

Voices into action

Working with us in 2010

A guide for local involvement networks (LINKs), overview and scrutiny committees, foundation trusts' boards of governors and other local voluntary and representative groups

February 2010, Issue 2



This is the second issue of our guidance. It gives you an update of how you can work with us. Thank you to those groups who have already sent us information about the health and adult social care issues that matter to you.

Key messages

Read the essential standards of quality and safety that people can expect from health services that are registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) from April 2010 and from adult social care services from October 2010.

www.cqc.org.uk/guidanceforprofessionals/registration/newregistrationsystem/howthenewregistrationsystemwork/complyingwithnewregulations.cfm

You can now send us information about any health and adult social care services **at any time** using our new web form at **www.cqc.org.uk/localvoices** or to our local staff.

Send your **information about providers of social care or independent health care by**

31 March 2010. This will help us decide whether they meet the essential standards of quality and safety.

Send your views about how well your local council is **commissioning (purchasing) adult social care services by 31 March 2010.** This will help us assess their performance for 2009/10. LINKs and overview and scrutiny committees can also comment on the information we already hold about councils' performance (see below).

Any information you send after this date is very important to help us monitor these services during the year. You can also continue to tell us about any NHS services or primary care trusts that commission services **at any time.**

What is the Care Quality Commission?

CQC is the independent regulator of health care and adult social care services in England. We also protect the interests of people whose rights are restricted under the Mental Health Act.

Whether services are provided by the NHS, local authorities or by private or voluntary organisations, we make sure that people get better care by:

- Driving improvement across health and adult social care.
- Putting people first and championing their rights.
- Acting swiftly to remedy bad practice.

- Gathering and using knowledge and expertise, and working with others.

People who use health and social care services are at the heart of our work, so we want to make sure that their voices are heard.

You can learn more about CQC on our website, by reading *About the Care Quality Commission* at www.cqc.org.uk/publications.cfm?fde_id=10979 and more about how we are involving people by going to www.cqc.org.uk/publications.cfm?fde_id=12419

How can you send information to us?

Your group can tell us your views and experiences of local services by sending information through our website at www.cqc.org.uk/localvoices or by talking to local CQC staff. Ring the National Contact Centre on 03000 616161 for details.

There is a form on our website to help you structure your information. It tells you the main areas we look at when we assess both providers and commissioners of services (including councils and primary care trusts). It also provides space for any other information that you think will help us. You can print off the form to decide which sections you want to complete. You do not need to fill in all the sections.

You can complete as many forms as you need about different providers or commissioners. You can also give us information that is about more than one organisation, or is about joined-up care. You may find it easier to send this information as an attachment to the form. You can attach any reports and surveys to the form when you submit it. It helps us if you can set out the key sections or messages in the box provided.

You do not need to show the information you send us to any health and social care services. However, we hope that you will use it as part of your discussions with local services about making care better.

The form is aimed at local groups. If you want to send us information as an individual, you need to ring our National Contact Centre in 03000 616161.

Do your local services meet our essential standards of quality and safety?

From April 2010, new essential standards of quality and safety are being introduced gradually across all health and adult social care services in England. By law, providers of health and adult social care will be registered with CQC if they meet essential standards and CQC will constantly monitor them to make sure they comply with the new legislation about to be passed in Parliament.

NHS trusts are the first to come into the new system, starting 1 April this year; they will be followed in October by providers of adult social care and by providers of independent health care. Over the coming two years, the system will include all dental practices and primary care too, including family doctors.

We need information from LINKs, overview and scrutiny committees and other groups to help us decide whether health and social care services meet these essential standards of quality and safety. In December 2009, we published our *Guidance about compliance: Essential standards of quality and safety* which can be found at www.cqc.org.uk/publications.cfm?fde_id=13512 and a summary version at www.cqc.org.uk/publications.cfm?fde_id=13510

Tell us about local councils that commission adult social care services in your area

We will continue to assess the performance of councils that commission adult social care services this year. The assessment will cover the period from April 2009 to April 2010. You can tell us what you think about local councils that commission or arrange the local adult social care services in your area. You can send us information using our webform, which sets out the main areas of performance we look at. For example:

- Do they put people first, to ensure they get the care they need?
- Do they make sure that their services are safe and of a good quality?
- Are they spending their budgets sensibly, to get the best services they can for people with the money available to them?
- Do they lead the services in their area well?

