



# UKAS Accreditation



*A briefing for Commissioners of Healthcare Services*



*Delivering  
Confidence  
in Healthcare*

# Accreditation: Underpinning Quality Healthcare Commissioning

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, both local commissioners (CCGs) and national specialised commissioners in NHS England (NHSE). 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 in healthcare 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 NHS finances continues to build, accreditation is increasingly being seen as an effective way for purchasers to demonstrate that they can achieve ‘more for less’. This is particularly important in the context of the Department of Health (DH) policy which allows services to be commissioned from ‘any qualified provider’ and the increasing diversification of service provision.

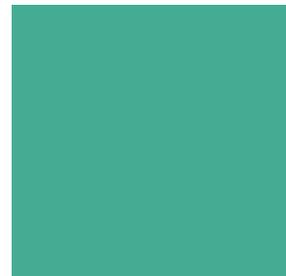


...Despite its non-mandatory status, accreditation is widely used, including by CQC, as a marker for quality of pathology services and there is an expectation in the system that laboratories should achieve this independent seal of approval. ...The new ISO 15189 standard has increased emphasis on continuous improvement...”

**Reference source:** Pathology Quality Assurance Review, Chaired by Dr Ian Barnes, January 2014

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 testing and evaluation of organisations against internationally recognised standards. Under European Regulation (Regulation EC 765/2008), UKAS has been formally appointed as the National Accreditation Body, providing a legal basis for accreditation.

UKAS is becoming increasingly active in the Healthcare sector with a number of schemes approved for use within CQC hospital inspection methodology. Details of areas supported by UKAS accreditation are given in this briefing. When commissioning services in these areas, local and national ‘specialised’ commissioners are advised to specify UKAS accredited services, wherever possible.



## 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 15189:2012 (*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 in 2006.



As Chief Inspector of Hospitals I am developing a model for hospital inspection that is robust, fair, transparent and helpful, playing its part in driving quality improvement. CQC cannot go into every corner of a hospital so we will mainly focus on those areas where patients are likely to be at risk. This means that we need to harness robust and timely information from other sources to provide a more rounded picture of a trust.

**Accreditation and peer review already play an important role in quality improvement in areas such as mental health, diagnostics and cancer and I strongly believe that such schemes have a key role to play in the future of hospital inspection.**

We need to use information from these schemes to feed directly into CQC monitoring processes and the development of trust-specific key lines of enquiry for use at inspections.”

**Professor Sir Mike Richards, CBE,**  
Chief Inspector of Hospitals

## ***Accreditation in Action***

### **Medical Laboratory Accreditation**

Although accreditation is voluntary, the majority of UK clinical pathology laboratories are currently accredited under the Clinical Pathology Accreditation (CPA) scheme, initiated in the 1990's. Development of accreditation of pathology has taken account of Lord Carter of Coles conclusions and recommendations published in his review for the Department of Health in 2008.

The CPA has been a wholly owned subsidiary of UKAS since 2009. UKAS is currently managing the transition of all CPA accredited laboratories to UKAS accreditation against the internationally recognised standard for Medical Laboratories, ISO 15189:2012. Medical laboratory accreditation is recognised by CQC and is approved for use within the CQC hospital inspection methodology.

This move towards international standards will demonstrate that the Laboratories are able to compete on an international scale as UKAS is a full member of the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) and a signatory to Multilateral Mutual Recognition Arrangements, which allow for global acceptance and recognition of accredited test reports.

