Programme Specific Operating Model for Quality Assurance of Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening Programmes

Public Health England leads the NHS Screening Programmes
About Public Health England

Public Health England (PHE) exists to protect and improve the nation’s health and wellbeing, and reduce health inequalities. We do this through world-class science, knowledge and intelligence, advocacy, partnerships and the delivery of specialist public health services. We are an executive agency of the Department of Health, and are a distinct delivery organisation with operational autonomy to advise and support government, local authorities and the NHS in a professionally independent manner. Public Health England, Wellington House, 133-155 Waterloo Road, London SE1 8UG Tel: 020 7654 8000 www.gov.uk/phe Twitter: @PHE_uk Facebook: www.facebook.com/PublicHealthEngland

About PHE screening

Screening identifies apparently healthy people who may be at increased risk of a disease or condition, enabling earlier treatment or better informed decisions. National population screening programmes are implemented in the NHS on the advice of the UK National Screening Committee (UK NSC), which makes independent, evidence-based recommendations to ministers in the four UK countries. The Screening Quality Assurance Service ensures programmes are safe and effective by checking that national standards are met. PHE leads the NHS Screening Programmes and hosts the UK NSC secretariat.

www.gov.uk/topic/population-screening-programmes
Twitter: @PHE_Screening Blog: phescreening.blog.gov.uk
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1. Introduction

1.1 This document sets out the programme specific operating model (PSOM) for quality assurance (QA) of the NHS abdominal aortic aneurysm screening programmes and should be read in conjunction with the ‘Operating Model for PHE Screening Quality Assurance Service: 2015/16 to 2017/18’ and the relevant screening quality assurance service (SQAS) generic standard operating procedures documents.

Background

1.2 The QA of NHS screening programmes consists of 2 elements:

- an assurance process - measuring the quality of screening services against a set of agreed standards
- quality improvement activities - to support screening programmes to increase the quality of their services

1.3 SQAS undertake a number of activities to assure and improve the quality of screening services. These include but are not limited to:

- peer review (QA) visits carried out every 3 to 5 years
- production of data reports (monthly/quarterly/annually)
- incident advice and support for investigations
- expert advice and support through regular attendance at screening programme board meetings
- network and educational meetings
- targeted support to providers

1.4 This PSOM has been developed by a working group led by the national portfolio leads for abdominal aortic aneurysm screening and consisting of members from the SQAS teams and external stakeholders. It sets out how SQAS will work with, support and quality assure local abdominal aortic aneurysm screening services.

1.5 All associated processes and documentation have been approved by the SQAS Quality Assurance Executive Group and the Screening Division Strategy Management Group.

Programme description

1.6 The NHS Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) Screening Programme aims to reduce premature deaths from ruptured abdominal aortic aneurysms among men
aged 65 and over by up to 50% through early detection, appropriate follow-on tests and treatment.

Purpose and scope

1.7 The purpose of this operating model is to outline the agreed QA process for abdominal aortic aneurysm screening programmes which should be adhered to by all SQAS staff and any professional and clinical advisors (PCAs) supporting the SQAS team. This will ensure consistency of approach across all screening providers.

The quality assurance process

1.8 The quality assurance process for the SQAS is provided in Appendix A and details:

- the relevant section of the screening pathway to be addressed
- specific activities to be conducted by SQAS staff and PCAs
- the evidence used to inform the QA process
- data and information sources that will be used for quality assurance
- the required frequency at which the QA activities should be carried out
- mapping of the QA activity to standards, key performance indicators (KPIs) or service specifications that detail the requirement
2. Quality assurance activities

Service engagement

2.1 A senior quality assurance advisor (SQAA) / quality assurance advisor (QAA) or deputy will attend programme steering or oversight boards to:

- identify new issues
- monitor progress against recommendations
- monitor other known issues
- support service improvement

Systematic and routine collection and analysis of data

2.2 SQAS will collect and/or review statistics and data on a monthly, quarterly or annual basis. This is described further in chapter 3.

2.3 Services will be benchmarked using national data sets.

2.4 SQAS, representatives of the national abdominal aortic aneurysm screening programme and PCAs (where appropriate) will perform an annual review of data and intelligence at both a national and regional level. This data set will also be used to complete the prioritisation matrix for SQAS activities.

2.5 Further information and intelligence may be collected via forms, submission of an annual questionnaire or attendance at programme steering/oversight boards. This will be supplemented by intelligence gained by SQAS staff in the course of their routine activities and interactions with services and national screening programmes.

Visits and reviews

QA visits

2.6 The frequency of QA visits starting in April 2017 will be based on findings from the prioritisation exercise. In most cases it will lie between 3 and 5 years. The maximum interval for a full visit for all services will be 5 years. This approach of targeting QA resources and visits to services which require support will be kept under review.
2.7 Visit schedules and other QA activities will be decided by assessment against an agreed set of criteria each year. This new approach is designed to align SQAS resource according to services’ needs. SQAS will evaluate this approach and consider the impact on the average visit interval, findings at QA visits and SQAS capacity.

