

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE ACT 2012

EXPLANATORY NOTES

COMMENTARY ON SECTIONS

Part 10 – Abolition of certain public bodies etc

Section 281 - The National Patient Safety Agency

1481. This section provides for the abolition of the National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA).
1482. The NPSA was established as a Special Health Authority in 2001. Its core function is to improve the safety of NHS care by promoting a culture of reporting and learning from adverse events.
1483. Provision is made in Part 1 of the Act for the NHS Commissioning Board to have responsibility for the functions currently carried out by the NPSA in respect of reporting and learning from patient safety incidents.
1484. The National Clinical Assessment Service¹ (NCAS) and the National Research Ethics Service² (NRES) are functions of the NPSA being provided for separately and outwith the Act. The Department intends that, over the next few years, NCAS will become a self-funded service and the Department will seek to agree a date with the service for achieving self-sufficiency. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) will act as an interim host for NCAS from its transfer from the NPSA to the end of 2012/13. The future of NRES was considered as part of a wider independent review³ of health research regulation and governance which recommended creating a new body to rationalise the regulation and governance of all health research. The Plan for Growth⁴, published alongside the Budget on 23 March 2011, announced the Government would set up a new body to streamline regulation and improve the cost effectiveness of clinical trials. The Government established the Health Research Authority in December 2011 as a Special Health Authority with NRES at its core.
1485. The function of managing the delivery of the Confidential Enquiries (now known as the Clinical Outcomes Review Programmes – CORP), with the relevant provider organisations transferred in September 2011 from the NSPA to the Healthcare Quality Improvement Partnership (HQIP), who currently host the contract to manage and develop the National Clinical Audit and Patient Outcomes Programme. CORP are a series of independent programmes that assess the quality of care patients receive from the health service. CORP will cover four themes each delivered by a separate organisation (mental health, medical and surgical, child health, and maternal and new born).

¹ NCAS supports the resolution of concerns about the performance of individual clinical practitioners to help ensure their practice is safe and valued.

² NRES protects the rights, safety, dignity and well-being of research participants that are part of clinical trials and other research within the NHS.

³ Academy of Medical Sciences (Jan 2011): *A new pathway for the regulation and governance of health research*

⁴ HM Treasury, Department for Business Innovation & Skills (2011): *The Plan for Growth*, p92