

## NICE guidance and quality standard assurance: a process change to improve effectiveness and efficiency

**20**  
YEARS OF  
**NICE**  
1999-2019

A single, unified and meaningful approach to the NICE assurance process was developed across the large East Sussex 'Out of Hospitals' clinical division, which has over 30 different single and multi-professional services in acute and community settings.

*"The changes have given our services much greater oversight and the ability to measure our levels of evidence-based care and service quality. We can now be proactive with cost-beneficial developments and innovation."*

**Dr Carol McCrum**, East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust.

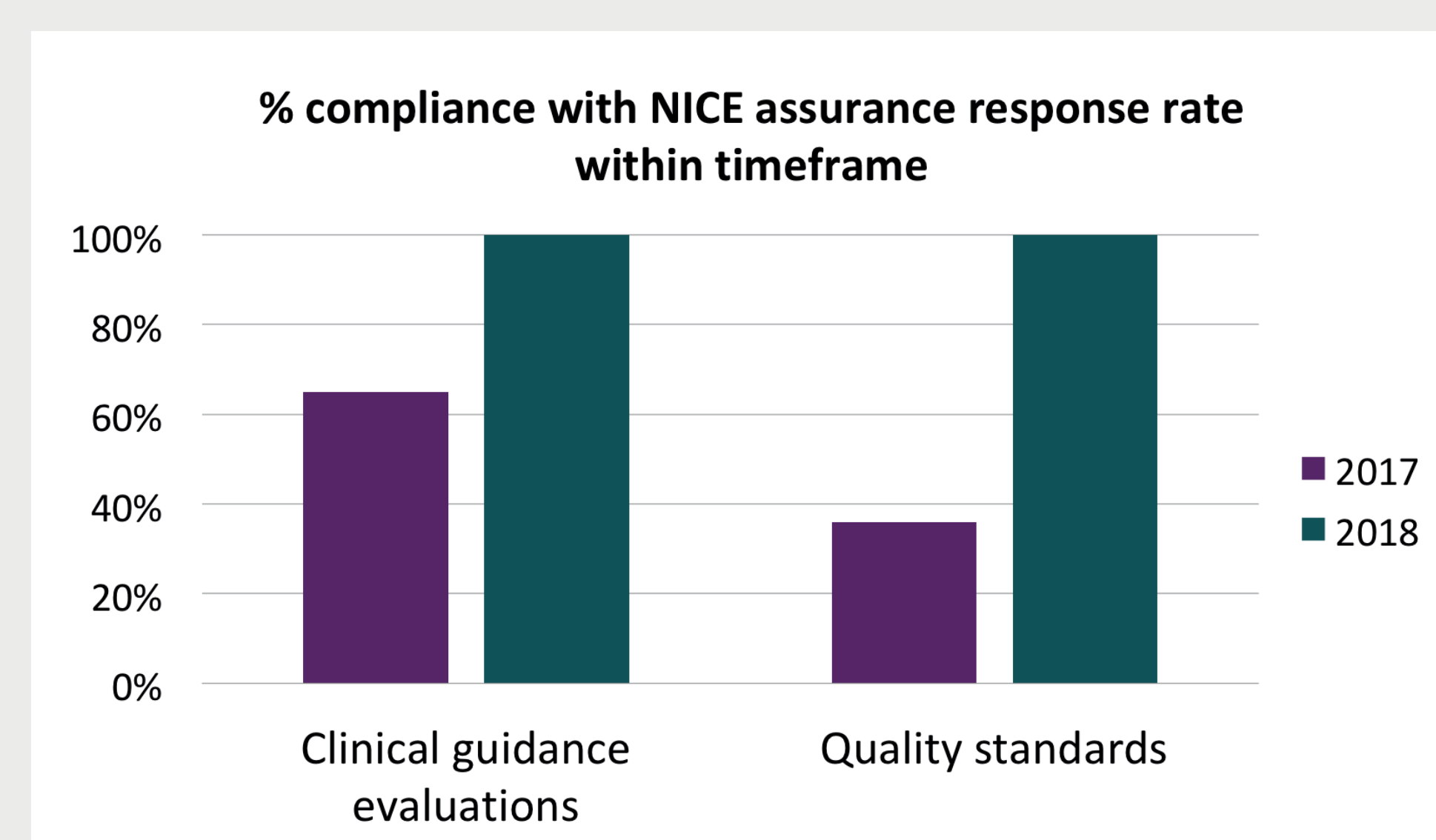


### What we did and why

- A clinical effectiveness facilitator was allocated to the division.
- A core NICE multidisciplinary team with professional and service level expertise and oversight was established.
- A network of NICE responders was set up across professions and services.
- Education on NICE products, resources and tools for evaluation, responses and action plan development was delivered.
- A priority rating system was developed to show levels of compliance and action plan implementation.
- We held fortnightly conference calls, which involved core team triages, evaluated newly published guidance and quality standards and followed up on outstanding action plans.
- Invitations to evaluate specific guidance were sent to service or professional responders.
- We continually evaluated and refined elements within the process.
- Input from the wider responder group was included in the final approach.

### Outcomes and impact

The division's position improved within the 3-month target from 65% for clinical guidance evaluations and 36% for quality standards evaluations to a consistent 100%.



More clinically and operationally meaningful and collaborative evaluations, action plans and service changes were developed.

At a central level, the clinical division moved from poor to outstanding in terms of clinical effectiveness.

Using NICE resources and tools has now been integrated to support evaluation and impact measurement in clinical and operational processes.

### What we learnt

- The importance of education at all levels was found to be invaluable in leading to a greater understanding of the value of NICE resources in supporting better quality care and cost effectiveness, and for future planning.
- Developing local NICE champions within services and professions has supported better processes and helped raise awareness.
- Engagement and support at service manager and executive level has increased appreciation of the value of investing in a robust process of assurance. There is now awareness that busy clinicians need dedicated time to set up and evaluate action plans.
- Clear lines of accountability are needed for seeking responses from, and carrying out evaluations on, services and professions within services.
- Using non-clinical staff to do administrative tasks, data collation and reporting is invaluable.