

Quality Outcomes and Contract Monitoring Framework



Hampshire
County Council

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Adults' Health and Care Policy	[051/24 V1]
Quality Outcomes and Contract Monitoring Framework	
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Summary:	This is a policy framework that details the approach taken by Adults' Health and Care in respect of reviewing, supporting, and monitoring provider quality. For detailed guidance, practitioners should refer to the internal Social Care Practice Manual page.
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Please ensure:

- **That you and your team read and implement this policy**
- **All staff are able to access this policy**
- **All previous versions are removed and this version used.**

1. Purpose

This framework combines policy and guidance in respect of how Adults' Health and Care works with social care providers, regulated and non-regulated, to support improvements, monitor contract performance, and sustain good quality services. This framework outlines the requirements to ensure both quality of service, and monitor performance against contractual obligations, and how these two elements combine to form an overarching view of a provider.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Adults' Health and Care staff and external care and support providers.

3. Policy Statement

Hampshire County Council is committed to ensuring that the care and support it commissioned is of suitable quality. Where there are causes for concern or standards fall below expectations, the County Council will implement this Framework. Adults' Health and Care will ensure that the care and support needs of individuals impacted by any support, quality improvement, contract remediation or termination is minimal and will take all steps to safeguard the people affected by such decisions.

4. References

- Sections 2, 5 and 19 of the Care Act 2014
- Hampshire, Southampton, Portsmouth, and Isle of Wight 4LSAB Large Scale Safeguarding Enquiry Protocol
- Care Quality Commission Fundamental Standards 2015
- Adults' Health and Care Large Scale Section 42 Safeguarding Policy 08/23
- The Care and Support Statutory Guidance (update 2 November 2022)
- Employment Agency Standards Inspectorate (EAS)
- UK Visa and Immigration Sponsorship Regulations
- The Public Contracts Regulations 2015

5. Stakeholder Consultation

This framework and supporting materials has been produced in collaboration with Adults' Health and Care operational, procurement, brokerage and commissioning leads and colleagues from the Integrated Care Board quality teams have also contributed.

6. Introduction, Background and Exceptions

The Quality Outcomes and Contract Monitoring (QOCM) framework is designed to ensure Adults' Health and Care has a robust mechanism for monitoring and responding to information in respect of the services we commission in terms of both the outcomes for people in receipt of care and support services and contract performance for the businesses commissioned to deliver.

This framework provides a system that allows the information held across the directorate to be brought together to provide an overview and contemporaneous assessment of how a service is performing and responding to market conditions.

The directorate works collaboratively with other Local Authorities, health authorities, commissioners, and partners to review available insights and intelligence to ensure evidence-based decision making.

Exceptions to this framework arise:

- when the Local Authority's Safeguarding Duty is applied
- if Adults' Health and Care does not contract with a social care provider and the concerns regarding the service delivery do not meet the Section 42 Safeguarding criteria

See [Adults' Health and Care Large Scale S42 Safeguarding Enquiries Policy](#) for further information.

7. Principles and Definitions

Principles

One quality assurance framework alone cannot offer a definitive conclusion about the quality of care; however, it does allow for:

- a consistent approach
- acknowledgement of market diversity
- exploratory review
- supported improvement

Quality Outcomes

As part of this framework Adults' Health and Care will use a defined set of quality indicators to assess and monitor the quality performance of providers and where necessary work with provider services to:

- prevent poor practice
- offer support and guidance and support improvements of the quality of services commissioned
- ensure the wellbeing and desired outcomes of the service users whilst undertaking any activity as part of this framework
- support a provider through the 'QOCM Process' where required

Where concerns about quality are raised, the range of approaches and tools within this framework will enable any member of staff to respond appropriately and in line with their role – all staff in community teams that work with, and support providers should use this framework for the basis of such work.

Contract Monitoring

Regular and appropriate contract monitoring arrangements are a key part of working with providers. Contract Monitoring, usually led through the directorates commissioning functions, is delivered in line with an individual contract terms and conditions, and is a primary way through which the directorate can:

- monitor a provider's delivery against a contract's key performance indicators
- identify and support performance or early improvement concerns
- ensure the people in receipt of services needs and safety continues to be at the heart of all activities

Contract Monitoring arrangements can take a number of forms, depending on what is most appropriate to the service or situation, but may include:

- regular formal meetings
- unscheduled provider visits
- audits of provider records
- Key Performance Indicator (KPI) workbooks and monitoring forms
- questionnaires

The QOCM framework aims to provide a consistent, evidence-based approach to decision making, throughout the Contract and Quality monitoring process. The supporting guidance will enable staff to share information about providers with partner agencies.

