

# UKAS Accreditation

A BRIEFING FOR COMMISSIONERS OF HEALTHCARE SERVICES



## Accreditation: Underpinning Commissioning for Quality

The need to drive up the quality of care for patients, whilst delivering efficiency and productivity, is a key principle for commissioners of healthcare services. UKAS accreditation is a tool that can be used to support the commissioning of healthcare services that are safe, effective and that continually improve the experience for patients.

The influence and use of UKAS accreditation continues to grow across a wide range of areas to support the delivery of informed and effective purchasing, good governance and public confidence. As pressure on finances continues to build, accreditation is increasingly being seen as an effective way for purchasers to deliver 'more for less'.

The United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS), as the national accreditation body, is the only body recognised by Government, to assess and declare the competence of organisations carrying out calibration,

testing, certification and inspection activities, against internationally recognised standards. In response to a new European Regulation (Regulation EC 765/2008), UKAS has been formally appointed as the National Accreditation Body providing for the first time, a legal basis for accreditation.

UKAS is becoming increasingly active in the Healthcare sector. Details of areas supported by UKAS accreditation are given in this briefing. When commissioning services in these areas, be sure to specify UKAS-accredited services.



**Accreditation is absolutely essential to ensure quality of supply**

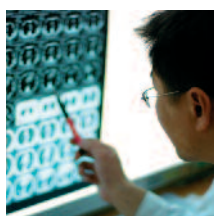
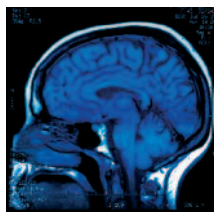
**Lord Carter of Coles, Chair,  
The Independent Review of NHS  
Pathology Services**

### Accreditation in action:

#### Diagnostic Imaging

UKAS has been appointed by the College of Radiographers and the Royal College of Radiologists to manage and deliver a UK-wide imaging services accreditation scheme (ISAS). Under the scheme, jointly developed by the Colleges in collaboration with other health professionals and patients' representatives, imaging services are assessed against agreed standards for quality, patient-focused care and continuous improvement.

The scheme focuses on the delivery of high quality care for patients by competent staff working in a safe environment. The process of accreditation involves peer review against agreed standards and criteria supported by expert specialist advice and input from patient representatives. UKAS accreditation provides confidence in the quality and consistency of the imaging services delivered across the health sector.



### Accreditation in action:

#### Health information standard

UKAS has developed accreditation for certification to the new Department of Health Information Standards. The standard sets down criteria for organisations providing written or scripted medical based patient information. Many different kinds of organisations produce health and social care information, for a wide range of communities. This standard has been developed to provide reassurance that the health and social care information they access comes from a reliable source. It has also been designed to raise the general standard of information provided. Once an organisation has been assessed and certified against the Information Standard by a UKAS accredited certification body, the organisation will be able to display the Information Standard Quality Mark on their information materials so people searching for health and social care information can easily identify it as coming from a reliable, trustworthy source.



# Making a difference to public sector delivery

## The benefits of accreditation for Commissioners of healthcare services include:

- Providing an independent assurance of quality and safety that supports world-class commissioning decisions to deliver better care and value for patients
- Providing a mechanism for measuring quality improvement
- Supporting consistency in the quality of care.

UKAS accreditation is an on-going business process to establish that:

- A Service's performance meets **the required standard;**
- Clinical and administrative practices are **delivered competently**
- The resources, facilities and workforce are **appropriate;**
- Service delivery is **patient-focused;**
- A Service's standard of performance **can be sustained.**

UKAS carries out this accreditation work to internationally-recognised standards and is itself regularly reviewed by its international peers.

Because UKAS has well-established and transparent assessment processes applicable to all disciplines, its accreditation helps to:

- **Enhance quality:** accreditation addresses the dimensions of quality and supports continual improvement. Its philosophy embraces targets such as fitness for purpose, value for money and reliability, rather than minimum levels of performance.
- **Engender trust:** the UKAS symbol is a well-known means of identifying organisations that meet and maintain high standards. The public can have more confidence in Services when they know standards are checked, updated and enforced.
- **Reduce bureaucracy:** accreditation moderates the need for legislation and reduces duplication in existing audit and inspection regimes. The accreditation process will generate quality measurement information that is required for Quality Account reporting, and feed into the requirements for CQC registration.