We would like to receive your information about councils by 31 March 2010.

We will also send all LINKs and overview and scrutiny committees the information we currently hold about your council's performance in a report, with a letter explaining how you can comment.

You can find out more about our assessments of councils at www.cqc.org.uk/guidanceforprofessionals/socialcare/councils.cfm

Do you have a complaint or concern about health or adult social care services?

The Care Quality Commission does not deal with individual complaints about services. If you have a complaint about a particular service, you should first contact the provider. For more information, go to www.cqc.org.uk

If you have urgent concerns about the wellbeing of a child or vulnerable adult, which may or may not be related to the quality or safety in a particular service, you should contact your local authority children's or adult social care department. For more information, go to www.cqc.org.uk

Top tips for sending us your views and experiences

- ✓ Tell us what matters most to your group and the people in your community.
- ✓ We are keen to hear about good care as well as services where improvements are needed.
- ✓ It helps us if you can name the providers or the commissioners of the services that you are giving us information about.
- ✓ Read about the new essential standards for quality and safety that we expect all health and social care services to meet. We will use these standards when we look at the information you give us.
- ✓ We are interested in recent experiences of care. It will help if you can give us information you have gathered since 1 April 2009.
- ✓ We are especially interested in whether care is 'joined-up' for people who need to use a range of different services and to hear the views and experiences of care of those people who have not been listened to, or have not received acceptable standards of care in the past.
- ✓ Try to find facts and examples to back up your information. These may include notes from a meeting or visit to a service, the results of a local survey, or a set of personal stories from individuals with dates and supporting documents.
- ✓ Please note that your information must not include any confidential or personal information, such as the names of individual patients or staff, or their contact details.
- ✓ You do not need to send us all the supporting information you have, but we may ask you to show us this to help us use your information.

What we will do with the information you send us?

Your information will become part of our profiles of health and adult social care organisations. This is where we keep all the information we have about each organisation. We will use your information:

- To help us spot problems or concerns in local services that we need to act upon.
- In our assessments and reviews of different types of organisations.
- To look at how well a service provider meets essential standards of quality and safety. This will help us decide if the service provider can register with us and be allowed to provide its services to local people.
- To help us decide if we need to ask a service provider to make improvements in some areas of its care, to show us that it will meet all these standards in future.
- To help us check whether primary care trusts and local councils are meeting the standards set for them by the Government to commission health and social care services in your area.

Giving you feedback

If you send us information through our website, we will send you an email to tell you that we have received it. We will also publish a report every year that says what we have done with the views and experiences of services that people have sent us. You will also get feedback from your discussions with local CQC staff about how we are using what you have told us.

Feedback about LINKs annual reports 2008/09

We have looked at all the LINKs annual reports for 2008/09 and checked them for any information that tells us about the quality or safety of individual providers of health or social care or about service commissioners.

Contact details and further information

Quality accounts and CQC

We will gather and use the information produced by NHS organisations in their quality accounts. This includes the information that comes from LINKs and overview and scrutiny committees. You do not need to send this information to us.

New consultation about our assessments of quality

We have published our national consultation on how we propose to assess the quality of health and social care services in the future. This includes how we will check on the quality of both service providers and commissioners. The consultation can be found at www.cqc.org.uk/getinvolved/consultations/assessmentsofquality.cfm

The deadline for comments is Tuesday 27 April 2010.

Giving us advice

We have set up an advisory group and sounding board for LINks, overview and scrutiny committees, foundation trusts' boards of governors and other voluntary and representative groups to advise us on what we do and how we do it. For information about this, please contact Clare.Delap@cqc.org.uk or Lucy.Hamer@cqc.org.uk in the involvement team. These groups have now met and we will be posting information about their work on our website shortly at www.cqc.org.uk/getinvolved.cfm. Thank you to all those who have contributed to these groups so far.

You can also subscribe to our monthly newsletter by visiting our website at www.cqc.org.uk/newsandevents/newsletter.cfm or by ringing our National Contact Centre on 03000 616161.

If you would like to see the first issue of this guidance (November 2009) please go to www.cqc.org.uk/publications.cfm?fde_id=13274

We hope you find this information useful. If you have any other issues you want to discuss with us, please contact your local CQC staff or email enquiries@cqc.org.uk or ring our National Contact Centre on **03000 616161**.