

Overview of the RCoA Quality Network and an indicative QI departmental lead job description

RCoA Commitment:

The Royal College of Anaesthetists (RCoA) vision is for safe, more effective patient-centred care, delivered by a well-trained, supported and valued workforce. It's strategic aim to "promote healthier outcomes for all" includes a commitment to evidence-based improvements in healthcare. The College will do this by:

- promoting best practice where it is shown to improve patient outcomes and/or cost effectiveness across healthcare
- lead, deliver and facilitate high quality evaluation and improvement to reduce variability in healthcare services and improve outcomes.

The [Quality Network](#) strives to support the College in its aims. It was established to support anaesthetists to undertake improvements in their own department, hospital and region. The network shares successes and lessons learned from quality improvement (QI) work, helps fellows and members to develop their QI knowledge and increases their confidence to undertake improvement projects.

The structure of the network is as follows:



How can the Quality Network help deliver quality improvement in my department?

Many departments are working on similar QI aims, and there is a lot we can learn from each other. The Quality Network aims to give its members a peer to peer network to coordinate, share and spread ideas and resources. This might involve sharing protocols or other documents, or sharing experiences or learning from each other's successes (or failures!). It could also provide support or a forum to ask questions for those undertaking improvement work, which can feel very demanding at times.

This isn't like other networks- we do not exist mainly to pass information to and from the College, but primarily to share between us and help each other develop. Of course, the College may wish to ask this group for help with key College quality initiatives, but we do not see that as being the primary role of this network.

The key activities of this role are listed below, these are distinct from those of the [Quality Audit & Research Coordinators](#) (QuARCs) (primary role to support HSRC audit and research projects such as NAPs and SNAPs and support NIAA activities) or [ACSA lead](#) (primary role to co-ordinate a department's activity towards gaining ACSA accreditation). There may be some overlap between the roles and it may be appropriate for a person to become their department's Quality Network lead in addition to another role, if they feel the roles are compatible with the QI activities within the department.

Regional Leads: The Regional Leads will help facilitate and coordinate this local communication, taking an overview of what is going on in their region. The Regional Leads could link anaesthetic departments in their area who might not be aware they are undertaking similar or complementary improvement work. They may also be able to help departments in their region share work on College initiatives like ACSA, PQIP or NELA.

Quality Network Regional Leads are:

- A consultant or SAS grade in Anaesthesia and/or Intensive Care Medicine
- Holder of a substantive post in the NHS
- Committed to the development of QI work
- Have a track record in undertaking QI work
- Skilled in working with others; collaborating and communicating
- Supported by their Clinical Director in taking on the role

This role benefits individual departments, as regional leads will be able to draw on expertise and experience from across the country when addressing challenges. They can find solutions which have worked elsewhere and perhaps share written and other resources to help speed up the implementation of improvements. They are able to help their trainees engage in meaningful improvement work despite short rotation times, as ongoing projects can be coordinated across the region.

A database of the Regional Leads is held by the College, and the leads names are published on the [College website](#). When enquiries are received, the College QI team can put the individual into contact with their local Regional Lead.

Departmental QI leads: Each department should have a designated lead (or leads, departments can nominate more than one lead if desired) chosen through an internal process within the anaesthetic department. Their nominated title within a department may vary, for example, QI Lead or Audit Lead. This lead can signpost new or rotating doctors towards QI projects, thereby helping trainees contribute to sustainable changes despite shorter rotations. The RCoA Quality Network Regional Leads will facilitate departments liaising with each other by connecting Departmental Leads together, to share ideas and resources and ask questions of each other.

Roles and responsibilities of a QI Departmental Lead include:

1. **Oversight of perioperative quality improvement within their department**
By promoting and facilitating involvement in QI for anaesthetists and other members of staff, rather than the single QI lead undertaking the projects.
2. **With assistance of the Regional Lead, linking hospitals with opportunities to learn from each other's work or collaborate**
To facilitate sharing and learning across the region, reduce duplication and coordinate efforts. For example, discussing your departments experiences with other departments working on similar aims. This may also include linking with other specialties, e.g. surgeons or emergency department, on shared projects.
3. **Helping the Training Programme Director and the Quality Network Regional Leads facilitate trainees within the region to make the most of QI opportunities on their rotations.**
4. **Signposting training opportunities for consultants, specialty doctors and trainees**
The College's Membership Engagement Panel survey previously indicated that lack of training was a key barrier to anaesthetists doing more improvement work. Together with the Regional Leads, the Departmental Lead can signpost QI training opportunities collated by the regional QI leads.
5. **Assist the further co-design of the Quality Network**
We want to take the experiences and opinions of members on board when developing this network, so we openly invite you to share your views with us.

The above roles and responsibilities will be reviewed by the College as the network progresses.

Request of departments

Departments are requested to nominate a local QI lead for their department, and if you haven't already done so please send their name and contact email to your Quality Network Regional Lead- full list of Regional Leads can be found [here>>](#)

If you have any queries, please contact qualityimprovement@rcoa.ac.uk

Communication within the Quality Network

Email will be used as the primary mode of communication but the College may use other novel means of communication, such as app-based communication and project management tools, depending on the will and preferences of the cohort. Depending on the demand, the College may run national or regional meetings in conjunction with major RCoA events to provide face to face communication between the College and the Quality Network Leads.