# Making a difference to public sector delivery

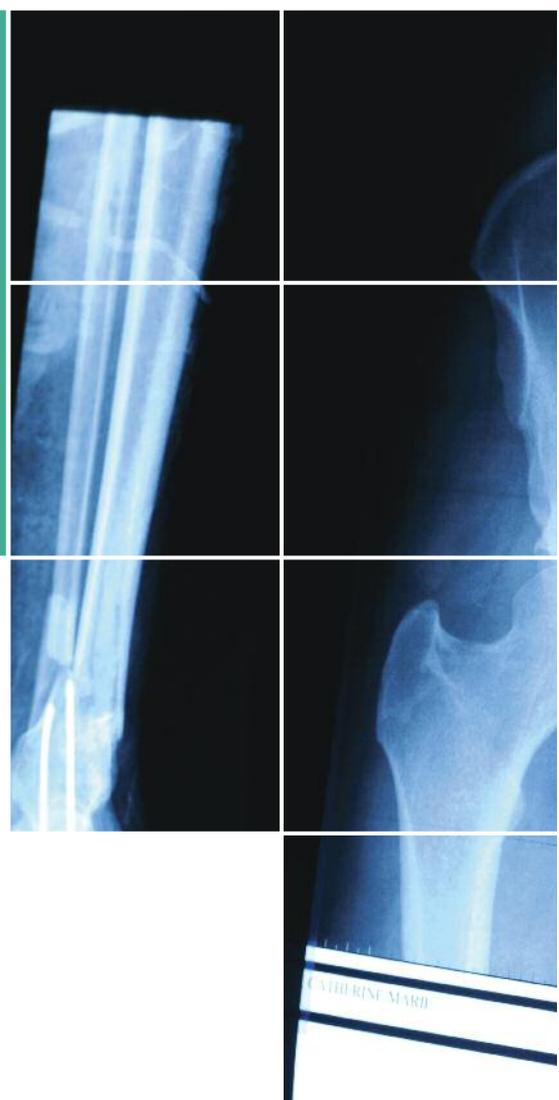
## The benefits of accreditation for Commissioners of healthcare services include:

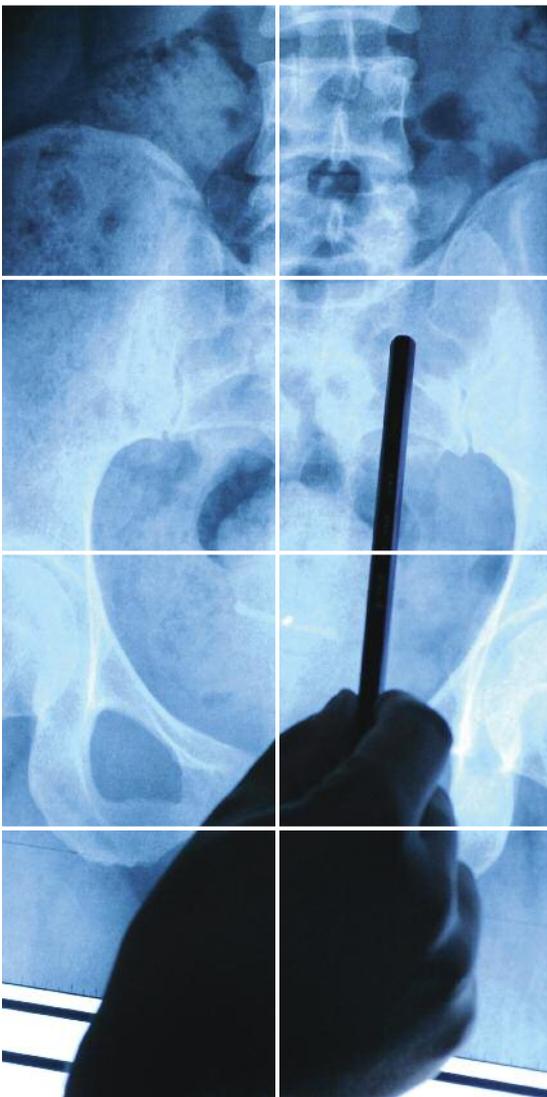
- Providing an independent assurance of quality and safety that supports commissioning decisions to deliver better care and value for patients
- Providing a mechanism for measuring quality improvement
- Supporting consistency in the quality of care.

## 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 professionally
- Accreditation supports a focus on patient safety and high quality of care
- The resources, facilities and workforce are appropriate
- Service delivery is patient-focused
- A Service's standard of performance can be sustained
- Accreditation raises local standards and supports continuous improvement

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 continuous 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.
- **Improved regulation and inspection:** accreditation moderates the need for legislation and can be drawn on to strengthen the existing audit and inspection regimes. The accreditation process contributes to improved regulation and inspection and can generate quality measurement information that is required for Quality Account reporting. This information can then feed into the requirements for CQC registration and rating of services.



...accreditation of services is supported and encouraged by NHS England and the accreditation of scientific and diagnostic services has been identified as an NHS England business plan priority.”