2.8 SQAS may undertake a focussed visit or assessment of any individual discipline or group of disciplines of the screening programme that require more detailed investigation or intervention outside the routine QA visit process. The level of intervention and most appropriate approach will be informed by the prioritisation assessment. A set of principles will be devised linked to a set of QA interventions, to support consistency of this approach. A review of the number, rationale and outcome of non-routine visit interventions will be undertaken as part of the evaluation of QA visit activities.

2.9 Local screening services will be visited in order of implementation unless the prioritisation process indicates an earlier visit is required.

2.10 SQAS will share learning internally and with other relevant local services and commissioners where risks in service delivery are identified that are applicable to more than one service. This is to ensure that information can reach the front line in a rapid manner.

2.11 The QA visit process will include all providers delivering the full or part of the screening pathway. This includes private providers commissioned to deliver NHS screening programmes.

2.12 Abdominal aortic aneurysm QA visits will include elements of vascular and medical imaging services where these impact on national standards or are included as part of the screening programme pathway. For example, waiting times for treatment and ensuring treatment options for screen referred patients are discussed by the multidisciplinary team (MDT).

2.13 Local screening services will complete the QA visit questionnaire and provide the supporting evidence.

2.14 There will be an initial desktop review of the QA visit questionnaire and supporting evidence by the SQAS supported by the QA visit chair.

2.15 The QA visit and review of screening services will cover:

- programme management and governance
- the screening pathway
- referral to relevant diagnostic or treatment services
- timescales to treatment

2.16 QA of public health system leadership and commissioning has been developed and will be rolled out across all programmes from July 2017.

2.17 The visit and review process will be informed by:

- identified datasets by programme
- core evidence submitted and the completed context grid (where applicable)
- ad hoc data identified as required
- specified job descriptions
- specified protocols
- walkthrough of the patient journey where applicable
- Information shared in the professional meetings

**QA visit reports**

2.18 All reports will be addressed to the provider and commissioner(s). The provider may be an NHS trust or private sector organisation.

2.19 The clinical lead and the programme manager are the point of contact for liaising with the provider with respect to the factual accuracy check of the QA reports. They will be responsible for circulating the report to other service leads.

2.20 Recommendations for subcontracted services will be included in the reports for the lead provider.

**Executive summary publication on GOV.UK**

2.21 The chief executive of each organisation involved and the NHS England Director of Commissioning Operations (DCO) or their representative will be asked for their consent to publish the executive summary on GOV.UK. If SQAS do not receive a response, it will be assumed that consent is granted.

2.22 Executive summaries will be published online in accordance with national guidance.

**Reviews**

2.23 Any QA interventions due to ad hoc events such as incidents, identification of poor performance, and so on, may be managed with recommendations or an action plan, similar to those for a QA visit.
Follow-up against recommendations

2.24 Recommendations designed to improve the quality of the service will be made at QA visits.

2.25 The wording of the recommendations will give the context to enable all reviewers, provider management and commissioners to understand the rationale for the recommendation.

2.26 The recommendations will have an associated timescale.

2.27 The provider is responsible for developing an action plan in collaboration with the commissioners to address the recommendations made within the available timeframe.

2.28 The commissioners require assurance that timely action is being taken to address the issues raised. Progress against the action plan should be an agenda item at the Programme Steering or Oversight Board meetings.

2.29 SQAS makes recommendations and states what evidence is required to close the recommendation. The Screening and Immunisation Lead (SIL) is responsible for ensuring that action is taken. It is the responsibility of the provider to send the evidence to the SIL and SQAS to review. SQAS will advise the provider and SIL if the evidence submitted provides assurance that the recommendation has been met.

2.30 SQAS will work with commissioners to monitor activity and progress in response to recommendations. This is for a period of 12 months following the issuing of the final report. This will allow adequate time for at least one response to all recommendations. A letter will then be sent to the provider chief executive and commissioners summarising the progress made and asking for their direct intervention to address any remaining issues.

2.31 Escalation to chief executives and commissioners will occur earlier if serious concerns are identified.

Support with screening safety incidents and serious incidents

2.32 The activity of the SQAS is outlined in PHE’s guidance ‘Managing safety incidents in NHS screening programmes (October 2015)’ and is detailed in PHE Screening Division’s ‘Managing safety incidents in NHS screening programmes standard operating procedure (March 2016)’.
2.33 The national and regional portfolio leads will work together to develop greater consistency in the handling of suspected or confirmed safety incidents and serious incidents.

2.34 SQAS regional teams are to track and record their advice from the reporting of each incident through to closure. SQAS records of active incidents will be reviewed regularly by each regional portfolio lead.

2.35 The national portfolio leads will contribute to producing quarterly detailed thematic reports. They will agree lessons to be shared and national actions with the programme managers. Lessons to be shared will be done in a timely manner appropriate to the incident.

Networking and support

2.36 There are a wide variety of approaches to professional networking support across SQAS. These have received good feedback, showing evidence of value to both SQAS and service representatives.

2.37 Professional meetings are an important forum for SQAS to share information relating to new standards, guidance and programme developments with the relevant professionals. They provide an opportunity to share data, discuss support needs, and enable feedback on products and plans. They help identify quality issues or potential risks which could inform future QA activity.

2.38 The forums are also important to the professionals working within local screening services. They can share issues, identify possible solutions, develop networks that foster resilience and share out tasks such as development of protocols.

