



# QSI accreditation at multiple sites for Alliance Medical

Alliance Medical has achieved UKAS accreditation against the QSI standard across 48 imaging sites in the UK, covering MRI, CT, PET-CT and radiography modalities in both static and mobile units.

Spokesperson for Alliance Medical, Derrian Mercieca, director of quality and risk, said: "We recognised the benefits of gaining a quality mark for our services, to demonstrate our standards to commissioners and service users and felt that QSI accreditation was the most appropriate because it is very specific to diagnostic imaging."

A radiographer-led team was set up to oversee and lead the project, directed by Derrian and led by Sarah Hudson, quality and risk (Q&R) manager, and assisted by Cordelia Wilson, Q&R assessor (who led on the initial self-assessment work), and Sally Lewis, Q&R assessor. Having a team comprised of radiographers worked well for Alliance because they assisted the units with hands-on experience.

## Challenges and opportunities

Alliance Medical provides imaging services to circa 500,000 patients annually in the UK. Ensuring that each of the 48 sites know about the standard and were compliant was a challenge. However, the team believes that applying for accreditation of multiple sites almost made it easier because it required standardisation across units.

"Within Alliance Medical, we undertake a



Left to right Pravin Suryawanshi, senior radiographer, Somerset MRI; Sally Lewis, quality and risk assessor; Sarah Hudson, quality and risk manager; Ann Pinder, QSI assessment manager, UKAS; and Anna Zelezniak, clinical assistant, Somerset MRI.



minimum of an annual Quality Assurance Review (QAR) of each of our sites. The tool used to support these reviews was updated to ensure it covered the QSI standard. It was then used when visiting and assessing every site. Trending and learning from these visits enabled us to share learning across all our facilities," Derrian said.

Unit manager meetings were also used to share the message and learning nationally, and provided a forum for the managers to discuss local challenges in their units, their approach to various aspects of the project and then share processes.

"Having submitted documentation electronically for the assessment team to review, UKAS on site assessments were undertaken over six-weeks, using assessors from all over England. Detailed planning of the sites to be visited was required, to ensure a good cross section of our services. The plan for assessment visits of our mobile services was a challenge because last minute changes to the rota could mean that the mobile scanner was not parked where we were expecting it to be but close liaison with the logistics team guided us to the correct location," Derrian added.

The assessment visits covered the head office in Warwick to review the company's overarching documentation and central processes, as well as mobile and static sites. Senior management personnel and the medical director were interviewed. The assessors also spent time with remote reporters, including in their home environments.

The assessment did identify areas where the standard was not met and additional work was needed to ensure compliance across all units. These were managed closely to ensure evidence was provided to UKAS and changes were embedded in practice.



## The Imaging Services Accreditation Scheme - QSI

The Royal College of Radiologists and College of Radiographers have developed the Imaging Services accreditation Scheme (QSI) to support diagnostic imaging services to manage the quality of their services and make continuous improvements; ensuring that their patients consistently receive high quality services delivered by competent staff working in safe environments.

Accreditation to Professional Standards is supported by the CQC, NHS England, NHS Northern Ireland and NHS Wales.

"All staff quickly understood what we were wanting to achieve and how UKAS accreditation would benefit our patients, stakeholders and ultimately ourselves. Many of the units were already compliant with the standard but perhaps weren't evidencing it appropriately," Derrian said.

### Action points

- A self-assessment gap analysis against the standards was undertaken
- The intranet was used to streamline document management
- The role of QSI champions was established across the sites
- Additional audits were undertaken to allow measurement of processes and aid quality improvement.
- A standard site file template across static DI sites was introduced

The support of the board to introduce the changes required has been key, says the team. They have released funding to ensure compliance to the standard as needed, including full funding of a new intranet site.

Going forward, Alliance plans to continue to improve and prepare for future assessments, to retain QSI accreditation, and is now considering applying for accreditation for the company's two central London sites.

"Displaying the QSI accredited service mark gives patients reassurance that we focus on quality," Derrian said.

"It helps our staff to be focussed on ongoing improvement, knowing that we will undergo continuous assessment visits."

Ann Pinder, UKAS assessment manager, said, "Congratulations to all the imaging staff at Alliance Medical for achieving UKAS accreditation for QSI services. Accreditation is a proven mechanism for delivering safe, accountable and sustainable services that offer value for money. Accreditation to the QSI standard provides confidence to patients, imaging professionals and commissioners that the highest standards of care are available."

Ann continued, "Accreditation to the QSI standard can demonstrate to the Care Quality Commission that patients consistently receive high quality services, delivered by competent staff working in safe environments. The CQC recognise and endorse accreditation for diagnostic services in the hospital inspection methodology."

For more information about Alliance Medical visit <https://www.alliancemedical.co.uk/>



## UKAS

UKAS accreditation gives formal third-party recognition that an imaging services provider has demonstrated their organisational competence to deliver high quality imaging services.

Visit the QSI website to find out more, including information about organisations accredited so far, workshops to help services prepare for QSI accreditation, and becoming a QSI assessor.