NHS England (NHSE)

## Accreditation in Action

### Diagnostic Imaging

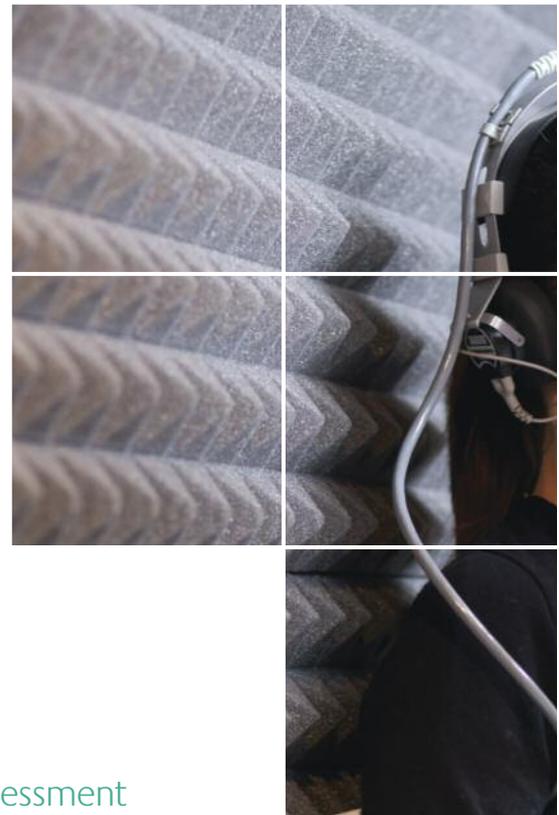
UKAS has been appointed by The College of Radiographers and The Royal College of Radiologists to manage and deliver a UK-wide Imaging Services Accreditation Scheme (ISAS). Under the scheme, jointly developed by the Colleges in collaboration with other health professionals and patients' representatives,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

The scheme focuses on the delivery of high quality care for patients by professional 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 gives formal third-party recognition that an imaging services provider has demonstrated their organisational competence to deliver high quality imaging services. UKAS accreditation provides confidence in the quality and consistency of the imaging services delivered across the health sector. ISAS is recognised by CQC and is approved for use within the CQC hospital inspection methodology.

# Accreditation Standards

UKAS conducts its assessment and accreditation activities in accordance with international standards. Wherever international standards exist that outline the requirements for competence of assessment of healthcare provision, these are used as the basis for accreditation. Where international standards do not exist, UKAS can use 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.

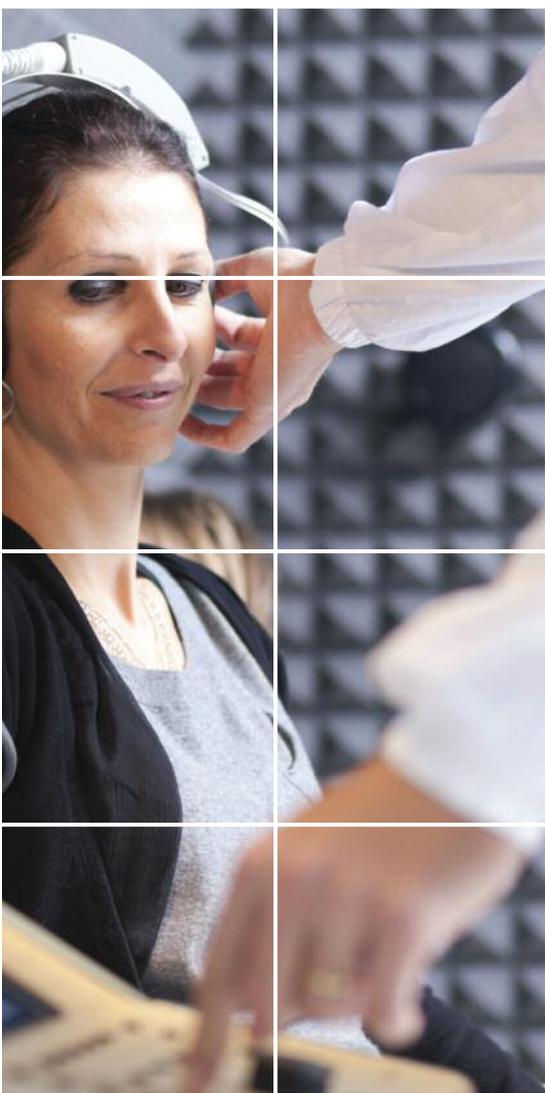


...accreditation schemes are so important. Independent assessment provides an objective view of what is being delivered and the standards and approach of the process itself do an enormous amount to embed a quality culture.”

**Professor Sue Hill OBE**, *Chief Scientific Officer, NHS England*

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



IQIPS puts Physiological Scientific Services at the leading edge of continuous quality improvement and quality assurance in the NHS. It provides a mark of quality for commissioners, providers and users of service with patient quality outcomes at its core.”

