Audit Workshop

A guide to writing and formatting audits

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Disclaimer

The information presented is general in nature and is not representative of national guidance within the Screening Quality Assurance Service.

All advice and guidance within today's presentation reflects the QA Advisor's experience and expertise in supporting screening services with the development of audits.

The learning from audits which have provided the format and outcomes that have been well received by all stakeholders, will be the basis of today's training

What do you hope to gain from today?

Aims and Objectives

At the end of this session, we will have covered:

- What an audit is?

- Why audit is important?

- What the benefit of an audit is?

- What an audit looks like – group work

- The important aspects of an audit

- The content of an audit – group work

What is an audit?

FACTOID:

The term "Audit" is derived from the Latin term "Audire" which means "to hear". In ancient times auditors listened to the oral reports of responsible officials to owners or those having authority and confirmed the accuracy of the reports. Over the years the role evolved to verify written records.

Systems of checks and counter checks were implemented to maintain public accounts as early as the days of ancient Egyptians, Greeks and Romans

Why is an audit important?

An audit is a safeguard measure…and provides third party assurance to various stakeholders that the subject matter conforms to an agreed reporting framework and principles.

As a result of an audit, stakeholders may effectively evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, service delivery, quality improvements, equalities, and the governance process over the subject matter.

Environmental

Energy

Audit

Clinical

Performance

QUALITY

What is the benefit of an audit?

As a result of an audit, stakeholders may effectively evaluate factors such as:

- The effectiveness of risk management

- Compliance with national guidance

- Quality of service delivery

- Equality of access to services

- Governance processes

- Identification of at-risk groups of people

- Gaps in health and safety

So, what does an audit look like?

Here is a fictional audit presented to a broad range of stakeholders:

Ref No	Model	Date of modification	Location	Checked	Status	Total
CYY112	Thingy me bob	10/10/2017	South	Yes	A	1
BH3345	Wotsit	11/12/2018	East	Sometimes	A	5
JX5541	Flange	01/01/2019	West	Yes	B-	6
KG1111	Clip Clop	02/03/2019	North	No	C+	2
0001456	Bing bong	04/04/2019	South	No	Missing	8
322456	Plink	No	South	Yes	Missing	12
Missed	Plonk	23/05/2019	South	Yes	Missing	0
Unknown	Ploop	01/06/2019	West	No	Fine	5

What do you think about this audit?

Would the stakeholders be assured by this audit?

If not, why not?

Some important aspects of an audit - format:

- Set the context – 'Introduction and background'

- What the audit is about and what is it trying to achieve – 'Aims and Objectives'

- Version of the audit and who is the author – 'Document Control'

- What will the audit *not* show? – 'Caveats and Interferences'

- Avoid or explain terminology

- What period of data does this audit represent?

Some important aspects of an audit:

- How was the audit carried out - Methodology

- What were your findings?

- How was the data analysed? –
  - Was a data analyst employed?
  - Was a stats software system used?
  - Was a public health registrar used?
  - What was the limitations of the data?

- What were the learning/conclusion(s)?

- What actions will be taken?

Example audit format:

Content	Description
Document control	Version number, date of release, authorised by etc
Introduction & Background	Why is this audit being carried out? Explain the area of the screening pathway that is being investigated.
Aims and objectives	What is the audit hoping to achieve? What it won't show!
Frequency audit	How often audit occurs
Caveats and Interference	What barriers may be faced in allowing this audit to successfully investigate it purpose
Standards	What standards or guidance will the audit measure against
Methodology	How was the audit carried out?
Analysis	Data analysis, showing high-level stats, numbers, outcomes etc. Put raw-data in appendices if necessary
Conclusion & Lessons Learned	Summary of findings. What is now understood that wasn't before. Avoid describing actions here
Actions and recommendations	Itemised actions based on conclusions with deadlines and assigned responsibility

Ok, but what about the content itself?

Where do I start?

Establishing the format is a good start as it helps to clarify the structure of the report.

But what about the content?

It can be quite daunting trying to determine how much or even how little information to provide. How formal should I make the report? Should I include all my spreadsheets? Do I need to explain all the terminology?

Here are some useful principles to help you write an audit report:

Principles for writing audit reports:

- Use plain English

- Imagine the reader has no knowledge of the subject of the audit – test your report on colleagues ☺

- Avoid using terminology, or at least provide a glossary if the subject is technical

- Minimise use of abbreviations/accronyms – or at least write them out in full the first time

- If you need a calculator to determine totals, the report has not done its job
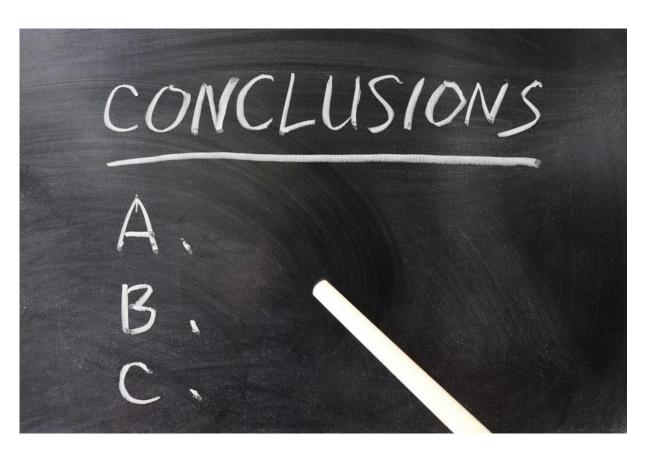
Principles for writing audit reports:

- Include lessons learned and conclusions

- Always include actions – but these must be associated with the conclusions!

- Keep sentences to no more than 15-20 words – it's not easy! ☺

- Raw data can be included in the appendices if necessary.

Writing conclusions:

- Conclusions should link back to aim of the report and reflect on the findings of the analysis work.

- Do not introduce a new points or ideas

- Do not introduce new evidence that should be in the body of the report

- Your conclusion should leave the reader thinking about the significance of the whole topic.

- Avoid making your conclusions too long

Writing an action plan:

- Use SMART Actions (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-based)

- Deadlines and accountability

- Actions should be based on the conclusion(s)

Content groupwork:

- Discuss example audit:

What about audits in DES?

There is a national audit schedule for Diabetic Eye Screening.

Mandatory audits:

- Exclude and suspended audit

- Non-responders/DNA audit

- 10% QA Sample

Recommended audits:

- Health Equity impact assessment of Health Equity Audit (HEA)

- Camera image and settings audit

- Grading and ophthalmology outcomes audit

What about audits in DES?

But audit within DES doesn't have to be limited to just the national audit schedule!

Local commissioners may request additional audits to be presented at programme board on a regular basis

Local screening services can complete an audit(s) along any part of the screening pathway, that will:

- provide assurance that screening is meeting national standards and guidance

- clarify concerns, particularly when there is an anomaly within performance outcomes or quality issues.

- provide assurance that failsafe procedures are optimal

Summary:

- Use a consistent format for all your audits

- An audit report should not require considerable effort to understand

- If you need a calculator to determine totals, the report has not done its job

- Avoid using terminology, or at least provide a glossary if the subject is technical

- Use plain English

- Spell out acronyms on the first instance of their use

- Use SMART Actions (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-based)

Revisit aims and objectives

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Thank you

Any questions?