Auditing journals for adherence to editorial policy and peer review

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Background

- Journals differ considerably in the editorial processes and standards they employ, which makes editorial quality difficult to monitor[1].

- Maintaining consistent standards across all journals is challenging for any publisher with a large portfolio such as BioMed Central.

- International organizations such as COPE[2], CSE[3] and ICMJE[4] provide guidelines and advice that help define and maintain editorial standards.

- COPE has developed a tool for auditing journals[5] for compliance with its Code of Conduct and Best Practice guidelines which is available to all COPE members.
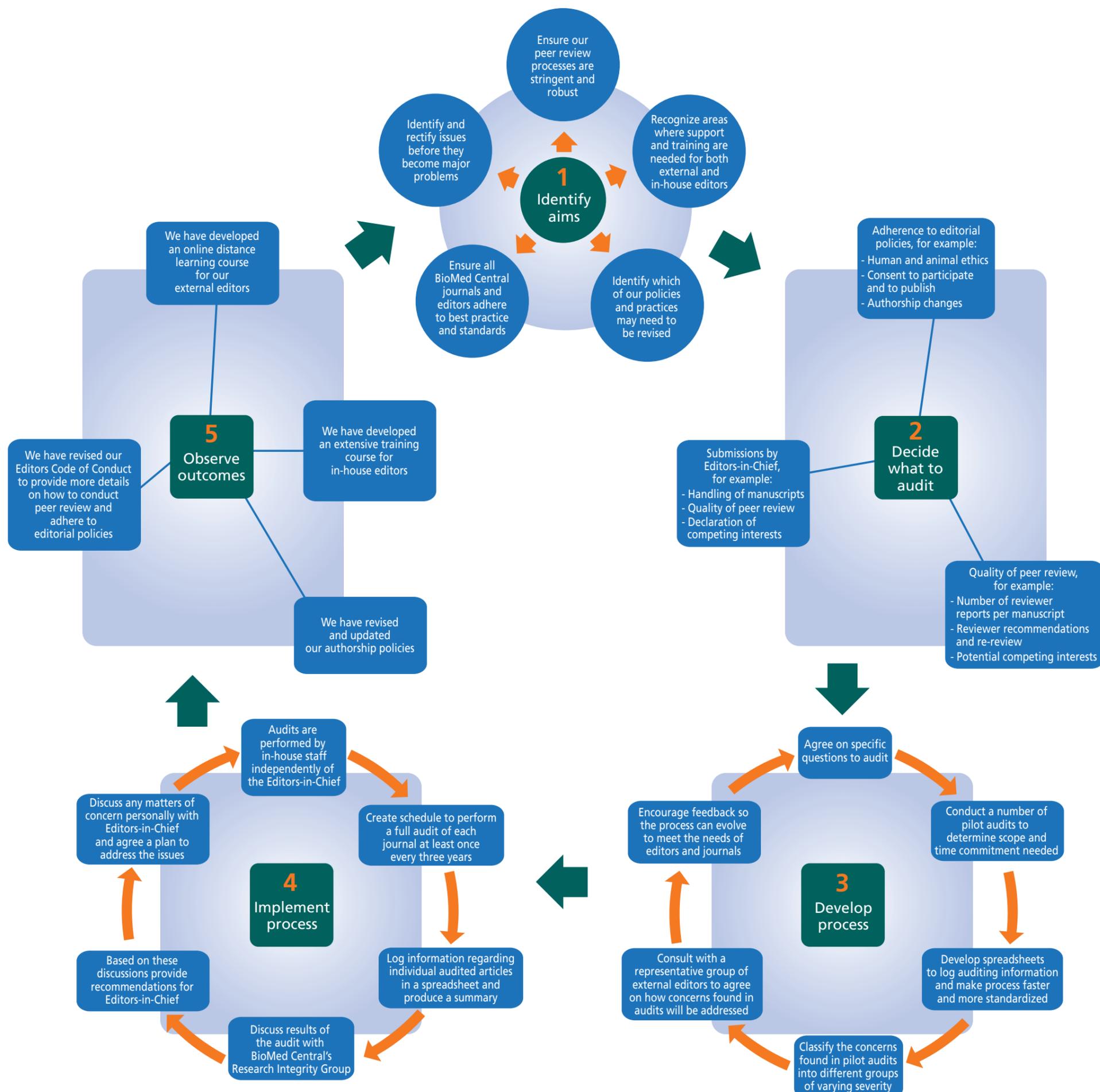
- We have developed our own auditing process and tools based on the above guidelines.

Methods

- Please see how we developed the auditing process for our journals below:

Conclusions

- Results of pilot audits suggest they are a useful way of identifying gaps in knowledge and improvements that need to be made.

- On the basis of audit results so far we have been able to improve training, clarify editorial policy and make improvements to editorial processes so that the publisher can provide appropriate support for Editors.

References

1. Jefferson et al JAMA. 2002;287(21):2786-2790
2. Committee on Publication Ethics publicationethics.org
3. Council of Science Editors scienceeditors.org
4. The International Committee of Medical Journal Editors icmje.org
5. Auditing tool available to COPE members publicationethics.org/resources/audit

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