelling, out-of-hours practices.

Identifying a Clinical Audit Topic

Contact Us

For advice or support on any aspect of clinical audit at NHSBT, contact the Clinical Audit Team:

 clinical.audit@nhsbt.nhs.uk

 <https://nhsbloodandtransplant.sharepoint.com/sites/Clinical/SitePages/Clinical%20Audit.aspx>

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Clinical audit compares current practice against standards and guidelines to identify quality improvements. This guide will help you choose and prioritise topics with the greatest potential impact.



Audit: Where Do Audit Topics Come From?

Clinical audit topics may be identified by:

- National bodies (NICE, CQC, Royal Colleges)
- NHSBT annual audit programmes
- Clinical groups
- Individual staff

All NHSBT audits must be approved by the relevant CARE Group.

Types of Clinical Audit

Example

Single collection team's practice vs. national infection control guidelines

South-east region collection teams vs. national infection control guidelines.

All collection teams nationally vs. national infection control guidelines

Other Considerations

Before committing to an audit, ask yourself:

- ➔ Is it practical to undertake the audit?
- ➔ Can you get the information you need?
- ➔ Is the problem amenable to change?
- ➔ Is the topic a priority for the organisation?
- ➔ Are good standards/guidelines available? If not, is there consensus on good practice?
- ➔ Who needs to be involved to ensure changes can be implemented?
- ➔ Does the topic align with national policy initiatives?

Tool for Prioritising Clinical Audit

Use the following checklist to rate your potential audit topics. If you have most of your ticks in the 'Yes' columns, it's probably a good topic for clinical audit.

Question	Yes	Maybe	Don't Know	No
Is the topic High Risk?				
Is the topic High Volume?				
Is the topic High Cost?				
Is there wide variation in practice?				
Is there local concern about practice?				
Are Standards / Guidelines available?				
Is the topic important locally?				
Is the topic important nationally?				
Can practice be changed?				