

Job description

Job title:	Clinical Director, National Cancer Audit Collaborating Centre (NATCAN)
Grade:	Clinical Consultant scale, 2 PA
Department:	National Cancer Audit Collaborating Centre (NATCAN), based in the Clinical Effectiveness Unit (CEU)
Responsible for:	Strategic clinical leadership and oversight
Accountability and Relationships:	Member of NATCAN Executive Team, which is accountable to NATCAN Board Works collaboratively with the Director of Operations as a key leadership partner to ensure integration of clinical priorities with operational delivery Reports to: Director of the CEU

Job summary

The Clinical Director position provides a unique opportunity to shape a national centre of excellence dedicated to strengthening NHS cancer services and reducing variation in care. The role is based at the National Cancer Audit Collaborating Centre (NATCAN) within the Clinical Effectiveness Unit (CEU), jointly run by the Royal College of Surgeons of England (RCS England) and the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM).

The Clinical Director is a member of NATCAN's Executive Team (with Prof David Cromwell, Director of the CEU, Dr Julie Nossiter, Director of Operations, Prof Kate Walker, Senior Statistician, and Prof Jan van der Meulen, Senior Epidemiologist). NATCAN delivers a programme of 10 national cancer audits, which undertake activities to support benchmarking and the improvement of cancer services, and encompasses a portfolio of development activities that aim to strengthen the audits' methodological robustness and clinical relevance.

The Clinical Director plays an important role in ensuring NATCAN translates NHS cancer priorities into strategies related to performance assessment, outlier detection, the use of national data sources, and quality improvement activities. The ideal candidate will have extensive experience and expertise in all these areas at a national and international level. The Clinical Director helps NATCAN respond to changes in cancer service delivery, with an effective communication strategy that ensures the cancer audits remain clinically relevant and impactful.

The Clinical Director acts as an ambassador for NATCAN, supporting dialogue with the wider NHS cancer care community and with NHS commissioners and providers, especially in the context of performance assessment and quality improvement. The successful candidate will be familiar with the existing national quality improvement landscape and will identify opportunities to improve collaboration and avoid duplication.



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The Clinical Director supports the Clinical Leads of NATCAN audits so that each cancer audit benefits as much as possible from the “critical mass” of expertise available within NATCAN, and consistently implements Centre strategy and policy whilst recognising the specific clinical requirements and circumstances within each audit.

The Clinical Director works with other members of NATCAN’s Executive Team to support the portfolio of NATCAN’s developmental activities, ensuring the clinical perspective is represented at the highest level within the Centre, and liaising with the Clinical Leads within NATCAN.

Specific duties and responsibilities:

1. Strategic Clinical Leadership

- As a member of NATCAN’s Executive Team, contribute to the strategic direction of NATCAN ensuring the Centre priorities reflect developments in cancer policy and service delivery
- Provide expert clinical perspective on the translation of NHS cancer policy into Centre strategies and goals, related to performance assessment, quality improvement goals, outlier management, and the use of national data sources.
- Provide senior clinical input into NATCAN developmental activities, advising on clinical relevance, feasibility, and impact

2. Cross-audit Clinical Coherence and Governance

- Support and advise audit Clinical Leads on the consistent implementation of centre-wide strategy, policies, and clinical standards
- Provide expert clinical perspective on NATCAN audit outputs, recommendations and dissemination activities in relation to their clinical relevance and likely impact
- Contribute to maintaining a coherent centre-wide approach to the interpretation of audit findings, the management of outliers, and the publication and communication of results
- Review strategic issues, emerging risks, and opportunities to support improvement of cancer services.
- Facilitate cross-audit learning through monthly meetings with the internal NATCAN team (staff employed by the RCS England and LSHTM), regular meetings with the Audit Clinical Leads and annual cross-NATCAN face-to-face events.



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3. External representation and stakeholder engagement

- Contribute an expert clinical perspective to NATCAN's communication strategy and individual centre-level communications with the NHS clinical cancer care community, commissioners, cancer charities and patients
- Liaise with professional bodies with respect to centre-level issues, with the aim of enhancing links with relevant clinical communities
- Represent NATCAN on relevant national bodies and structures
- Maintaining the confidence and trust of all relevant stakeholders, especially the clinical communities, in the relevance and robustness of NATCAN's outputs

4. Quality improvement and impact

- Contribute an expert clinical perspective on refining the framework for NATCAN's quality improvement activities, ensuring each NATCAN audit benefits from the expertise within NATCAN, the CEU and RCS England, and external QI experts.
- Support the delivery of an effective 'closing the audit loop' strategy at a national level, through "enhanced audit and feedback" mechanisms which promote the clinical interpretation of audits findings and support local quality improvement.
- Communicate QI lessons from the audits to professional bodies and other national stakeholders that promote clinical audit and quality improvement.

5. Other

- Be available for the mentoring of NATCAN Clinical Fellows as required.
- Contribute to other occasional duties within NATCAN, for example, but not exclusively, staff development

This job description will be subject to review in the light of changing circumstances and may include other duties and responsibilities as may be determined. It is not intended to be rigid or inflexible but should be regarded as providing guidelines within which the individual works.