2.39 The meetings can also be educational events with input from external speakers or the sharing of local audit information. SQAS will work in conjunction with the national screening programme where applicable to develop joint agenda for these meetings.

2.40 The frequency of these meetings will vary by professional group. There will be a minimum of 3 per year. These will cover staff groups depending on prioritisation and current issues. It is anticipated that these will include some or all of the professional areas below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Network meeting</td>
<td>Annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directors meeting</td>
<td>Twice a year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme managers meeting</td>
<td>Twice a year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technicians meeting</td>
<td>Annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vascular nurse’s event</td>
<td>Annual</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Data and intelligence for quality assurance

3.1 This chapter describes the specific data requirements for the abdominal aortic aneurysm screening programme. General information on the data requirements of the Programme Specific Operating Models can be found in the ‘Programme Specific Operating Model Data & Intelligence Overview’.

Data sources

Screening management and referral tracking

3.2 There is one IT system for abdominal aortic aneurysm screening, Screening Management and Referral Tracking (SMaRT), used by all local screening services. SMaRT is used to collect and manage the operational data. A business analytics tool (Business Objects) is used to provide a snapshot of the underlying database which is used to generate automated reports run monthly and quarterly. The snapshot does not contain any patient identifiable information.

Data analysis

3.3 The abdominal aortic aneurysm SQAS will comply with the national SQAS methodologies.

3.4 SQAS undertakes validation on the data received by SQAS staff through production of SQAS standard operating procedures and/or automated validation processes.

3.5 Data analysis is undertaken by national screening programme data analysts and the national data and information team in the case of KPIs.

3.6 All data is extracted from SMaRT. The pathway standards use percentages. Where incidence rates of aneurysms are presented the rates are per 100,000 men.

Data reporting

3.7 Reporting and analysis will be done once, nationally where possible. Dissemination of data to local services will be done by the local SQAS team.
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Key performance indicators

3.8 KPIs for abdominal aortic aneurysm screening are a subset of screening standards and are identified as part of the section 7a service specification. They focus on areas where important improvements in quality can be made. Once a KPI consistently reaches the achievable level, the KPI is either withdrawn as a KPI and remains as a standard, allowing entry of another KPI or the KPI thresholds are reviewed to promote continuous improvement.

3.9 KPIs are collated and reported quarterly. If numbers are small, aggregate data is reported annually. The information on surveillance patients and the aggregated figures for each KPI are sent by the PHE national team to the local screening services for sign off in line with the published submission guidance. KPIs are published on GOV.UK.

Screening pathway reporting

3.10 There are a variety of reports which local screening services can access. Reports are automatically generated in Business Objects and then made available within SMaRT in Microsoft Excel format.

3.11 Local screening services can only see their own data and a summary of the national data. Reports are run on Tuesdays after the reporting period has ended. For example, the January screener test report is run on 14 February and the January to March pathway standards report is run on 14 April.

3.12 Pathway standards and the waiting times trackers are available quarterly to regional SQAS teams along with a summary file showing trend data by the national screening programmes team. The pathway standards are also published annually on GOV.UK with uptake by local authority included in the Public Health Outcomes Framework tool.

3.13 The current list of outline reports is given in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Report title</th>
<th>Geography</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Screener test</td>
<td>Local screening service National</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinic and appointments</td>
<td>Local screening service National</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pathway standards</td>
<td>Local screening service National</td>
<td>Quarterly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiting times tracker</td>
<td>Local screening service</td>
<td>Quarterly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pathway standards</td>
<td>Local screening service National</td>
<td>Annually</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data sharing

3.14 Routine data sharing activities between PHE Screening and Chief Knowledge Officer directorates are covered by a data sharing agreement, ODR_2014_220b.

3.15 Routine data sharing between PHE Screening and NHS England for all 11 screening programmes is underpinned by the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by both organisations. This MoU extends to any onward sharing to any third party, for example, PHE Centre Directors, providers of screening services, local authority, clinical commissioning groups (CCGs), voluntary organisations and other health professionals using screening data to improve and monitor services. This is for the purpose of improving quality of screening services. The set of data items covered by the MoU is shared prior to publication and for management purposes only. Data flows, schedules and the list of data items shared are managed by the national data and information team.

3.16 Non routine data requests from commissioners and service providers should be discussed with regional SQAS who will consider requests in line with data release principles including, but not limited to, the following questions:

- has the data already been shared via the MoU or available in the public domain?
- is the data likely to support population health improvement?
- is the data likely to improve the quality of screening services?
- what is the level of anonymisation required (open government licence to potentially identifiable and identifiable information)?
- what are the resources and costs required to extract, collate, quality assure and release the data set?

3.17 Regional SQAS will, if necessary, involve programme managers and the national data and information team in the initial discussion of non-routine data requests and seek advice from research committees where appropriate. All requests for personal confidential information will be discussed with the PHE Office for Data Release.

