Cause for Concern Policy

National Clinical Audit for Anxiety and Depression (NCAAD)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Purpose**
NCAAD collects, analyses and reports data at participating Trust/organisation, CCG and hospital level. Given this, NCAAD requires a robust process for identifying, highlighting and acting upon areas of concern or poor practice highlighted as part of the audit process.

The following procedure reflects the guidance provided by the Healthcare Quality Improvement Partnership (HQIP).

NB. This document should be read in conjunction with the NCAAD Outlier Policy.

**Definitions**

**Acceptable performance:** For the purpose of NCAAD, acceptable performance will be based on all data within 2 standard deviations of the mean, unless other suitable external data, or an identified norm exists.

**Alert:** A provider identified as being 2 standard deviations from the mean.

**Alarm:** A provider identified as being 3 or more standard deviations from the mean.

**a. Identifying & confirming outlier status**

Once data cleaning and the main analysis is complete, further analysis will be conducted on the following three key metrics to identify possible outliers.

- Psychological Therapies: Was the service user referred to psychological therapy?
- Discharge/medication: At discharge, was the service user given to take home (TTOs) medication?
- Discharge: Was a discharge letter sent to the service user’s GP?

The audit team and Trust/organisation will follow the process outlined in the NCAAD Outlier Policy to scrutinise the data and analysis to determine whether there appears to be a case to answer or not.

Following review of the submitted data and where necessary amendments, the Trust/organisation may still appear to be an outlier after which the audit team will need to follow one of the identified processes below.

**b. Actions**

i. **For Trusts/organisations identified as an ‘alert’**

Please follow the process in the NCAAD Outlier Policy.

ii. **For Trusts/organisations identified as an ‘alarm’**

On confirmation of a Trust/organisation’s outlier status, the audit lead within the Trust/organisation will be contacted within 5 days by telephone, after which written confirmation of outlier alert status will be sent to the audit lead, along with the Medical Director and CEO.

The letter to the Trust/organisation will include notification that the audit team will be informing the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and HQIP. The Chief Executive of the Trust/organisation will be asked to notify their commissioners and NHS Improvement. The Trust/organisation will be informed of data transparency and that their Trust/organisation will be identified in the national report.
The NCAAD team will notify the CQC via email to clinicalaudits@cqc.org.uk and HQIP Associate Director Kirsten Windfuhr.

The Trust/organisation should provide acknowledgement within 10 working days of receipt of notification of alarm outlier status. The Trust/organisation should confirm that a local investigation will be undertaken independent assurance of the validity of this exercise.

Should no acknowledgement of the letter be received within 10 working days, the audit team will send a reminder letter to the Trust/organisation, copying in the CQC.

If no response is received after a further 5 working days, the CQC and NHS Improvement (nhsi.medicaldirectorate@nhs.net) will be notified via email.

The audit team will endeavour to provide appropriate support and information to all stakeholders as requested.
Publication of comparative data identifying services in national report

Audit contact provides a written response to NCAAD

Data inaccurate and requires amendment

Data accurate and Trust/organisation remains an outlier

Data amended and Trust/organisation is no longer an outlier

Data amended and Trust/organisation is still an outlier

What is the outlier type?

Alert

Inform Trust/organisation of transparency and that their service will be identified in the national report

Telephone Trust/organisation contact to confirm alarm status

Letter sent confirm alarm status

Contact CQC and HQIP to confirm alarm status

Send reminder letter

Response received?

Yes

No further action unless requested

Escalate to CQC and NHSI

Response received?

Yes

No

5 working days