



Keeping score with NEQAS

Dr Jane Stockley
Chair, National External Quality
Assurance Advisory Panel -
Microbiology



NQAAP (Microbiology)

- Professional group
- Executive responsibility for maintaining standards of analytical & interpretative work in UK laboratories
- Covers private and public sectors
- Representatives from RCPATH, IBMS, AMM, SGM, CVN + co-opted experts
- Scheme organisers from approved EQA schemes (UKNEQAS, QCMD & others)



Work of the Panel

- Regular reports from Scheme organisers, including scheme developments and suggested scoring schemes
- Identification of poor performance
- Emphasis is educational – problem identification and resolution
- Confidential, professional expert advice offered
- Scheme organisers, Panel and Chairman's letters



Scoring schemes

- General bacteriology
 - core & advanced pathogens
 - problem organisms, and ID limitations
- Antimicrobial susceptibility – differential scoring of wrong sensitivity & resistance
- Try to reflect clinical importance of report
- Constant review, new scheme introductions, pilots
- Not examined, not returned reports
- Feedback always welcome, UKNEQAS user group meetings



Confidentiality

- Panel relationship with scheme participants is professional, and all information regarding performance is confidential
- Clinical governance
- Scoring allows laboratories to benchmark themselves. Panel involvement is welcomed by most participants.
- CPA, Department of Health
- MHRA



The Panel and Joint Working Group

- Panels report to RCPATH and Joint Working Group on Quality Assurance
- Panels are accountable to the professions through the JWG
- Most poor performance can be resolved within individual specialist Panels
- If persistent, poor performance referred to JWG, where Chairman makes contact with the Chief Executive