**Professor Sue Hill, OBE,**  
Chief Scientific Officer, NHS England

## Accreditation in Action

### Improving quality in Physiological Services (IQIPS)

IQIPS is a professionally led programme hosted by The Royal College of Physicians and delivered and managed by UKAS. The aim of the programme is to improve services, care and safety for patients under-going physiological tests, examinations and procedures. Designed for eight disciplines, the programme offers the benefits of sharing best practice and the opportunity to enhance efficiency with evidence for local leverage.

In addition UKAS accreditation confirms professionally-led clinical governance standards, raises the level of competency, and enhances the credibility of the service amongst patients, professionals and commissioners, providing assurance to those who fund the services. UKAS accreditation also brings national recognition to the service, with a badge of quality. IQIPS is recognised by CQC and is approved for use within the CQC hospital inspection methodology.

## Accreditation in Action

### Inspection of health and social care services

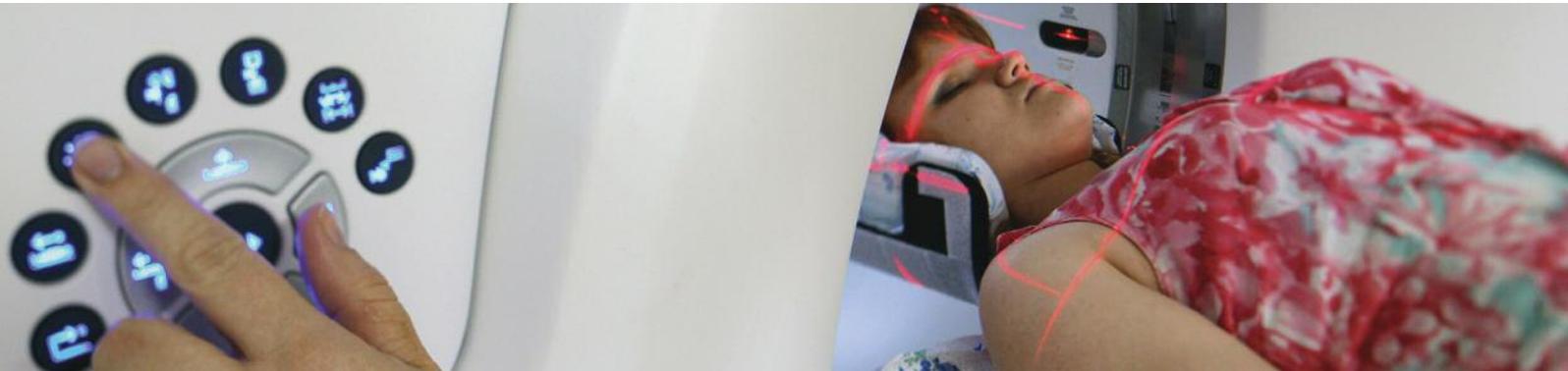
UKAS assess the competence, impartiality and the performance capability of organisations that provide the inspection of residential care homes against the internationally recognised inspection standard ISO/IEC 17020 (*Conformity assessment – Requirements for the operation of various types of bodies performing inspection*). UKAS accreditation delivers confidence in both the quality of the inspection services an organisation provides and the quality of care offered by the residential care homes it inspects.

## Accreditation in Action

### Quality Assurance of Dental Providers

Accreditation to ISO 17065:2012 ensures that patients receive high standards and quality of care in dentistry, which is supportive of current NHS and overall government healthcare objectives.

To find an accredited service visit the UKAS website; <https://www.ukas.com/search-accredited-organisations/> Here you will find details of each organisations specific accredited activities.



## UKAS

The United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) is the UK's national accreditation body appointed by Government to assess, against internationally agreed standards, organisations that provide conformity assessment services such as certification, testing, inspection and calibration.

UKAS is a non-profit-distributing private company, limited by guarantee. It is independent of government but operates under a memorandum of understanding with the government through the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills.

For more information about UKAS please visit <https://www.ukas.com/sectors/healthcare/>

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## UKAS Members

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

### Current members are:

Academy of Medical Royal Colleges

Association of British Certification Bodies

British Measurement and Testing Association

British Retail Consortium

Chartered Quality Institute

Chartered Trading Standards Institute

Confederation of British Industry

Department of Health

Federation of Small Businesses

Food Standards Agency

Health and Safety Executive

Public Health England

Secretary of State for Business Innovation and Skills

Secretary of State for Defence

Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

The Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply

The Safety Assessment Federation

The Science Council