Accreditation is emerging as a mainstream activity of the NHS Quality Agenda”

**Sir Duncan Nichol,**  
UKAS Non-Executive Director & Former  
NHS Chief Executive



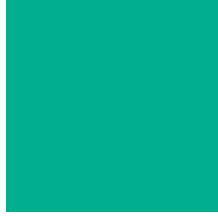
## Accreditation in action:

### Point of Care Testing

Public awareness of the availability of Point of Care Testing has been increasing with greater access than ever before to community based testing. UKAS accredits organisations which provide point of care testing against ISO 22870: 2006 (Point of Care Testing – particular requirements for quality and competence), applied in conjunction with ISO 15189: 2007 (Medical Laboratories – particular

requirements for quality and competence). This accreditation is an important element in establishing and maintaining confidence in a point of care testing service. Lord Carter of Coles recommended the accreditation of point of care testing providers in his final report of the Review of NHS Pathology Services in England 2006.





## UKAS accreditation is helping to establish and maintain confidence across the public sector in policy areas such as:

National DNA database	Home Office
Forensic science laboratories	Home Office
Food safety	Food Standards Agency
Water Quality	Drinking Water Inspectorate
Public Health	Health Protection Agency
Customer Service Excellence	Cabinet Office
Environmental management	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
National Measurement System	Department for Business, Innovation, and Skills
New Approach Directives	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
Monitoring Certification Scheme (MCERTS)	Environment Agency



### Accreditation Standards

While UKAS always operates to international standards, assessment can be carried out by healthcare providers to standards that are developed and owned by professional bodies. Where possible, UKAS will work in collaboration with professional bodies to ensure that the standards include assessment criteria, and can be structured into a common format that enables domains to be mapped against internationally recognised standards, as well as those set out by the CQC and NICE.



### Accreditation in action:

#### Clinical Pathology

UKAS (through CPA Ltd) assesses and declares the competence of NHS Clinical Pathology Laboratories. Laboratories are inspected every two years and have to renew their registration every year, confirming that they are continuing to operate according to strict guidelines. Although accreditation is voluntary, the majority of UK clinical laboratories are currently accredited, demonstrating that they have been inspected and approved as providers of results which meet accepted standards.

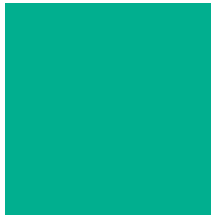
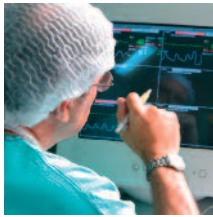
Lord Carter led a study on behalf of the Department of Health to make proposals for the modernisation of Pathology Services in the UK. The final report, published in December 2008, was instrumental in leading Clinical Pathology Accreditation Ltd to seek a stronger relationship with UKAS.





## Key facts about UKAS

- Only national accreditation body recognised by Government to assess to international standards
- Non-profit-distributing company limited by guarantee
- Over 40 years' experience



## Who to contact for further information

If you wish to find out more about how accreditation might be of assistance to you in your capacity as a Commissioner of Healthcare Services, please contact:

**Jon Murthy** Telephone **020 8917 8493**  
 Email [jon.murthy@ukas.com](mailto:jon.murthy@ukas.com)  
 Or visit our website at [www.ukas.com](http://www.ukas.com)

**United Kingdom Accreditation Service**  
 21-47 High Street, Feltham,  
 Middlesex TW13 4UN  
 Tel: 020 8917 8400



## UKAS Members

Rather than shareholders, UKAS has members that represent those who have an interest in different aspects of accreditation. Current members are:

- Association of British Certification Bodies
- British Measurement and Testing Association
- British Retail Consortium
- Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply
- Chartered Quality Institute
- Confederation of British Industry
- Consumer Focus
- Federation of Small Businesses
- Food Standards Agency
- Health Protection Agency
- Health and Safety Executive
- Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services
- Ministry of Defence
- Safety Assessment Federation
- Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills
- Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

The United Kingdom Accreditation Service has made the greater public awareness of accreditation and its benefits a key strategic priority.

Activities towards this objective are carried out under the banner of the **Accreditation Awareness Campaign** and are supported by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.



*Delivering Confidence*