March 2026



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Person specification

	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fellowship of a relevant Royal College 	
Experience and skills including technical competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A national clinical profile in the area of cancer services A proven national leadership role in cancer care quality improvement Extensive experience in developing and implementing novel approaches for the performance assessment of cancer services at national level Evidence of a leadership role in multidisciplinary teams at national level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of relevant publications in the area of healthcare performance assessment and quality improvement at national level. Extensive research output, including peer-reviewed publications Evidence of a detailed understanding of analysing large electronic datasets Strong understanding of epidemiological and statistical methodologies relevant for healthcare performance assessment
People and interpersonal skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excellent verbal and written communication skills at national and international level Outstanding organisational skills Demonstrable leadership skills within and outside the health service. 	



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The post holder will also need to demonstrate the following values:

Collaboration	We embrace our collective responsibilities working collaboratively and as one college.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We work together, using our collective expertise and experience to effect positive change • We are open, honest and transparent, straightforward in our language and actions, acting with sincerity and delivering on our commitments • We take our responsibilities to each other, to patient care and to the environment seriously and we act with this in mind across our work
Respect	We value every person we come into contact with at the College as an individual, respect their aspirations and commitments in life, and seek to understand and meet their physical and wellbeing needs.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We treat everyone we meet with kindness and integrity and we seek to promote these behaviours in others • We actively seek a range of views and experiences across our work, and we listen to, and make everyone feel, a valued part of the team
Excellence	We aspire to excellence and success. We share learning from our experiences, apply feedback into practice, and commit to continual improvement.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We work hard to be the best at what we do, recognising and celebrating effort and achievement, and reflecting on our work, so we can learn and improve • We value and invest in research, education and training to drive excellence and put improvements in surgical practice, dentistry and patient care at the heart of our work • We always seek to learn and discover more, valuing knowledge and scientific evidence, basing our decisions on insights, fact and experience

The Royal College of Surgeons of England is an Equal Opportunities Employer. We are open to all talent and we actively ensure that all qualified applicants will receive equal consideration for employment without regards to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.



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About the National Cancer Audit Collaborating Centre (NATCAN)

National Cancer Audit Collaborating Centre

Evaluating and where necessary improving the treatment for cancer patients is a key priority for the NHS Cancer Programme, and the Quality Statement for Cancer Wales. The Healthcare Quality Improvement Partnership, on behalf of NHS England and the Welsh Government, has commissioned the development and establishment of a new centre of excellence for national cancer audits.

[NATCAN](#) is part of the National Clinical Audit and Patient Outcomes Programme (NCAPOP). NATCAN is home to all ten national cancer audits. This includes new audits in breast cancer (primary and metastatic), ovarian, pancreatic, non-Hodgkin lymphoma and kidney cancer. In addition, this includes existing clinical audits in prostate, lung, gastro-oesophageal and bowel cancer. These audits have helped to identify and address variations in cancer care across England and Wales and improve outcomes for patients. They have also promoted quality improvement initiatives within NHS cancer services and identified best practice.

NATCAN aims to:

1. Provide regular and timely evidence to cancer services of where patterns of care in England and Wales vary.
2. Support NHS services to identify the reasons for the variation in care in order to guide quality improvement initiatives.
3. Stimulate improvements in cancer detection, treatment and outcomes including survival.

[NATCAN](#) began on the 1 October 2022 in the CEU, a collaboration between the RCSEng and LSHTM. NATCAN collaborates closely with professional groups, clinicians and patient charities to ensure that all relevant stakeholders inform the quality improvement goals of each audit. NATCAN has approximately 45 staff from a range of disciplines including statistics, data science, health services research, epidemiology, healthcare quality improvement and clinical audit management. It is led by Dr Julie Nossiter, Director of Operations, NATCAN; Prof David Cromwell, Director of the CEU and Professor of Health Services Research, LSHTM; Prof Kate Walker, Professor of Medical Statistics, LSHTM; and Prof Jan van der Meulen, Professor of Clinical Epidemiology, LSHTM.

NATCAN is a key source of information that supports various quality assessment and improvement activities, both at a local level (by NHS trusts and boards, Cancer Alliances, Integrated care Systems) and at a national level (e.g., CQC inspection and regulatory work). The activities of NATCAN and the individual audits drive quality improvement across the country aiming to help cancer services reach the highest standards possible.



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About the Clinical Effectiveness Unit

The [CEU](#) is a collaboration between Royal College of Surgeons of England (RCS England) and the Department of Health Services Research & Policy of the LSHTM.

The work of the CEU involves carrying out national clinical audits, developing audit methodologies and producing evidence on clinical and cost effectiveness. The CEU currently delivers cancer audits in prostate, lung, bowel, oesophageal and stomach cancer, and recently completed an audit of breast cancer in older patients. These audits have helped to identify and address variations in cancer care across England and Wales, and improve outcomes for patients. They have also promoted quality improvement initiatives within NHS cancer services and identified best practice.

An essential element of the CEU's strategy is that it considers audit projects as *epidemiological studies* of the quality of hospital care. Epidemiological methods are used to generate high quality evidence on the *processes* and *outcomes* of hospital care as well as on their *determinants*. Another important feature of the CEU's strategy is the emphasis it gives to joint clinical and methodological leadership.

The CEU has 50 staff members, of whom 12 are academic staff members of the LSHTM. The background of the staff demonstrates the multidisciplinary character of the Unit (medicine, health services research, medical statistics, epidemiology and public health). The Unit's Director is Professor David Cromwell.



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