

## Case Study:

# How accreditation has helped Alliance Medical Diagnostic Imaging improve its quality management system and the service it provides for patients



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Ellen Leacy, Quality and Process Manager, Alliance Medical

## Summary

Alliance Medical Ireland was a joint winner of the CHKS quality improvement award 2014 judged by a panel comprising senior healthcare experts representing Royal Colleges and national institutes. Since the company started out in Ireland in 2007 it has been working hard to improve the quality of the expert imaging service it provides.

## Background

Alliance Medical Ireland provides expert imaging services in MRI, CT, ultrasound, DEXA, PET/CT and X-ray. When the company first started providing these services it had nine clinical sites. This has grown to 18 clinical sites throughout Ireland with a mix of NHS, HSE and private hospitals as partners and customers. It employs 130 staff and its primary goal within the diagnostic imaging sector is to deliver healthcare of the highest quality to all patients.

## The challenge

Ellen Leacy, Quality and Processes Manager joined the company in 2008. The company's quality management

system was not robust and one of her objectives was to make sure a system was in place covering each of the sites. *“This meant creating a system of document control, ensuring robust processes and we also brought in a new patient administration system. We also knew that accreditation would help us improve quality management.”*

## The solution

Ellen says the CHKS accreditation programme provided the company with the building blocks for its quality management system.

The initial approach was to accredit individual clinical sites and by 2010 six sites had been accredited which meant they were working to international best practice standards.

In 2013 the company decided that along with ISO certification, it should aim for organisational accreditation with CHKS. According to Ellen this was a step change and helped the company make further improvements to its quality management system and provided the organisation with a framework for sharing best practice across all its sites.

## The benefits of working with CHKS

Ellen says the accreditation process has brought significant benefits to the company. As well as helping to create a universal quality management system the process of accreditation itself has been beneficial. *“Each time we had meetings with surveyors they always contributed something new to the business. On one occasion there was a focus on the patient experience and the suggestions that were made helped us to evolve our services,”* she says.

*“Unless you have someone external come in to review the organisation and evaluate it against international standards then you do not know whether you are being as effective as you can be.”*

A further benefit of the accreditation process has been the impact it had on staff engagement. *“We operate in the four corners of Ireland and we therefore rely on unit managers to roll out any changes. By going through accreditation we were able to benchmark each unit and ensure members of staff in each location were part of the improvement journey.”*

Ellen says the most important benefit has been the improvement in the way services are delivered to patients and their referring clinicians. She believes this is because patient feedback is taken into account when making decisions which in turn leads to patients experiencing tangible improvements.

*“Overall the benefits to patients include a safer clinical environment, improved patient facilities and the delivery of a consistent standard of quality care to our patients. Patient feedback has improved over time and we are now seeing very high satisfaction levels.”*

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