3.18 All data requests and releases will be centrally logged and tracked.
4. The QA visit

Objectives

4.1 The objectives of the QA visit are to:

- examine the performance of the local screening service
- verify achievement of national standards, identify variance from these standards and support professionals working in the local screening service to maintain and improve standards
- gain knowledge and expertise of areas for shared learning and disseminate this to all screening services
- share experiences and understanding of current problems or concerns in NHS abdominal aortic aneurysm screening services and contribute to national development

Requirements

Frequency of visits

4.2 The frequency of QA visits starting in April 2017 will be based on findings from the prioritisation exercise and in most cases will lie between 3 and 5 years. The maximum interval for a full visit for all services will be 5 years. This approach of targeting QA resources and visits to services which require support will be kept under review.

4.3 Visit schedules and other QA activities will be decided each year by an assessment against an agreed set of criteria. This new approach is designed to align SQAS resource according to services’ need. SQAS will evaluate this approach and consider impact on the average visit interval, findings at QA visits and SQAS capacity.

4.4 A desktop review may be completed in between full visits where local screening services are thought to be at risk and timings or reviews may be changed if the service is subject to significant boundary changes or is reprocured and run by a different provider.

4.5 PHE, NHS England and provider organisations will be informed of the proposed schedule of visits.

Membership of visiting team
4.6 The visiting team will be selected by the SQAS.

4.7 The visiting team will be led by the visit chair.

4.8 Members of the team may include the following PCAs:

- clinical lead / director or vascular lead or interventional radiologist (usually also the QA visit chair)
- public health and commissioning
- programme management
- ultrasound clinical lead or vascular scientist or clinical skills trainer

4.9 Members of SQAS:

- senior quality assurance advisor and/or
- quality assurance advisor / quality assurance facilitator (QAF)

4.10 Visiting team members will be asked to declare conflicts of interest before the visit. If this raises concerns about the use of a PCA for a visit, SQAS will take advice within PHE.

4.11 A maximum of 2 observers may also be present at a QA visit, for training and education purposes. The observers will only act in an observational capacity: they will not be involved with providing feedback nor will they have any input into the interviews or decision making processes.

Role of the QA visit chair and QA advisor in QA visits

4.12 The visit chair will normally lead all QA visits with the support of a SQAA or QAA.

4.13 For abdominal aortic aneurysm screening, the visit chair will either be the regional head of quality assurance (RHQA) or head of quality assurance (HQA) who holds the abdominal aortic aneurysm screening portfolio or a PCA who has undergone additional training in order to undertake this role. Where the visit chair is a PCA, this will be their sole role during the visit. They will not be acting in the capacity of a PCA, except in exceptional circumstances agreed in advance.

4.14 The visit chair is responsible for:

- chairing and directing the conduct of the QA visit
- undertaking a desktop review of evidence in conjunction with the SQAA / QAA
- providing considered, consistent feedback on the visit findings
• managing sensitively and appropriately any serious issues or concerns raised prior to or on the day of the QA visit
• facilitating the exchange of knowledge and ideas and encouraging productive networking in order to foster developments in quality

4.15 The SQAA / QAA supporting the visit chair is responsible for:

• ensuring that the local screening services are fully aware of what is required in preparation for the visit
• acting as a point of contact for any queries regarding organising and coordinating the visit
• assembling and managing the visiting QA review team who will be accountable to the visit chair during each visit (up to and including production of the final report)
• ensuring that all PCAs selected have undergone appropriate training
• ensuring collection of evidence to support the visit and that any required observational pre-visits have been completed
• ensuring that adequate preparatory work is undertaken
• supporting the visit chair to assemble feedback during the visit
• ensuring that an accurate, considered report of the visit is issued within an agreed timescale and disseminated to provider chief executives and NHS England / SILs
• ensuring that all agreed recommendations are followed up and monitored or escalated where necessary, within an agreed timescale
• arranging any preliminary meetings between the SQAS and the local screening service as necessary

Skills and experience of visiting QA team

4.16 Members of the visiting QA team will need to demonstrate the following generic skills and training:

• PCAs / QA training course
• report writing
• interview techniques
• public health aspects of screening
• have an understanding of incident identification and management
• analytical skills
• ideally will have observed a QA visit

4.17 Specialist skills required of the individual PCAs are documented in the abdominal aortic aneurysm screening PCA person specification / job description.
Locations to be visited

4.18 The QA visit will assess the entire local screening service including screening sites not located at the main provider unit but will not visit these sites. Assessment of these sites will be undertaken by a QA visit questionnaire, evidence and interviews with staff.

Local screening service personnel attendance

4.19 The personnel from the local screening service who should attend during the visit, depending on service configuration, are:

- programme clinical lead / director
- programme manager / co-ordinator
- clinical skills trainer / provider QA
- screening technicians
- administration staff, including failsafe officers
- specialist nurse
- lead vascular surgeon from each vascular network centre
- senior representative from NHS England public health commissioning teams

Sources of evidence considered as part of QA visits

4.20 The QA report will be built up from a number of sources of evidence. These will be:

- response of the local screening service and commissioner to the pre-visit questionnaires
- supporting evidence and documents submitted to the SQAS for review
- interviews undertaken during the QA visit
- analysis of annual report data and routine data for the preceding 12 month period
- analysis of audit reports

Preparation for a QA visit

4.21 The SQAS will liaise with the local screening service and commissioners to make arrangements for the visit at least 6 months prior to the visit date. A mutually convenient date within a set timeframe will be agreed and a named contact within the local service for visit preparation should be identified. This named contact will be responsible for ensuring that members of the local screening service team are invited and able to attend the visit. The date will not be changed once it is agreed, except in exceptional circumstances, and only with the agreement of both parties.
4.22 The chief executive of the host trust, stakeholding trusts, commissioners, providers of any associated services and treatment providers will be informed by the SQAS that a visit is taking place. They will be invited to attend or send a suitable representative to the summary of the visit feedback session and subsequent discussions as appropriate. For timescales in the QA visit process see Appendix B.

