

Information management

Join the team and
make a difference

Staff in information management gather, analyse, interpret and present information about health and healthcare to improve services and patient care.

What will you do?

Clinical audit manager

Clinical audit plays a vital role in making sure clinical services are maintaining national standards and finding practical ways to improve patient services.

Your main role will be to manage a systematic process in which you measure the performance of your trust's clinical services in comparison with national guidelines and standards.

Using the facts from the audits, you will work directly with health professionals and with the clinical effectiveness team to help them improve patient services. This could be anything from meeting government guidelines for diabetic patients' glucose checks to reducing the number of falls on wards. You will ensure the smooth running of the rolling audit programme, and also work to promote a blame-free culture that encourages healthcare professionals to learn from having their services audited. In addition to national guidelines, departments may set their own targets for clinical effectiveness, which you will help them to achieve by highlighting areas that can be improved.

Information governance manager

The job of information governance manager is to help manage, share and protect the



information within a trust. Managing information is essential to the NHS – from having the correct postcode on a patient's health record to confidentiality agreements. With more and more information being stored electronically and shared among professionals, this emerging discipline is increasingly important.

You will ensure information is accurate, high-quality, stored safely and shared appropriately, and that the trust complies with important rules about confidentiality, data protection and information security.

Your tasks are likely to include high-level strategic planning, developing policies and

procedures, as well as hands-on, practical issues, such as visiting social services colleagues to make sure information you share with them is held securely. The job will include thoroughly investigating any security breaches and training everyone in the trust so they are aware of how to handle patient and other sensitive information.

Planning and performance manager

Planning and performance managers help to drive continuous improvement in services by checking how they are performing and planning improvements. They also look ahead to make sure we have the services we need for the future.

You will use statistical and other information to monitor how services are performing, to ensure contribution to improve patient care and plan to meet the future health needs of a community.

It's likely you will have a team of information analysts and planning and performance officers reporting to you. You will have overall responsibility for ensuring the information they collect about services is used to meet key government performance targets, for example waiting times for outpatient and inpatient appointments, and for coronary heart disease and cancer care.

A key part of the job is to make sure that those responsible for trusts and services are fully informed about how well those organisations are performing. Depending on where you work, you may also play a role in making sure PCTs are commissioning the right services to meet their community's health needs.

Information analyst

Information analysts collect data and turn it into meaningful information about the health needs of communities, how services

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are changing and improving, and detailed facts about specific services.

You will provide the information different teams or departments need about their performance in order to manage changes and improve. You will collect information from or about services and ensure accuracy.

An essential role will be spotting any breaches of national targets, such as A&E waiting times. You may also be asked to turn the data you collect into charts, graphs and reports that help illuminate trends and changes in services. Your job may also include some performance management, which means informing departments or organisations about any areas that need to be improved, and how to ensure they reach milestones and targets.

Clinical coder and clinical coding tutor

Clinical coders record a patient's journey through the healthcare system, creating a record of all the medical activity in the hospital. This is vital information that can be used for local and national planning, for hospitals' payment by results systems and for international World Health Organisation statistics. Clinical coding tutors train clinical and non-clinical staff to support clinical coding use.

Your job is to create an accurate record of a patient's stay in hospital, including all the diagnoses and treatment they receive, which you record on a computer as a series of alphanumeric codes.

Accuracy is critical. You will receive a set of medical notes from a ward and your task is to chase any missing information, query the consultant about any treatments or diagnoses you don't understand, and accurately extract all the information that represents a patient's stay in hospital. You are likely to use the internet often to find out about new treatments and operations.

You will work with other NHS staff to identify the best way that a precise and complete picture is collected about patient diagnosis and treatment.

What entry routes are available?

Clinical audit manager

You will probably need a relevant degree, such as statistics, computer studies or

healthcare management, as well as some experience of project management in the health service.

There are opportunities to join in the more junior position of clinical audit officer, and learn and progress in the post. Your job would be to support the manager, communicating with staff about the clinical audit process, arranging meetings and keeping up-to-date records of clinical audit activity. You would need to demonstrate analytical and computer skills. You would also have plenty of opportunities to learn about all aspects of clinical audit, including collecting high-quality data, sharing information and working with healthcare professionals and managers to find agreed ways of improving services.



