

NHS England Patient Safety Expert Groups

Terms of reference

Background

NHS England recognises the value of working in collaboration with the Royal Colleges and other professional and patient associations to improve patient safety. NHS England now seeks to take forward and build on the work previously undertaken by the National Patient Safety Agency in the development of patient safety expert groups. The expert groups will be established by NHS England to provide senior clinical advice to the commissioning system, support NHS England's priorities in patient safety and lead on the development and dissemination of advice and guidance for both commissioners and providers.

NHS England will host each of the expert groups through providing administrative support for meetings, a meeting venue and a patient safety domain representative. The patient safety domain representative will provide practical support to the Chair of the expert group and work with the expert group to ensure that the terms of reference are adhered to.

Membership will be multi-professional and include representation from relevant colleges and associations in England, patient representatives, and a representative CCG. Additional membership may include relevant organisations in a position to promote learning and provide data on patient safety priorities e.g. confidential enquiries, national clinical audit programmes and research institutes. Each expert group may have a core membership and wider membership that can be accessed for specific relevant issues.

There are currently seven patient safety expert groups for surgery, medicine, child health, mental health, primary care, women's health and learning disabilities.

An NHS England Patient Safety Steering Group has been established to both raise the expert groups' awareness of NHS England's priorities in patient safety and to consider and approve, as appropriate, the priorities identified by the groups. The steering group will work to ensure consistency and minimal overlap in activities of the boards.

Routine evaluation of the effectiveness of the groups will be developed in collaboration with the patient safety expert groups, and may include annual summaries of achievements.

Purposes

The purpose of the expert groups is to collaboratively improve the culture and safety of patients in NHS funded care by:

1. Informing NHS England's national priorities for patient safety in (*specialty*) through:
 - Sharing information to help identify priority areas where patient safety improvement is most needed;
 - Routine review of NRLS data – this may be both raw data and data that has been clinically reviewed;
 - Encouraging and supporting the development of new information sources on priority areas for patient safety.
2. Making proposals on how these priorities can be taken forward (e.g. through member organisation workstreams, NHS England commissioning guidance and levers, seeking dedicated project funding, calls for research, etc.).
3. Providing clinical advice to the commissioning system (e.g. Domains 1-3, CCGs, direct commissioners, senates and networks) in relation to patient safety within the specialty as required.
4. Working in collaboration with NHS England to identify the contribution of the member organisations to national safety improvement programmes.
5. Working collaboratively with NHS England in the development, implementation and dissemination of recommendations / guidance / solutions to the commissioners and providers of NHS funded care and social care as appropriate, ensuring there is appropriate patient engagement. This may involve the establishment or identification of working groups for specific pieces of work.
6. Providing high level leadership and identifying the most appropriate methods of communication and dissemination, ensuring stakeholder engagement within their constituent members and specialty networks.
7. Providing endorsement, when appropriate, to individual initiatives and best practice prior to dissemination to providers and commissioners of NHS funded care.
8. Meeting four times yearly and, where appropriate, providing advice on urgent issues between meetings.

Specific responsibilities

Members of the patient safety expert groups representing professional organisations will undertake to ensure that appropriate systems are in place within their

organisation to inform them over priority safety issues and take responsibility for the development, implementation and dissemination of recommendations / guidance / solutions as appropriate.

Members of the patient safety expert groups representing NHS England will provide support to the Chair of the group and take responsibility for ensuring that there is effective communication between the board and the NHS England Overarching Steering Group. Administrative support will also be provided.

Members of the patient safety expert groups representing patients will undertake to ensure that there is appropriate patient engagement with colleagues on the board in both identifying priority safety issues and any subsequent development work.

Members of the patient safety expert groups representing sources of information on key patient safety challenges e.g., national clinical audits, confidential outcome reviews, NRLS and research bodies will undertake to both share outcomes of relevant activities and support emerging issues as appropriate.