

Project Definitions

What is a *Clinical Audit* Project?

Clinical audit is a quality improvement tool.

It measures the current standard of care, or patient outcomes, against a predetermined standard(s).

This standard(s) may come from:

- National guidance documents (e.g. NICE publications)
- Professional membership body publication (e.g. Royal College of Surgeons)
- Outcome data from a research project
- Local policy
- Local consensus

If current care is found not to meet the standard(s) then improvement actions are taken to address any deficits, followed by a repeat cycle of auditing to assess the impact of the actions.

Example: NELA is a national clinical audit which aims to help improvements in the care and outcomes of patients undergoing emergency laparotomy. Local data is measured against a set of nationally agreed standards, which represent best practice.

Some of the standards included within NELA are:

- Patients aged ≥ 65 yrs should have their level of frailty assessed and recorded within 4 hours of admission or transfer
- A consultant surgeon is present for all high-risk cases with a predicted mortality $> 5\%$

Who can support me with a clinical audit project?

Clinical Audit departments can provide advice, guidance and support with clinical audit projects.