Role	Where will you work?	What skills and qualities will you need?
Clinical audit manager	You will be part of the clinical governance department of a trust. You will work with the clinical effectiveness team and you are likely to regularly visit health services and health professionals throughout the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strong analytical skills, to enable you to interpret data from audits and highlight areas for improvement • excellent communication and negotiating skills • the ability to work to tight deadlines, and under pressure
Information governance manager	You may typically be based in the records library, or in the corporate communications office of your trust. You will also go out and visit all parts of the trust and related professions, to increase awareness of working with records correctly, to investigate breaches, and to support services with any challenges in managing information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • methodical and an eye for detail • the ability to understand national policy and law and implement it locally • an interest in information and what's new in the field • the ability to keep up with a rapidly changing area • good persuasive and negotiating skills
Planning and performance manager	You could work in a strategic health authority, a primary care or hospital trust.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a well-developed analytical approach • the ability to think strategically, and to seek potential new uses for information • excellent communication skills to manage relations with others within your own organisation and with other trusts and health authorities • good motivator – you will need to persuade others to improve services • negotiating skills, to persuade people of the benefit of providing information or making improvements
Information analyst	Information analysts are based in strategic health authorities, public health bodies and in hospital, ambulance and primary care trusts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • excellent IT skills • highly numerate and analytical • an eye for detail, and the ability to interpret numbers into meaningful information about services • good communication, as you will need to develop a rapport with the departments you regularly deal with, and talk to people right across the organisation, up to senior managers and directors • good negotiating skills
Clinical coder and clinical coding tutor	The clinical coding team is usually based together in a hospital. This allows coders to draw on the expertise and help of other team members. Some coders are based on the wards they work for, building up a strong rapport with ward staff and a great deal of specialist knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accuracy and an eye for detail • the ability to sift information quickly – you will need to read through sets of medical notes and rapidly extract what's important • a dogged determination to get all the information you need • an enquiring mind and enjoyment of medical matters – you will need to understand medical terminology, anatomy and physiology • the confidence to speak to health professionals and query notes • the ability to work on your own initiative, but also as a team member

Clinical coder and clinical coding tutor

To join a clinical coding team, you would need a good general education, probably including GCSE Maths and English or equivalent, and to be reasonably familiar with computers – but you can take The Essential IT Skills (EITS) Programme once you join the NHS.

You will get on-the-job experience, and receive training in your first year. This will teach you how to use and understand the reference books, and give you a grounding in medical terminology, physiology and anatomy, which you will build on as you gain more experience. New coders are expected to take the accredited clinical coders exam.

Information analyst

You will usually need to have been educated to A level standard or equivalent to become an analyst, and to have good general ability with electronic data management products. Joining the NHS in the more junior role of information assistant can be a good way of getting any analytical and/or numerical experience you need to become an information analyst. To join as an information assistant, you will need good IT, organisational and numeracy skills and an interest in applying these to health services information.

Information governance manager

For this role, you will need some experience of the key elements of information governance, which are record keeping, record management, information security and data protection.

There are plenty of opportunities to develop your career in information management



A common route is to join from a medical records department, where you will gain some of the experience described above. Experience as a medical records manager may equip you for the job of information governance manager, or if you don't yet have management experience, you can join as an information governance officer and work your way up. You can also join information governance from an information, management and technology (IM&T) team. Roles such as data quality officer or data protection officer could equip you for a move to information governance.

Planning and performance manager

You are likely to have a degree, ideally in a related subject, and experience at a senior management level.

It is possible to join a planning and performance team as an information assistant or information analyst and work your way up.

For more information on the range of opportunities available in health informatics, please visit www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/qualifications. This gives more specific details about what qualifications are

necessary for each role. You can search for current vacancies and download job descriptions at www.jobs.nhs.uk

How can you develop your career?

There are plenty of opportunities to develop your career in information management. For example, an experienced clinical coder will be able to progress to become a supervisor or clinical coding manager. In many professions, such as information analyst, you will be encouraged to take short courses to train and develop your skills. This could lead to becoming a senior analyst, leading a team where there will be further opportunities to progress to team manager, and eventually assistant director or head of service. As you gain more experience, along with experience of how information flows around an organisation, you will be in a good position to move into other senior management positions in the NHS.

As well as moving to more senior and specialised roles within this area, you will also have the chance to take on additional responsibilities and progress within the organisation, as part of the Career Framework. For more information about this initiative please see the *Careers in Health Informatics* booklet.

For more information about training in information management and courses you can take to progress your career, please visit www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/training

Pay

The national pay system in the NHS is called Agenda for Change (AfC). This applies to all staff in health informatics except the most senior managers. These are examples of roles and the AfC bands at which they may be paid: information management and technology service manager (Band 8a); information analyst (advanced) (Band 7); information technician (statistics) (Band 4).

For more information, visit www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/payandbenefits

To find out more about careers in this area of healthcare informatics, please go to

www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/working

For contact details, including professional bodies, visit

www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/contacts