



### About this document

This policy has been developed to define the criteria to be met in order for an endoscopy service to be considered 'linked'.

This document also suggests issues for units to consider when deciding to operate as one service with linked sites.

### Definition of a linked service

'Linked' implies a common management structure and common policies and procedures across all sites within a Trust/Organisation.

In order for the JAG Office to be able to provide the best service possible and to ensure that linked assessments are beneficial, the following criteria will need to be met for a unit to be considered as linked:

#### Are there shared policies across all sites?

If the answer is 'yes', then at the time of a JAG assessment visit, any shared policies may be uploaded once, onto the main sites visit checklist. It is the responsibility of the service to make clear in the comments if there are any site specific protocols.

If the answer is 'no', then the units cannot be considered as linked.

#### Are audits conducted and presented as a Trust/Organisation?

If the answer is 'yes' it is expected that clinical audits are based on data extracted for the Trust/Organisation as a whole rather than site specific.

If the answer is 'no', then the units cannot be considered as linked.

#### Are Privacy and Dignity Standards met equally across all sites within the Trust?

If the answer is 'yes' it is expected that on physical inspection, both sites meet same sex accommodation standards equally.

If the answer is 'no', then the units cannot be considered as linked.

Where a Trust/Organisation has more than one site and can demonstrate that its sites operate as one endoscopy service and meets the criteria set above, the following will apply:-

1. The Trust will submit one GRS census that covers all linked sites and the scores must be identical for all sites. (At this current time, the GRS census should be completed on the main site and JAG will copy the scores to the other site).



1. JAG assessment visits to linked sites will be conducted on consecutive days or within a two week period and will be assessed by the same JAG Visit Assessment team.
2. In preparation for the assessment visit, the Trust/Organisation will upload evidence onto the main site's visit checklist and any smaller satellite sites or other sites would only complete the Unit Information, Unit Design and Layout and Decontamination on their visit checklist.
3. The full Assessment team will visit the main site, with smaller satellite sites or other sites being visited by the Nurse Lead (and/or other members of the assessment team when required) to assess the environment or any other site specific areas as appropriate. The second site visit may be shorter than that of the main site; however this is dependent on the core functions of the unit. The visit timetable will be set by the lead assessor.
4. The visit will usually run over several days and more time may be allocated for interviews. Following the visit, the assessment team will give brief feedback on the first day at local level, with a robust, organisation-wide feedback session to follow at the end of day two of the visit.
5. The trust will receive one report for linked sites
6. Linked sites will also have a linked accreditation decision when the service is assessed. If one site is ready to be awarded accreditation when the other is not, both sites would need to have accreditation deferred and have a status of *assessed: improvements required*. In some circumstances, linked services can be unlinked to allow one to be awarded accreditation and the other to pass, particularly for environmental reasons. However, this decision must be escalated to the JAG office so the decision can be made in consultation with the JAG QA Leads.
7. One annual report card will be completed each year and the information submitted would be for all linked sites.
8. Where units in the trust have different 5 year visit due dates, to be considered linked, the 5 year visit will need to be conducted at the same time as the first 5 year visit is due. This may result in some units having their 5 year visit earlier than planned.

Issues for units to consider when deciding to operate as one service with linked sites:

1. If one site deteriorates for any reason it will impact upon all. Lower GRS returns impact on all sites.
2. If one unit deteriorates then all linked units will be affected and this may impact on screening and Best Practice Tariff.