Preliminary meeting between Screening QA Service and the local screening service

4.23 A preliminary meeting between the SQAS and providers or commissioners may take place where applicable. This will vary by programme, for example, SQAS might request to attend the first scheduled local screening programme board meeting or operational group meeting after notification of the visit is made.

4.24 If a local screening programme board or other appropriate meeting has not been set between notification and the day of the visit, the SQAS might ask for one to be organised approximately 3 months before to the visit date.

4.25 A member of the SQAS will attend this meeting to inform the local screening service about arrangements for the visit. This will include arrangements for any observational visits, an outline of the agenda and answering any questions that the local screening service and its stakeholders may have. This will also give the local screening service an opportunity to comment on current progress.

Information to be provided by local screening service

4.26 Local screening services will be asked to provide the following information in preparation for a QA visit:

- action plans from previous QA recommendations (where not already available to SQAS)
- action plans from pre-visit questionnaire or desk top review (where applicable)
- completed pre-visit questionnaire (where applicable)
- supporting documents and protocols as outlined in the pre-visit questionnaire or documentation
- performance reports as requested
- information on any incidents that have occurred in the last 12 to 24 months
- information on venue organisation – where the visit will be held and what rooms have been booked for interviews and feedback sessions
- other relevant information requested by the SQAS
4.27 This information should be provided to the SQAS at least 10 weeks prior to the visit date. There will be no flexibility on extending deadlines for evidence submission unless it enables a reduction in burden for the SQAS. Such cases will be agreed by the visit chair and SQAA / QAA responsible for the visit.

4.28 Evidence provided which is out of date, for example policies or guidelines, will not be assessed but will be used to inform decisions relating to local screening service governance.

4.29 Any request for clarification of evidence or for further evidence from providers should be coordinated by the SQAA / QAA responsible for the visit.

4.30 Any evidence transfer must conform to information governance rules. It must not contain patient identifiable or sensitive information and should be transferred to the SQAS following SQAS information governance protocols.

Review of evidence to inform the visit

4.31 The lead SQAA / QAA will complete the context grid (summary document) where applicable and review the evidence with the visit chair to determine key lines of enquiry (KLOE). At this stage the visit chair and SQAA / QAA will decide which PCAs are required for the visit with support from the RHQA / HQA if necessary.

Standing down of PCAs

4.32 The desktop review process may result in a targeted QA visit which will aim to address the KLOEs identified by the QA visit team. Dependent on the strength of the evidence provided, it may not be essential for all members of the QA review team to attend and undertake interviews on the day of the visit.

4.33 PCAs will be notified at least 8 weeks before the visit date if they are not required to attend the visit. PCAs may be asked to carry out a variety of tasks, including scrutiny of specific elements of evidence, development of KLOEs and telephone interviews.

4.34 The minimum visit team will consist of the visit chair and SQAA / QAA who will meet with the provider executive director responsible for screening, programme clinical lead, programme manager and lead commissioner. A full QA visit will take place where necessary. The lead SQAA / QAA will inform PCAs of any required actions.

Information for the QA visit team
4.35 The SQAS will provide an information pack, usually in electronic format, for the visiting QA team which will include:

- contact details of visiting PCAs
- list of local screening service personnel
- agenda for the visit day (including details of venue and rooms booked)
- overview of the local screening service (context grid where applicable)
- copy of last QA visit report (where applicable)
- all documents submitted by the local screening service
- data relating to performance of the local screening service
- results of annual prioritisation exercise

4.36 The information pack will be sent to the PCAs at least 2 weeks before the date of the visit.

Format of a QA visit

4.37 In some instances, a pre-visit may take place or a case notes, slide and imaging review may be undertaken.

Components of the QA visit

Briefing for visit chair, PCAs and SQAAs / QAAs

4.38 The visiting team will either meet before the day of the QA visit or just before the visit commences. The aims of the briefing meeting are to:

- introduce all members of the QA visit team
- enable the SQAS to provide PCAs with an accurate overview of the core elements of the local screening service prior to the QA visit
- initiate discussions and enable any potential areas of concern to be highlighted prior to the QA visit
- enable triangulation of initial findings from pre-visit evidence review such as KLOEs generated by the PCAs and SQAS
- ensure that all members of the visiting QA team are aware of their roles and responsibilities for the QA visit

Introductions between the visiting team and the local screening service staff

4.39 Members of the visiting QA team and SQAS representatives will introduce themselves to the local screening service on the day of the visit.
A short presentation from the clinical lead about the local screening service’s achievements

4.40 The clinical lead or designated representative will be asked to give a short 10-15 minute presentation giving a brief overview or description of the service, including:

- changes since the last visit
- activity
- achievements
- any challenges or particular issues

Individual interviews between each PCA and the local screening service representative for that profession

4.41 Each PCA member of the visiting QA team will ideally meet their professional counterpart(s) in the local screening service. This will be a structured interview to assess adherence to national minimum standards, professional performance and the relationship between the different components of the local screening service.

