

**PRESS RELEASE**

**NOCA ISSUES GDPR GUIDANCE AND URGES HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS TO CONTINUE CLINICAL AUDIT**

**Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> May 2019:** The National Office of Clinical Audit (NOCA) has today published GDPR guidance to support the continuation of clinical audit. Since the introduction of the GDPR legislation one year ago, there has been increasing confusion about what it means for clinical audit and research.

The guidance clearly sets out the legal basis for the continuation of clinical audit and what steps must be taken to ensure compliance with the GDPR legislation. It also explicitly states that the Health Research Regulations 2018 applies to research only. These regulations require explicit consent (GDPR consent) as the lawful basis to use a patient's data in research, unless a consent exception is sought. Therefore, NOCA have, at present, ceased providing clinical audit data for research purposes. NOCA has decided that the only option available is to apply to the Health Research Consent Declaration Committee, seeking a consent exception for the secondary use of National Clinical Audit Data for research purposes.

Collette Tully, NOCA Executive Director commented *"We are strongly urging all healthcare providers to review their interpretation of the GDPR regulations in regard to clinical audit and issue updated guidance to their staff, where appropriate, so that clinical audit can continue to support improved patient care and outcomes."*

NOCA fully supports the need for legislation and standards and welcomes GDPR. The GDPR regulations, if interpreted and applied correctly, support those working to improve healthcare using clinical audit and also increase trust between patients, clinicians and organisations in regard to ensuring that their data is used and managed appropriately.

NOCA was established in 2012 to create sustainable clinical audit programmes at national level. NOCA enables those who manage and deliver healthcare to improve the quality of care through national clinical audit. NOCA is funded by the Health Service Executive Quality Improvement Division, governed by an independent voluntary board and operationally supported by the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland.

**ENDS**

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