

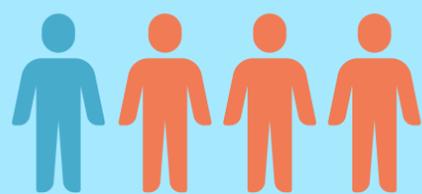
How to conduct an IPC health-check

Seven tips to improve your IPC audits

1 Avoid duplication

Almost a quarter of all questions asked on a typical IPC audit are around cleanliness/tidiness or the location of inappropriate items. These questions are often covered in audits undertaken by other departments, including the national cleaning standards audits, and health and safety audits, not to mention general quality walkabouts. Save time and use those instead.

25%



2 Focus on the questions that really matter

It can be reassuring to have a tick list of questions against every topic, but who has the time for that? Instead focus on specific areas of concern. Include things staff need to keep an eye on or areas where the team can make a significant impact on patient care.



3 Validate your audit questions with staff

There is an art to choosing which questions to ask and which questions to leave out of an audit. Following these steps:

- Involve staff at all levels, especially the front line. Tap into their experienced intuition for just knowing when things are right. Keeping staff motivated and engaged with audits is also good for morale.
- Continually test and refine audits – check out how long they take to do in practice, or whether the questions need to be asked so frequently. If there is no possibility to address any issues before the next audit date, review the frequency.



4 Keep questions relevant and up-to-date

Review questions at least annually. New guidance is always being produced, meaning the key focal areas may also change. Challenge questions to check that they are still relevant when guidance changes. Also, with new staff in roles, take the opportunity to engage with clinicians who can bring a fresh pair of eyes.



Transform your Infection Control System



5 Avoid audit fatigue

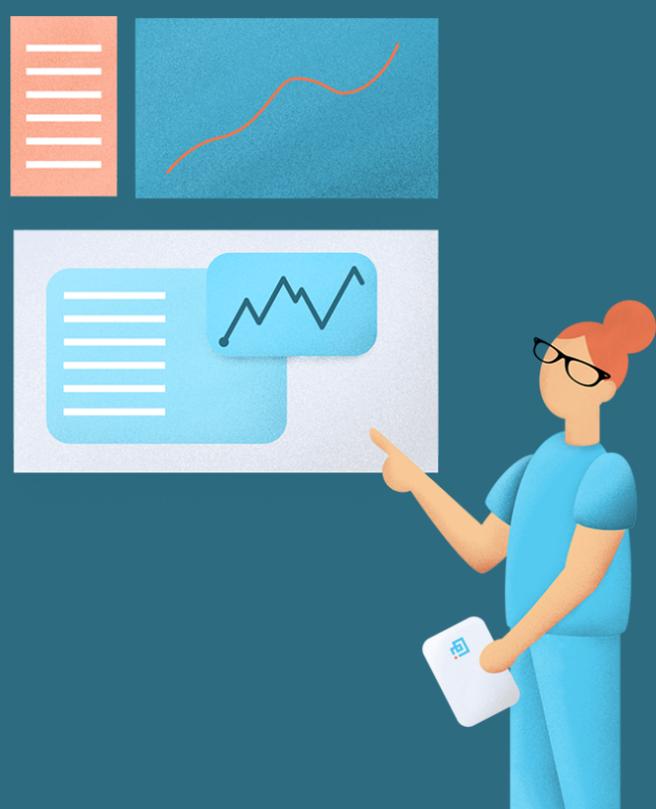
If the same questions are continually asked every week or even every month, staff will lose the motivation to audit well. A great audit is valued by staff as it is an essential tool to help them focus on what is important, so if compliance drops, it might be time to check in with staff to understand why this is not prioritised.

6 Get your governance right

Consider asking 'what would the regulator would say if we change our audit questions and process?' Fully risk-assess your organisation's decision-making and have robust governance in place for agreeing those decisions. That way, it will be easier to demonstrate that any decisions made were the right ones for patients and for staff.



7 Use the power of data to turn the good into something truly transformational



We all saw how data and automation really came into their own during the pandemic. The latest digital quality improvement and safety solutions make light work of IPC auditing while giving senior managers the hard evidence they need to monitor and drive continual improvements to patient safety. Make the most of them to turn good auditing into truly transformational auditing.