4.42 The PCA should summarise the discussion, feedback main issues and check for mutual understanding at the end of the interview.

Discussion by the visiting QA team of findings and preparation of feedback session

4.43 The visiting QA team will meet to discuss outcomes of individual interviews and amalgamate their findings. They will focus on areas of risk, recommendations and shared learning. Findings will be summarised and this may take the form of a presentation.

Feedback session

4.44 The feedback on the day will be given in 2 sessions.

4.45 The visit chair and SQAA / QAA will meet with the provider chief executives and NHS England DCO team representative, for example, SIL, to give a verbal summary of risks, high level findings and recommendations. This session may also be used to raise concerns regarding performance of an individual, or concerns for patient safety where it would not be appropriate to report these findings to a wide audience.

4.46 This session will usually, but not always, take place prior to the main feedback session and it is anticipated that this will last no longer than 15 minutes.
4.47 The main feedback session will consist of a short presentation by the visit chair of the main findings and recommendations to all local screening service staff and some stakeholders. All those interviewed should be invited to the main feedback session.

4.48 Senior management representatives of the provider trust, chief executives, CCG representatives (where applicable), NHS England DCO team representatives and other stakeholders identified by the local screening service will also be invited to attend this session. Directors of public health or their nominated representative can be invited to attend by the DCO team.

4.49 The feedback session will highlight:

- areas for shared learning
- risks
- recommendations
- intention to publish the report executive summary on an external facing website 8 weeks following the production of the final QA report

4.50 It is anticipated that this feedback session will take no longer than 30 minutes.

4.51 Where immediate concerns related to safety are raised, a letter from the RHQA or HQA outlining the main concerns and corresponding remedial actions will be sent to the chief executive of the provider organisation and the lead commissioner within 2 working days. The letter will be copied to the RHQA (where applicable) and to the National Lead, Screening QA Service. The national programme managers will be informed where applicable.

Feedback from local screening service provider on QA visit

4.52 Local screening services will be asked to complete a feedback questionnaire after the QA visit in order to evaluate the visit process and provide feedback for the SQAS as part of its ongoing review process.

Written report and follow-up

4.53 Each member of the visiting QA team will submit to the SQAA / QAA a summary of their findings. It is expected that these summaries will be available to the SQAA / QAA within one week of the visit (or earlier as agreed). It is the responsibility of the lead SQAA / QAA to produce a draft report for factual accuracy checking by the local screening service and commissioners within 20 working days of the visit. Day 1 is the first working day after the visit takes place.
4.54 The final report will be completed within 8 weeks of the visit.

4.55 The QA visit report will:

- be completed using the agreed report template and associated headings
- use plain, clear English in line with the PHE style guide
- include summary descriptions of local screening service organisation and leadership arrangements
- comment on the adequacy of resource, accommodation, and equipment to meet national standards
- identify areas of shared learning
- identify variance from national standards as a centre and within specialties
- identify strengths and weaknesses within the local screening service
- make structured recommendations to address issues identified

Circulation of the report

4.56 A copy of the report will be sent to:

- provider chief executive(s)
- NHS England DCO team representative, for example SIL and the Head of Public Health Commissioning (HOPHC)

4.57 The report will be sent via email and will be copied to the clinical lead and programme manager.

4.58 The chief executive and SIL will be asked to disseminate to relevant colleagues including those in the local health economy with a responsibility for screening services and relevant colleagues in public health centres. Details of where the executive summary will be published will be included in the correspondence.

4.59 The executive summary of the QA report will be published on the GOV.UK website 8 weeks after the final report is issued (16 weeks after the visits) with consent from the local screening service provider and NHS England commissioners. The provider may choose to submit an action plan with progress at this time and if so, details of where the action plan can be found will be provided.

4.60 Where consent is not given by the provider, the provider’s name and the date of the visit will be published instead with an acknowledgement that a visit took place and consent to publish the executive summary was declined. A similar note will be placed on the website if NHS England commissioners declined publication.
4.61 Provider and commissioning organisations should note that the full report can be requested by a member of the public using a Freedom of Information request and may be released by PHE if requested.

Development of the action plan

4.62 SQAS will support the providers and commissioner through the action planning process. Each provider and NHS England DCO team will have a named SQAA / QAA.

4.63 The QA process should identify whether providers have met the nationally agreed programme standards and any statutory guidance or guidelines and should state the evidence used to assess how the judgement about quality was made.

4.64 The SQAS will write recommendations from which action plans can be developed. The evidence required to show that an action has been completed will be stated as part of the recommendations.

4.65 A criteria for closure will be included detailing exactly what action or documentation is required to show that an action has been satisfactorily implemented.

4.66 Timescales for the recommendations should be specific, with dates for completion clearly stipulated.

4.67 It is the responsibility of the NHS England DCO team’s SIL (the commissioner) to ensure that the recommendations made in the QA visit report are implemented. This will be done in conjunction with the provider.

