



CLAIRE PALMER

## Clinical Governance Support Service

The Clinical Governance Support Service (CGSS) was launched in February 1999 following an overwhelming response by mental health and learning disability services to the Royal College of Psychiatrists' Research Unit's experimental proposal to establish a support service for clinical governance.

The CGSS collaborators include the Centre for Evidence-Based Mental Health, the British Association of Medical Managers, the NHS Confederation and the Association for Quality in Healthcare. The CGSS also works closely with colleagues at other professional bodies, including the Royal College of Nursing, College of Occupational Therapists, British Psychological Society etc. We plan to develop this collaboration further in the next year. The CGSS runs by the calendar year and operates on a subscription basis.

### The first year: 1999

By November 1999, the CGSS had 92 members. The CGSS team utilised the knowledge and experience about the implementation of government policy previously gained by staff at the Royal College of Psychiatrists' Research Unit. We were aware that local implementation can be supported by a national organisation by providing:

- (a) new information in a format which is appropriate to the target audience;
- (b) opportunities for networking, sharing of ideas and problem-solving;
- (c) professional leadership and credibility for the new initiative;
- (d) practical support;
- (e) feedback on progress;
- (f) education and training events;
- (g) information through a variety of different channels and methods.

The core areas of work for the CGSS during its first year used these methods to support trusts in implementing the 21 key components of clinical governance outlined in *Clinical Governance: Quality in the New NHS* (NHS Executive, 1999).

In 1999 we provided:

- (a) 11 bulletins providing regular information on clinical governance;
- (b) 17 information sheets on priority areas for clinical governance;
- (c) an information and enquiry service;
- (d) a bibliography of clinical practice guidelines for mental health and learning disability services;
- (e) conferences and events and an events and training database;
- (f) three discussion days (an innovative way of small group learning);

- (g) an e-mail discussion list;
- (h) regularly updated contact lists to enable members to network with each other;
- (i) an evidence-base briefing (EBB) on dementia;
- (j) three clinical audit project examples books: learning disabilities, old age and substance misuse;
- (k) two support packs: implementing clinical governance and implementing the recommendations from the Caldicott report;
- (l) priority booking and a substantial discount (20%) for the Royal College of Psychiatrists' Research Unit's national multi-centre clinical audit on the management of violence;
- (m) the opportunity to participate in a research project on the role of trust boards in leading and supporting clinical governance;
- (n) a national, multi-disciplinary conference on clinical effectiveness (May 1999);
- (o) two symposia – the first a general introduction to clinical governance and the second focusing on staffing issues in relation to clinical governance.

### CGSS Year 2: 2000

Year 2 will see a slightly lower emphasis on information provision and a greater emphasis on staff and service development to support clinical governance. Particular priority will go to supporting services in implementing the National Service Frameworks for mental health and for services for older adults. The overall approach, of using a variety of channels and methods, will still be adopted. During the first year, the CGSS was only available to NHS trusts. In Year 2, the service will also be available to private health organisations.

### Further information

A list of the CGSS member trusts (at November 1999) is provided below. The CGSS has a link person in each of these trusts. If you would like to find out who your CGSS link person is, or if you would like any further information about the CGSS, please contact Sam Coombs, Communications Officer, Royal College of Psychiatrists' Research Unit, 11 Grosvenor Crescent, London SW1X 7EE; [sam.coombs@virgin.net](mailto:sam.coombs@virgin.net)

### Reference

NHS Executive (1999) *Clinical Governance: Quality in the New NHS*. London: Department of Health.

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