

St George's University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust anaesthetists rewarded for high quality patient care

The anaesthetic team at St George's University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust have been re-accredited under the Royal College of Anaesthetists (RCOA) [Anaesthesia Clinical Services Accreditation \(ACSA\) scheme](#).

The hospital was one of the first to receive the accreditation for the high quality care the anaesthetic team provided to patients.

ACSA is the RCoA's peer-reviewed scheme that promotes quality improvement and the highest standards of anaesthetic service. To receive accreditation, departments are expected to demonstrate high standards in areas such as patient experience, patient safety and clinical leadership.

Dr Carolyn Johnston, Consultant Anaesthetist and ACSA lead at St George's, said:

"Maintaining our ACSA accreditation and re-accrediting has been a source of great pride for our department. It has helped us raise the standard of care and be confident we are benchmarked against the best, because of the external reviews.

"The accreditation acts as a barometer of the good quality of anaesthetic services that we know ourselves we provide. We needed to work with many other departments in the hospital on evidencing the standards and for the review visit- the ED, paediatric services, maternity and so on, and I think that has been really good for our working relationships to talk together about what a good quality anaesthetic service we have in these areas. We have also had brilliant support from our managers which is invaluable.

"In particular areas, the ACSA standards have changed our practice, and have been important for changing things in the trust- like physical separation of children in recovery, improving our rest areas and expanding the pain service. The review visit was quite a lot to organise, but was actually a really great couple of days! It felt like a celebration of things we did well, rather than an intimidating inspection from the regulator. I think the whole process has brought the department together, our former colleague JP Van Besouw was college president when ACSA started, he would certainly want us to celebrate our reaccreditation, and we will certainly do that!"

Professor Ravi Mahajan, President of the Royal College of Anaesthetists, said:

“Achieving accreditation in the first place is a great accomplishment and it is very impressive to see the commitment and approach of the whole department to maintaining their standards and being re-accredited.

“Patient safety is at the heart of what we do as a medical Royal College and the continual quality improvement demonstrated during the re-accreditation process has helped the department manage the immense tasks presented to them by COVID-19 and the resumption of normal services.

“As part of the re-accreditation process the St George's anaesthetists demonstrated their continued dedication to enhancing the quality of service they provided across the hospital. The review team were particularly impressed with their ability to work across departments, integrating services and building good relationships.

“I would like to personally congratulate everyone in the team for their commitment to continuing to provide the best possible care for their patients.”

Dr David Whitaker RCoA ACSA lead reviewer, said:

“It was a pleasure to be welcomed by the department at St George's on their successful reaccreditation visit. I remember J-P Van Besouw ensuring that St George's was a very early adopter of the ACSA scheme and them becoming one of the first hospitals to be accredited. The department are again to be congratulated on engaging with the ACSA standards to help them continue to improve the levels of care and safety they deliver to patients. On this occasion it was also excellent to be able to accredit the hospital's cardiothoracic and vascular anaesthesia services. Well done to everyone.”