

## Claire McLaughlan

Now an independent consultant Claire McLaughlan is a former Associate Director of the National Clinical Assessment Service (NCAS) with a particular interest in remediation, re-skilling and rehabilitation of healthcare professionals and revalidation. As a registered (intensive care) nurse, educationalist and non-practising barrister Claire developed NCAS Back on Track Services for doctors, dentists and pharmacists. Over the last six years Claire has worked with approximately three hundred organisations and practitioners to 'make a difference' before irreparable damage was done to patients and the public, the practitioner and to organisations.

Claire has extensive experience of working within *Maintaining High Professional Standards* and the *Performers List Regulations* as well as working alongside the health Regulators. Before joining NCAS Claire was Head of Fitness to Practise at the Nursing and Midwifery Council.

Claire provides a range of bespoke, holistic services and access to resources relating to revalidation, remediation, re-skilling and rehabilitation for all health professionals and organizations.

**Development | Support**

**Co-ordination | Management**

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**C C McLaughlan  
Associates Ltd**

**The SMARTER Approach<sup>®</sup> to  
Remediation and Re-skilling**

**Development | Support**

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## Remediation

Remediation is the process of addressing specific concerns about clinical practice identified through a diagnostic process<sup>1</sup>. It is generally agreed that without a good diagnosis on which to base an action plan and/or a further training programme the practitioner is unlikely to be able to safely return to practice<sup>2</sup>.

## Re-skilling

Re-skilling is the process followed when there are no concerns about capability or performance. Instead the practitioner will have gaps in knowledge, skills and/or behaviours resulting from a significant period of absence (>6/12) from clinical work. The reasons for this include maternity, carer or other statutory leave, career break or ill health and may also follow suspension/exclusion, or restriction.

## The SMARTER Approach<sup>®</sup>

The SMARTER Approach<sup>®</sup> requires the practitioner to have been through a diagnostic process to identify the full range of concerns (e.g. knowledge, skills and/or behaviours). This is most commonly a clinical performance assessment undertaken by an organisation such as the National Clinical Assessment Service (NCAS) or, for doctors, the General Medical Council. Only after the diagnostics have been completed can SMARTER action planning can take place.

The SMARTER Approach<sup>®</sup> follows the tried and tested process of setting and agreeing SMARTER<sup>3</sup> objectives, the identification/allocation of resources, the identification of review criteria and evidence to facilitate objective decision making about progress<sup>4</sup>. The action plan itself forms a learning contract and describes how the identified needs will be met through a further training

programme. The findings of the assessment will determine the content of the action plan and the programme. NCAS has found that by following this traditional model it is possible to return between 65% and 75% of practitioners back to safe practice.

The Approach is compatible with *Maintaining High Professional Standards* and *Performers List Regulations*. It is suitable for use when the Regulator has put conditions on practice or undertakings have been agreed. If the programme is successful the practitioner's portfolio of evidence meets the requirements of the GMC's medical revalidation's 'six strands of evidence'<sup>5</sup>.

If there has not been a diagnostic performance assessment then the 2xSMARTER Approach<sup>®</sup> may be more suitable. For more information please see [www.ccmclaughlan.co.uk/services.html](http://www.ccmclaughlan.co.uk/services.html).

## Management of Risk

Patient safety and public protection is paramount. Therefore, risk has to be managed very carefully. Using the SMARTER Approach<sup>®</sup> ensures that patient safety and service integrity are not inappropriately put at risk and/or governance measures to control risk do not inappropriately divert resources. Following a risk assessment the practitioner is monitored through structured supervision of practice.

reviewed  
measurable  
time bound  
specific  
**SMARTER**  
encompassing  
relevant  
achievable

## Process Management

C C McLaughlan Associates Ltd can support and co-ordinate the various elements of the process, providing independent and objective oversight of the programme.

This includes; review and analysis of assessment reports, make recommendations for remediation if these are not included, drafting action plans, support implementation (including supporting negotiation meetings at each stage, brokering interventions, participants and if necessary a placement) and monitoring (including reviewing and analysing third party feedback and portfolio evidence) and advise, through the life of the programme, about progress and exit strategies.

## Summary

C C McLaughlan Associates Ltd is offering a cost effective, robust and independently co-ordinated/managed approach to responding to concerns about the competency or the performance of a healthcare practitioner. If there has been a diagnostic performance assessment, or there is confidence in knowing the range of concerns then the SMARTER Approach<sup>®</sup> is an efficient and appropriate tool. If not the 2XSMARTER Approach<sup>®</sup> may be more suitable.

This approach can be adapted for use where the practitioner needs to re-skill.

If you are unsure which Approach would be most appropriate then please call to discuss:  
Phone: 07831 799840 or  
Email: [claire@ccmclaughlan.co.uk](mailto:claire@ccmclaughlan.co.uk)  
Web: [www.ccmclaughlan.co.uk/contact.html](http://www.ccmclaughlan.co.uk/contact.html)

<sup>1</sup> The Back on Track Framework for further training NCAS 2010

<sup>2</sup> The Back on Track Framework for further training NCAS 2010

<sup>3</sup> Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time bound, Encompassing, Reviewed

<sup>4</sup> The Back on Track Framework for further training NCAS 2010

<sup>5</sup> Ready for revalidation – Supporting information for appraisal and revalidation (GMC 2012)