






### 3. Where to look for Data Sources

The information you require for your audit may be readily available because it is currently, or has been, collected as part of routine care or practice. However, you should ensure that the existing information systems (e.g. PULSE / Hematos or patient/donor records) are complete and accurate.

In some cases, it may be necessary to obtain information from several different sources.

Use existing systems such as:


-  **PULSE GUI**
-  **QPULSE**
-  **Patient/Donor records**
-  **Occurrence or complaints logs**
-  **Departmental records**


Be aware of the work that is performed in your directorate; it may be that someone else already collects the information you require. Talking to people is often a good way of finding out what is already available. If the information is not available, you will need to develop a method to access the information you need. This may include you and / or health professionals collecting the data at the point of care, or you could collect the information you require from observing practice or questioning staff, patients or donors.

When you have identified your data sources you need to decide how to collect the data.

## Contact Us

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

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

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# How to Collect Clinical Audit Data Effectively

Accurate and reliable data collection is at the heart of clinical audit. Well-collected data ensures audit findings are valid, meaningful, and can lead to real improvements in care. This leaflet outlines the key steps for effective data collection.





## Collecting Audit Data

You need to ensure that you collect the right information to meet your audit objectives (see leaflet 5: Developing Aims and Objectives for Clinical Audit' INF455). An effective data collection strategy will involve six important steps:

### 1. Set Clear Objectives and Methods

Your objectives show what you are going to measure, and from these you need to determine where and how you are going to obtain this information.

-  Define exactly what information needs to be collected to measure against agreed standards.
-  Decide how the information will be collected (retrospective, prospective, survey, questionnaire, etc.).

Once you have decided what you are going to measure you need to:

### 2. Identify the Audit Sample

Your audit population will include everyone who has received the treatment, service or care you are evaluating.

You won't usually audit the entire population. Define a suitable sample size and selection method.

Refer to **Leaflet 7 – INF456: How to Select an Audit Sample** for guidance.

Once you have done this, and you know what information you are going to collect, you need to decide how you are going to obtain that information.

## 4. How to Collect the Data

There are a variety of tools that can be used to collect data. Before you start to think about how you are going to collect the data, you need to determine if you are:

### Looking Back or Looking Forward?

There are two options; either to review what has been done before (retrospective), or to collect data as each event happens (concurrent or prospective).

There are advantages and disadvantages to each method of data collection and the topic of your audit. Your data sources will influence which is the most suitable method to choose.

**Retrospective data collection** is appropriate for collecting data from established sources where the information is well documented. Best used when processes have not undergone a change.

**Prospective / Concurrent data collection** is good if you require additional information to that normally documented. This often requires additional resources as you or a health professional involved in patient / donor care will likely be required to collect the data.

## 5. Design Reliable and Valid Tools

Once your method has been chosen, you need to design your data collection tool. Commonly used data collection tools include:

**Proformas:** These are tailored forms to collect specific data. These need to be unambiguous, especially if several people are collecting data.

**Questionnaires:** Your questions will be based on your standards and criteria. Question wording is important; it should be clear, unambiguous and not 'lead' the respondent to give the answer you would like.

It is essential to consider how you will analyse the data that you collect. Are you collecting **quantitative** data (that can be counted or expressed numerically) or **qualitative** data (that is descriptive and open-ended)? This will impact on the design of your data collection tool.

### Ensure Reliability and Validity

- **Reliability** – the data collection tool gives consistent results if used by different people or at different times.
- **Validity** – the tool measures what it is supposed to measure.

To achieve this:

- Use clear definitions for each data item.
- Train all data collectors in using the tool.
- Test the tool on a small number of cases before full data collection.

## 6. Pilot the method

The best way to test the reliability and the validity of your data collection method is to pilot. This involves picking a small audit sample and performing a 'mini audit' in which you collect data and analyse the results, comparing against your standards to determine if you obtain the information that you require.