

# Niche Investigations



**Our values-based consultancy is a trusted investigator to our clients at the time of their greatest need for sensitivity and professionalism...**

The fundamental purpose of a patient safety investigation is to learn from the incident, and not to apportion blame. Examining incidents and events in a structured way allows the detail of events to be uncovered systematically, drawing out learning.

It is vital through a rigorous investigation to establish clear causes and contributory factors. This will ensure that the correct recommendations are made and the appropriate actions result in long-term sustainable change where future harm will be prevented. It is also imperative that healthcare services have robust mechanisms to ensure learning is implemented and embedded into practice; ensuring that *mindful* learning occurs.

Our expert team and investigative processes will help healthcare organisations be confident and assured that their services are safe and is modelled upon the standards within the new Patient Safety Incident Response Framework (PSIRF). However, we recognise that each investigation requires its own scope and approach. Our investigations are focussed on the discovery of any contributory factors that have influenced the incident, and the analysis of events against best practice. In our view, good investigations require four key things:



1. **Governance** – Clarity on the purpose and scope of the investigation. How to avoid conflicts. Engagement on scope setting. Understanding on whether specialist skills/knowledge required to deliver the more specific areas of scope. An understanding of risk and excellent project management skills



2. **Candour** – an intention to focus on systems learning, avoiding a blame approach. The investigation must be conducted with independence and without bias, in an environment that is open and transparent. Organisations should be based upon a culture of openness, where staff feel able to share information, and that they feel able to speak up without impunity. A safe, compassionate environment will support staff to apply candour.



3. **Stakeholder engagement** – involvement of senior, operational and clinical staff, as well as engagement with families and other interested parties e.g. social care, housing providers and criminal justice. The involvement of families is crucial to an investigation, developing an ongoing dialogue through the lifespan of the investigation, ensuring that they are listened to and their concerns addressed.



4. **Clarity** – specific action orientated recommendations that are intended to influence or change practice. The development of an outcome-focussed action plan is an essential output, and should follow from clear action orientated recommendations. Action plans should lead to positive changes in practice that can be evidenced to demonstrate learning.



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HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE CONSULTING

## Different types of investigations

We always maintain our independence regardless of the bill-payer:

1.	<b>Independent Mental Health Homicide</b> <i>Where there has been a death related to a mental health service user and Article 2 of the Human Rights Act is engaged.</i>
2.	<b>Non Mental Health Investigations</b> <i>Care failings in acute, community, specialist, ambulance, commissioning, social-care. As well as non-care related investigations such as governance, conduct, HR.</i>
3.	<b>Complex or independent Level 2 or Level 3 investigations</b> <i>Where there is concern that internal resources are insufficient or, in the case of an adverse event where an external view would be helpful.</i>
4.	<b>Never Events and cluster events (single or multiple)</b> <i>When you require assistance to understand underlying issues.</i>
5.	<b>Death in Custody clinical review</b> <i>Where a death has occurred in custody and a review of healthcare provided is required.</i>
6.	<b>Domestic Homicide Reviews/Individual Management Reviews</b> <i>At the request of a Safeguarding Board or Community Safety Partnership.</i>
7.	<b>Safeguarding Adult/Child Reviews</b> <i>Where there is concern that a vulnerable adult or child has been harmed and there has been mental health service involvement.</i>
8.	<b>Large-scale reviews and enquiries</b> We have unique methods for undertaking very large-scale reviews at the level below a Public Inquiry, this includes the use of extensive amounts of data.

## Why Niche are the best healthcare investigatory firm in the country.

Niche is proud to be a values driven consultancy and we have over 30 years' experience in the field of analytics, investigations, evaluation and governance. We are proud to be one of the leading suppliers of independent investigations on the NHS England Investigations Framework. **No other consultancy has more experience at delivering professional, sensitive and value adding investigations**

We have developed our investigative method to an extremely high standard and through our work we support trusts and other clients to improve their own investigative method that is now also being used by trusts to help them with their internal investigations. Our work is rigorous, and we work with some of the most experienced investigators in the country. We are one of very few investigation services who are ISO accredited for our quality and information governance processes and we believe this gives us the credibility and assurance you need at this vital time. All of our practitioners are security cleared to either BPSS standards or DBS checked, and many of our practitioners are clinically trained.

Our investigations and reviews are robust, proportionate, evidence-based and supported by the most up to date examples of good practice. We offer an analytical service too, helping identify correlations and themes between incidents; we develop practical plans to resolve contributory factors, taking a proactive approach to patient safety and aiming to prevent the recurrence of incidents.

## Our independence

As a firm, we value our independence and integrity to the utmost. We have built a solid, long-standing reputation for delivering independent investigations, reviews and evaluations which can be trusted by our clients and regulatory bodies nationally. Niche is a wholly owned (by its Directors), independent consultancy. We have no external shareholders, and no contractual or other relationships with any other organisation which would compromise our independence. Our Directors and senior staff have no conflicting interests in any other organisation, and we ask them to make regular declarations in this regard.

It is crucial that our clients, regulators and families that we work with can be assured that we will take an independent view, regardless of the bill-payer and consequences of our findings. We always make clear that we welcome corrections of factual accuracy in our work, but we are wholly and independently responsible for our findings, conclusions and recommendations. No other agency – including our client – has the authority to “sign off” our report, or to insist on a particular form of finding. **It is crucial to us that our independence allows the truth to be safely surfaced.**

**insight  
integrity  
impact**



### Kate Jury - Partner

Kate has had a 20 year career in healthcare governance and has worked with over 300 clients nationally in this space. Kate has hands on experience in the NHS acute sector and also has a 12 year career in consultancy including director level positions within Deloitte LLP.



### Mary-Ann Bruce- Partner

Mary-Ann is a qualified and experienced nurse and with this background has also had a career with the Audit Commission and senior roles within Mazars. Mary-Ann has led several key investigations nationally and has developed system-wide mortality review processes.

**niche**