Understanding the CSP Process Improvement Targets

What is the purpose of this document?
A source of summary information to provide clarity and support local discussions regarding the CSP process improvement targets. These have replaced the former Comprehensive Clinical Research Network (CCRN) Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

Why has the target been changed from 30 to 15 days?
The CSP process improvement targets reflect the remit of NIHR CRN to support the continued improvement of study set-up times, in order to successfully deliver research in the NHS. Annual performance data against the former CCRN key performance indicators demonstrated that study wide and local reviews were continually achieved within a median of 30 (calendar) days. This was no longer a suitable target to drive continued improvement in CSP performance within the majority of NHS organisations. The target was changed for 2014/15 due to this. This target is for all studies and is not a median target.

Why has the CRN introduced CSP process improvement targets?
The CSP process improvement targets were introduced because there was confusion within NHS Trusts about the conflicting priorities around delivering against CRN High Level Objective 4 (HLO 4) (Proportion of studies obtaining NHS permission within 40 days at all sites) and also the NIHR Performance in Initiating and Delivering Clinical Research (PID) 70 Day benchmark. It became apparent that by uncoupling individual Trust CSP performance from HLO 4, introducing process improvement targets for CSP and prioritising reporting of the NIHR Performance in Initiating and Delivering Clinical Research (PID) 70 Day benchmark to Trust Boards, the confusion was minimised.

HLO 4, which is a national, study-wide measurement of the median time taken to gain NHS permission at all sites participating in a single CRN portfolio study will remain, however NHS Partner Organisations will no longer be performance managed on an individual basis on HLO 4 performance. It should be noted that HLO 4 incorporates NIHR CRN Portfolio eligibility assessment as part of the study wide process, which is not included within the 15 day study-wide review improvement target.

How are the CSP process improvement targets defined?
The CSP progress improvement targets are measured for all CRN portfolio studies using CSP. Data points for measurement are:
- 15 days from Date Valid R&D submission received to completion of study wide review
- 15 days from Site Specific Information Form submission (Valid Research Application) to NHS permission or assurance for each site.
Where are the CSP process improvement targets documented?
The CSP process improvement targets are documented in the LCRN Performance and Operating Framework (POF) 2014-15, which is a contractual appendix which each LCRN Host and NHS Partner Organisation are contractually obliged to follow. Section 2 (Measuring LCRN Performance) of the POF specifies that the indicator of LCRN performance of CSP is ‘timely processing of study wide and local reviews within the CSP process.’ It expected that the LCRN will work with RM&G staff to ensure Partner Organisations achieve or have a plan to support achievement of the CSP process improvement targets for study wide and local reviews. The content of the POF will be reviewed annually.

How will CSP performance within NHS Organisations be monitored?
It is expected that the LCRN will work with RM&G staff to ensure Partner Organisations achieve or have a plan to support achievement of the CSP process improvement targets for study wide and local reviews. The performance of individual NHS organisations will be monitored by the LCRN to identify opportunities for improving local delivery within the CSP process and ensure sharing of best practice is adopted across the geography.

How should NHS Organisations manage this change?
Data related to CSP study wide and local reviews will continue to be collected and managed within the CSP Module. The data will be readily available to support management oversight within individual Partner Organisations, across the LCRN to oversee regional CSP performance and for review at Partnership Boards and within the Leadership team as required.

How do these targets fit with the CRN HLOs and NIHR PID 70 day benchmark data requirements?
The CRN reports against performance of the HLOs to the Department of Health on a quarterly basis, for all CRN Portfolio studies. HLO 4 will not include a breakdown of the contribution of each participating NHS Organisation, however it essential that local management of Partner Organisations against the CSP process improvement targets supports continued improvement of median CSP process timelines.

In addition, all NHS Organisations with LCRN Host or Partnership agreements and those with NIHR contracts since Autumn 2011 will be required to report a minimum data set to the NIHR Central Commissioning Facility (CCF) in relation to the NIHR PID 70 day benchmark. This benchmark is managed completely separately to HLO 4 and the CSP process improvement targets. Rapid completion of study wide and local reviews for CRN portfolio studies will support delivery against the NIHR PID 70 day benchmark by reducing the time taken to achieve NHS permission or assurance.