4.68 An action plan should be developed by the local screening service within 4 weeks of receiving the final report, which is agreed with the SIL or HOPHC. It is good practice for this to be submitted to the next local screening programme board or equivalent governance structure within 3 months of the visit.

4.69 The SIL will ensure that progress against the action plan is maintained using relevant commissioner oversight mechanisms and levers, with SQAS kept informed via local programme / oversight boards and direct contact with the providers and commissioners.

4.70 SQAS will work with commissioners to monitor activity and progress in response to recommendations. This is for a period of 12 months following the issuing of the final report. This will allow adequate time for at least one response to all
recommendations. A letter will then be sent to the provider chief executive and commissioners summarising the progress made and asking for their direct intervention to address any remaining issues.

**Escalation process**

4.71 Failure to undertake recommended actions will necessitate appropriate escalation by SQAS if progress is not being made. This will initially be through the local screening programme board or equivalent governance structure and NHS England DCO team.
5. Training and development

5.1 All staff taking part in QA activity should undertake training related to the role. The training requirements for professional and clinical advisors are set out in the relevant job descriptions / role outlines which are available from the SQAS team.

Continuous improvement

5.2 We are committed to improving our processes and measuring the impact of QA and as such we request feedback from local screening services and providers on all aspects of the QA process and visit. Any feedback received will be shared as appropriate in relevant forums, or individually where applicable, to improve the QA process.
Appendix A: The quality assurance process

Details of the process described below are in development and will be reviewed.

SQAS activity key:

- Black: provider function reviewed by SQAS
- Pink: public health system leadership and commissioning function (please refer to pre visit questionnaire for complete list of functions for peer review)
- Green: under development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pathway Element: Call &amp; Recall</th>
<th>SQAS Activities</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Cohort identified and imported into SMaRT</td>
<td></td>
<td>Annual</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pathway Element: Identifying Cohort</th>
<th>SQAS Activities</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Cleansing of lists</td>
<td>Internal QA process to be checked/verified at QA visits and breaches reported to Programme Boards/incident reporting</td>
<td>1. Annually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. GP lists</td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Annually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Failsafe</td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Annually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Prisons</td>
<td></td>
<td>4. Annually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Transgender patients</td>
<td></td>
<td>5. Annually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Information Governance</td>
<td></td>
<td>6. At visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Ceasing</td>
<td></td>
<td>7. At visits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Programme Specific Operating Model for Quality Assurance of Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening Programmes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pathway Element: Invitation, reminders &amp; results</th>
<th>SQAS Activities</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Letters to men (invitations, DNA letters (1st and 2nd)) and recall following non-visualisation & non-attendance of such, and any potential recalls following QA of scans, using approved national leaflets | 1. Check correct leaflets are used, easy read and alternative language versions in use.  
2. Monitor quarterly standard reports and KPI data provided to PHE; discussed at programme boards | 1. At visits/on going  
2. At visits/quarterly |
| 2. Coverage | | |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pathway Element: Primary Screening</th>
<th>SQAS Activities</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Training of staff: basic and update | 1. Reported at programme board and reviewed as part of QA visit process  
2. Reported through incident reporting  
3. Annual ceasing audit; reported in quarterly figures  
4. Programme board information of any concerns with individuals and steps taken to resolve, i.e. additional training. Quarterly reports. Patient safety incident reporting  
5. Check at QA visit to ensure system is effective and meets governance/IT policy. Failsafe processes reviewed to ensure images transferred match correct patient.  
6. Programme board should be informed of promotional events, also quarterly and annual coverage rates from national figures  
7. Workforce numbers assessed at QA visit. Review of alerts in SMaRT. Future development for Technician performance | 1. At visits and Programme Board  
2. Ad-hoc and at visits  
3. Quarterly  
4. Quarterly or more often if issues occur  
5. At visits  
6. Quarterly and at visits  
7. At visits  
8. 3-5 years  
9. Quarterly and at visits (TBC)  
10. At visits 11. At visits |
| 2. Checking of ID/consent of patient | | |
| 3. Eligibility for screening | | |
| 4. Local QA of image quality and measurement accuracy | | |
| 5. Security of images, reconciliation and downloading at base | | |
| 6. Health promotion / coverage / inequalities / equitable access | | |
| 7. Minimum individual staff workloads | | |
| 8. QA participation | | |
| 9. Internal QA measures | | |
| 10. Results to GP practices in timely | | |
### Programme Specific Operating Model for Quality Assurance of Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening Programmes

