ISAS is key to bright future for imaging

UKAS 21st anniversary celebration and ISAS standard re-launch
25 January, Pullman Hotel, London

“The day was very useful in seeing and understanding the changes that have been made during the revision of the standard. Of particular note was the new TLR web page which appears to be much easier to use.”

“It was an excellent opportunity to meet and speak to colleagues who are going through the process and to catch up with the progress that they are making through their accreditation journey.”

Chris Woodgate, ISAS Officer
The College of Radiographers (CoR) and The Royal College of Radiologists (RCR)

DELEGATES, GUESTS AND SPEAKERS

Converged on the Pullman Hotel in January, to celebrate both the 21st anniversary of UKAS and the launch of the revised 2017 ISAS standard, which has just been published.

Speakers covered topics including the history of accreditation, details of the new standard and its development, new support tools that are available for applicants and the importance of accreditation in developing the gold standard of imaging services in every single trust and hospital in the UK.

The main talking points in a lively Q&A session which followed included safe staffing issues, application process details, how to access the support tools and documents, potential compliance problems and available support for applicants.

WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

Richard Evans, Society & College of Radiographers (SCoR) CEO

There has been much to celebrate said Richard Evans, as he welcomed guests and speakers to the anniversary celebration.

“Clinical accreditation is at the very beginning,” he said, “and everybody is talking about it. The CQC has endorsed ISAS as a quality mark and it’s more than likely that if you have ISAS as a department then you will get a ‘light touch’ from them or even no inspection at all!”

“There is a great deal more work to be done to give ISAS the boost it should have, but today is about celebrating what has been achieved so far and looking to greater success in the future.”

Professional standards by definition, have a much longer shelf life than government defined regulations, he commented, so we’re going to see a lot going on over the next few years.

“There is much to celebrate today.”
WHY CELEBRATE?
Lord Jamie Lindsay, UKAS chairman

Lord Lindsay thanked everyone taking the time to attend on the day and said he was delighted that a revised standard had now been published, with new regulations aimed at ensuring quality management systems and clear leadership.

He echoed Richard Evans’ introduction, reiterating that was a joint celebration to mark not only the recent publication of the revised standard, but also the 21st anniversary of UKAS, an organisation which has the vital role of underpinning reform.

“UKAS is currently managing the accreditation scheme to international standards,” he said. “The implementation of the refreshed system should now bring more consistency and make accreditation much more attractive to trusts.”

“In our view, ISAS is crucial. Accreditation inspires confidence across a wide range of services, not least of all diagnostics. Diagnostics has become a very important and essential part of our work, especially over the past few years when we have collaborated closely with the RCR and CoR.”

Since 2009, 25 imaging services have been accredited and a further 75 have applied for, or are in the process of applying for accreditation. These 100 services comprise almost 50% of all imaging activity.

Lord Lindsay welcomed the CQC’s recognition of the important role UKAS plays in accreditation. “We want ISAS to be the only accreditation scheme that is recognised by the CQC, and I think everyone would agree that regulatory recognition and support for accredited organisations would be very welcome.”

REVISED ISAS STANDARD:
SOFT LAUNCH COVERING MAIN CHANGES, SCOPE, BENEFITS

Kathlyn Slack, Royal College of Radiologists (RCR) and College of Radiographers (CoR) project manager

Kathlyn brought delegates up to speed with a brief potted history of ISAS accreditation and the journey to publishing the 2017 revised standard. She discussed the second review, which was published in 2013, leading up to the 2017 review which has replaced it.

During the review, Kathlyn told the audience, comments were invited from existing ISAS users, special interest groups at the RCR and CoR, as well as the assessors on the ground. “We used lessons from the past to improve the delivery of the standard and make it simpler and more streamlined for trusts to submit their evidence during applications.”

Kathlyn assured the audience that people already familiar with the existing scheme needn’t be concerned as there is a clear comparison table to reference to avoid all confusion. There is also a ‘transition’ brochure for applicants to consult, that answers a comprehensive list of questions about the new version versus the old.

TRANSITION TO THE REVISED ISAS STANDARD

Debbie Love, UKAS senior assessment manager

Both customers and patients need to be aware of the transition, said Debbie, and UKAS will expect all current applicants to be able to be assessed using version three. Therefore, the organisation has pledged support throughout the whole process and guaranteed that assessors will be working closely with customers during the transition, to determine realistic timelines for applications and submissions.

The key, she maintained, is that it’s about the quality of evidence, not quantity. Assessors need to see evidence that systems are working properly and identify what it is that organisations are trying to achieve. They also need evidence that processes are providing good quality outcomes for patients in terms of safety and service delivery, while complying with the standard.

“Familiarise yourselves with the new standard and raise awareness among staff.”

“We have remained patient-focused and ensured that the scheme remains relevant to diagnostic services.”
SUPPORT TO UNDERTAKE YOUR GAP ANALYSIS – REVISED TLR TOOL

Ann Pinder, UKAS assessment manager with Adrian Wheal, IT consultant
Anne introduced this session, explaining how the revised web-based traffic light tool (TLR) will work and confirmed that the offline support system will be available for all applicants.

The tool is user-friendly with helpful prompts along the way that confirm what you have input and will prompt you to approve or provide more information. At the end, when you have finished, you get a summary which helps you to see where you are in the process and what else (if anything) you need to do to be ready for assessment.

Adrian then demonstrated the tool ‘live’ in front of the audience, identifying new and familiar features and menus, to prove that the process was now smoother and easier than ever before.

The old tool was robust, he said, but the new standard had provided an opportunity to have a radical rethink in terms of the look and the job the TLR is designed to do.

"This is going to be bigger and better than before."

"We have tried to make the TLR tool responsive to the latest IT developments."

ISAS – KEEPING IMAGING SERVICES MOVING FORWARD AND FUTURE READY

Penny Owens, UKAS technical assessor
Why we absolutely must continue with ISAS, how critical it is, and how exciting the new standard is, was the thrust of Penny’s presentation on the day. Practice has changed out of all recognition she said, and the change has been fast – this means our priorities must be responsive to this change.

Whatever radiography is going to look like in the next 40 years, patient-centred care must be the start, middle and end of the process. Let’s start thinking about how that is going to be delivered, she told the audience.

“There aren’t enough healthcare professionals to go around and it’s hard out there. Therefore, it’s even more important to apply the rigour that ISAS can bring and apply it to practice.”

“We can work together to solve issues and challenges through multi-disciplinary working.”

“We owe it to our patients and ourselves to keep service standards high. We are the vanguard.”

ISAS, A TOOL TO SUPPORT COLLABORATIVE WORKING – CONSORTIUM APPROACH

Penny Storr, EMRAD – East Midlands Radiology Consortium programme director
Penny talked about the ISAS process in terms of EMRAD (East Midlands Radiology), a consortium which aims to share information across the region. What started as purely a sharing of information to make the procurement process more financially economical and efficient, has grown into a huge collaboration between seven trusts in the region.

The trusts have been working towards a shared system to facilitate insourcing and make the most of workforce capacity, with staff, managers, radiologists, clinicians and PACs managers working together to share information in real time.

She explained that while each hospital would have to apply separately, they were working closely together to set up robust parallel processes to make the application mechanism more efficient for each.

“We can work together to solve issues and challenges through multi-disciplinary working.”

“ISAS is going to be bigger and better than before.”

“ISAS is a tool to support collaborative working — consortium approach.”