

GOVERNANCE – A FRAMEWORK FOR A CAREER CHOICE



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Introduction

With so much focus on Advanced Practitioner roles are there other avenues, unidentified or unexplored which are open to radiographers? There is much focus on radiographer reporting with many colleagues choosing this as the most viable route to expand their experience and career.

However, there are radiographers working in other areas which may not receive the same recognition. Governance is one such area which may be an overlooked and unconsidered route to career progression. Yet it may be argued this too could expand the boundaries of our profession.

Whilst there are courses which focus on aspects of clinical governance, there is no recognised holistic qualification or certification in governance.

There are often misconceptions about governance where it is thought to be boring, rigid, overbearing and confining. However, governance can be satisfying, interesting and rewarding to those who decide to move into this sphere of expertise.

It can also be argued that the principles of clinical governance (McSherry & Pearce, 2001) can be adapted to cover all areas of governance not just clinical.

Most people in governance would likely agree that their role often goes beyond clinical - which is certainly the author's experience.

Governance is not about policing services or systems, nor is it about enforcing rules and regulations, imposing change, rooting out bad practice or identifying areas where things may go disastrously wrong. Whilst this may encompass certain of these aspects, it is important to understand that governance is also about balance, consideration, sharing experience and learning.

Overall it may be argued that there are key areas of experience, knowledge and skills which must underpin an individual's ability to work in a governance role:

The Author's experience:

Roles:

• Darkroom Technician	1 year
• Student Radiographer	2.5 years
• General Radiographer	4 years
• Neuro-radiographer	3.5 years
• CT & MRI	10 years
• Sales Account Manager	4 years
• Radiology Services Manager	6 years
• Service Improvement Manager	years
• Clinical Governance Manager/Risk & Governance Lead	6 years

Additional responsibility to roles:

• Caldicott Guardian	10 years
• Data Protection Officer	3 years

Qualifications:

- Diploma of College of Radiographers (Radiography)
- Clinical Tutor Certificate
- CT Scanning Certificate
- CT Head Reporting Certificate
- Caldicott Guardian Certification
- Data Protection Certification

In conclusion

Governance is the means to empower, encourage, energise, inspire, improve, and give aspiration to best practice both in the clinical and managerial arenas.

Should there be recognition and development of a course to train those seeking governance as a career?

How can skills obtained by those working in governance be passed on to continue to push the boundaries of our profession?

One cannot bring about change by dictating what should be, or indeed, what shouldn't be. It is therefore vital that anyone working in governance requires a knowledge of how to bring about change. They should understand:

- the importance of staff involvement to bring about change
- the value of process maps and how to use them effectively to demonstrate change and improvement
- the use of LEAN techniques and Plan Do Study Act cycles to effect continuous improvement (Liker, 2004)
- how to use audit to maintain service improvement

Those working in the field of governance must know when and how to disseminate what occurred, why and the lessons learned. By doing so in a considered and constructive way it will promote good effective practice, safe care and ongoing improvement within a service.

With the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations 2016 (Information Commissioner's Office) becoming law, those involved in governance must be aware of the importance of the regulations and how they should be applied. Knowledge of the Caldicott Principles (NHS Digital, 2013) is key in applying the legislation; awareness of these can keep staff from straying outside of the law.

It is vital that anyone working in healthcare governance must have a strong, broad clinical background which should include both general and specialist areas. A strong governance team will consist of individuals who each have differing skills which they can utilise to benefit colleagues and peers they work with. They should look to **enable, strengthen, support** and **motivate** others to **good practice**. Life experience and skills should also contribute. Everyone makes mistakes; it is how we respond that demonstrates character.

A valuable post-graduate certification achieved by the author was the Clinical Tutor Certificate. From this came the ability to **impart knowledge**, to **communicate effectively**, to **listen** and **deal with concerns**, to **learn** from those you teach, to **prepare presentations** and **speak effectively**, even passionately, where required. Being able to **develop others** and **inspire** them to work at their best is a privilege.

(Fortune, et al, 2014)

This a fascinating topic which not only teaches how people may react in certain circumstances but also encourages insight and review of one's self. Understanding that people are fallible, do not always work at the peak of their ability and can make mistakes is key when investigating incidents or looking at working practices. This concerns looking at why decisions are made, **culture** and what occurred at a given time. It is **not** about finger pointing or focussing on one element but reviewing things, as a whole, to **identify all errors** which caused an outcome.

Knowing how to review an incident or complaint is key to a governance role. Complaints should be reviewed to **identify the main issue(s)** for the complainant in order for the response to **address the issues** and **convey** that the complaint has been taken **seriously**. Both complaints and incidents require the ability to **understand** what the **root cause** is, to address this and **identify** any associated **risks** such that these can be managed. Thus **root cause analysis training** is **essential** for a governance role. Once **risks** are **identified** they should be **assessed**, the consequence and likelihood scored and where necessary added to the **relevant risk register**. (NHS Improvement, 2018)

Governance cannot function without strong policies or standard operating procedures (SOPs). **Policies are the backbone of an organisation**; therefore, they must be **clear, comprehensible, legally compliant and accessible to all staff**. This alone means that anyone working in governance must keep abreast of good practice, current guidance, legislation and be able to communicate this such that it is clear to all. **The SOP is the practical application of a policy for everyday use.**

References

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