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NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement, Delivering a quality service for end stage renal disease

The NHS Institute supports the NHS to transform healthcare for patients and the public by rapidly developing and spreading new ways of working and new technology.

In 2005 the Delivering Quality and Value team published a set of documents and related products designed to help local health communities/organisations to improve the quality and value of care for eight key high volume care areas. Following publication of the first phase of the High Volume Care series, the Department of Health commissioned the DQV team to do another phase of work in a further eight clinical areas during 2007/08. This work included a project aiming to identify the key requirements for delivery of an effective and efficient clinical pathway from diagnosis of end stage renal failure, to assessment and addition to the transplant list.

A small team focused on the year leading up to renal replacement therapy. A complex year, during which patients are confronted with a number of choices; haemodialysis or peritoneal dialysis, conservative care, or transplantation. The existing data on percentage of patients in units commencing haemodialysis with working long-term vascular access; numbers of patients transplanted pre-emptively or listed for transplantation; and size of live donor programmes, suggested there were wide variations in effective delivery of this pathway across the country.

This work has led to the development of toolkits; one aimed at promoting peer support the other at streamlining pathways.