**Pathway Element: Primary Screening**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SQAS Activities</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8. Local service to participate in four-year visit cycle</td>
<td>12. At programme board and at visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. <strong>Work-up audit schedule based on alerts, incidental findings</strong> (what is timely?)</td>
<td>13. Programme board and visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Review of audit activity assessed at QA visit</td>
<td>14. At visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Internal QA processes to monitor timely referral into Medical Imaging <strong>Need to feed into national standards work</strong> (development)</td>
<td>15. Quarterly reports, Programme board visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Quarterly report as per national QA standard activity</td>
<td>16. At visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Monitoring through KPI surveillance. Review of alerts in SMaRT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Assessed at QA visit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Quarterly standards report as per national QA standard activity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Review of MDT minutes as part of QA visit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Pathway Element: Screening test reporting**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SQAS Activities</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Identified Programme Co-ordinator/Manager with JD</td>
<td>1. QA visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Identified CST/QA staff with identified time and JD</td>
<td>2. QA visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Identified clinical lead/director with JD and identified time</td>
<td>3. QA visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Sufficient screening staff</td>
<td>4. QA visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Identified nurse with JD and identified time</td>
<td>5. QA visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Lines of accountability</td>
<td>6. QA visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Organisational chart for the screening service</td>
<td>7. QA visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5 Use of national guidance for WTE versus cohort numbers. Review as part of QA visit process</td>
<td>8. QA visit and on-going</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Reviewed as part of QA visit</td>
<td>9. QA visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Reviewed as part of QA visit</td>
<td>10. QA visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Discussed at Programme Board and via contract meetings as part of service Spec delivery. QA visit and on-going data monitoring/Annual Quality Review and risk prioritisation process</td>
<td>11. QA visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Reviewed as part of QA visit and via incident manager</td>
<td>12. Ad hoc and reviewed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. QA visit, incident management (ad hoc)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Ad hoc reporting via Programme Board and QA visits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pathway Element: Screening test reporting</td>
<td>SQAS Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Risk assessment and management</td>
<td>12. Appropriate management and reporting of incidents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Business continuity and succession plans</td>
<td>13. Assessed as part of QA visit (user experience). Local screening service should be assessing via regular patient user surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Clinical governance, escalation processes and integration into Trust systems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Equipment replacement and maintenance/testing programmes (phantom use frequency?)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Management of Serious Incidents/patient safety incidents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Complaints and compliments received, results of patient/user surveys, audit and feedback mechanisms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix B: Timescales in the QA visit process

**Key:**
- **Red text:** visit process milestones

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time (weeks)</th>
<th>Process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>Prioritisation of visits takes place following discussion with national screening programme and review of annual quality reports.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-26</td>
<td>Chief executive notified of visit date following negotiation with local screening service, provider and commissioner. Service copied into notification which includes information on intent to publish executive summary</td>
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<tr>
<td>-26 to -21</td>
<td>Inform local service and stakeholders with:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- letter(s)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- QA guidance document</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- evidence list</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-26 to -16</td>
<td>Lead SQAA / QAA attends programme board or bespoke meeting to deliver presentation and undertake familiarisation visit (if necessary)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-12</td>
<td>Reminder to screening service of evidence deadline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-10</td>
<td>Local service submit questionnaire and evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-9</td>
<td>SQAA / QAA updates questionnaire with additional information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-8</td>
<td>SQAA / QAA and QA visit chair undertake initial desk top review of evidence to determine preliminary KLOE (support from National Screening Programmes Data and Information Manager for context grid, for example, ONS population estimates and ethnicity population estimates)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-8</td>
<td>SQAA / QAA, RHQA / HQA and QA visit chair utilise any PCAs required to define the visit agenda, for instance:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- PCAs may not be needed and therefore stood down</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- PCAs may be asked to scrutinise specific elements of evidence</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- PCAS may support refinement of KLOEs</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- PCAs may conduct telephone interviews to clarify areas</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- further evidence may be requested where not clear (1 week turnaround only)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- PCAs informed of requirements</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time (weeks)</td>
<td>Process</td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-6</td>
<td>Information pack sent by SQAA / QAA to PCAs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| -6           | Local service and stakeholders sent visit agenda. If  
|               | - minimum visit – SQAA / QAA and QA visit chair meet with  
|               |   programme manager, clinical lead / director and lead  
|               |     commissioner (other PCAs stood-down)  
|               | - maximum visit – full QA visit |
| 0            | SQAA / QAA, QA visit chair and PCAs meet for evening pre-visit  
|               | meeting |
| 0            | **VISIT DAY. Includes verbal feedback on main QA visit findings** |
| +1           | Visit team submit notes to SQAA / QAA |
| +1 to +3     | SQAA / QAA writes draft report and submits to RHQA and visiting team  
|               | for factual accuracy checking |
| +3 to +4     | Telecon between SQAA / QAA and RHQA to review draft report (if  
|               | necessary) |
| +4           | Draft report and consent to publish executive summary on website  
|               | issued to interviewees and local service, cc’d to provider chief  
|               | executive |
| +6           | Local service to return feedback to SQAA / QAA on factual accuracy |
| +6 to +7     | SQAA / QAA completes response template with any comments in  
|               | response to factual accuracy from the local screening service and  
|               | interviewees |
| +7 to +8     | Report sent to senior administrator for sense checking prior to issuing  
|               | |
| +8           | SQAA / QAA issues final report to provider chief executive, local  
|               | service and stakeholders |
| +8           | SQAA / QAA updates national KPI report tracker/MARVIN  
|               | SQAA / QAA uploads final ‘pdf’ visit report to national shared drive |
| +14          | Local screening service action plan to be submitted to Screening and  
|               | Immunisation Team and SQAA / QAA (4 weeks after report is finalised)  
|               | |
| +16          | Executive summary published |