Providers will be supported to improve where appropriate and the framework also details what support may be offered.

The framework consists of four stages:

- monitor
- review
- support
- improve or change

The four stages are as follows:	
1. Monitor	
	<p>The directorate monitors providers activities and performance by a variety of means, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contract monitoring (see above) by commissioners • operational practitioners' day to day work with providers • insight and intelligence shared from partner agencies or people in receipt of services • regulatory and enforcement activity • submissions received from the provider in respect of their own performance or reviews of their own service • due diligence checks for new contracts • a dedicated Provider Quality Team to deliver and support with the primary monitoring and quality improvement role – this includes monitoring the regulatory position of providers that Adults' Health and Care purchase with based outside of Hampshire
2. Review	
	Adults' Health and Care makes use of a pre-defined set of

	<p>quality indicators from information available in the public domain, internally and through liaison with partners and people in receipt of services, to apply a RAG rating as a forward-looking measure of quality.</p> <p>The quality indicators enable the team to risk assess, monitor trends, and identify triggers that might suggest a provider’s quality is declining or that the service is not responding well to current market conditions.</p> <p>The RAG rating is a three-tiered approach, and the outcome of the assessment informs how the team interacts with the provider.</p> <p>There are two different tools used, one for the Care Quality Commission (CQC) registered services and one for non-regulated/registered support services.</p>
<p>3. Support</p>	
	<p>Adults’ Health and Care provides a range of activities and resources to support providers in delivering quality in care services. For example, Adult’s Health and Care IMPACT. Staff collaborate closely with colleagues in the Integrated Care Board to provide support in accordance with the services provided, for example nursing. Adults’ Health and Care may support or signpost the provider to a selection of good practice resources. Support may also include a visit, telephone assessment, signposting to workforce development or training activities or links to sector recognised guidance.</p>
<p>4. Improve or change</p>	
	<p>Where possible, Adults’ Health and Care seeks to gain assurance and evidence from the service provider that improvements and practice changes have been made and are sustainable. Where improvements or appropriate changes are not demonstrated Adults’ Health and Care reserves the right to implement contractual remediation steps.</p>

8. Purchasing Restrictions

Changes to purchasing and contracting status should be considered and applied in accordance with the contract terms where there are serious and ongoing quality, safeguarding concerns, or contract performance concerns, particularly where the concerns relate to the safety of service users which cannot be addressed by any other means.

This update introduces new guidance that a no new purchasing status must be applied in the following circumstances:

- every CQC inadequate rated service
- when a service is opened to Large Scale S42 Safeguarding Enquiry
- a service receives notification from UK Visas and Immigration that their overseas sponsorship licence has been suspended and/or revoked

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when Adults’ Health and Care, as part of their work with the provider, is not assured that it has appropriate service continuity plans in place to maintain a safe service. There are four **formal** restrictions that may be applied to a provider record. These are:

- **Purchase as Normal**
- **No New Purchase**
- **Purchase with Conditions** (agreed in advance with the provider)
- **Voluntary No New Purchase**

Purchase as Normal	There are no restrictions upon the provider, and they may be commissioned with as normal.
No New Purchase (Contract remediation)	There are restrictions upon the provider due to quality and/or safeguarding concerns and no new provisions should be commissioned with them.
Purchase with conditions (Agreed in advance with the provider and may also require a remediation plan)	The provider has voluntarily agreed to conditional purchasing to allow for consideration and/or improvements to be made to specific areas of concern. This will show on Care Director as Purchase with Conditions and the emphasis is on the provider to ensure the conditions are met. This will be a suggestion because of an Amber RAG rating with Service Manager approval. This will also mean that the Provider Quality Team is actively working with the provider.
Voluntary No New Purchase	The provider has voluntarily agreed to a full purchasing restriction for any new provisions until agreed actions have been undertaken.

A service manager or above is responsible for deciding on changes to a purchasing status for a provider. A letter must be written advising the provider of the decision and referencing any contractual defaults. These letters will also request a remediation plan (if appropriate) from the provider requesting detail of how they will address quality/safeguarding concerns and any contractual defaults. The letter will state the amount of time the provider has to respond in line with their contract terms.

Any purchasing restriction placed upon a provider must be reviewed on a **four weekly basis** to determine if the restriction is still required and if the risks remain unchanged. If a provider has a No New Purchase restriction for six months or more, the provider information and concerns will be escalated to a Head of Service for consideration regarding next steps.

9. Internal Quality Evaluations (RAG Ratings)

The Provider Quality Team internally evaluates providers using a RAG (Red, Amber Green) toolkit. The toolkit consists of eight quality indicators: CQC rating, QOCM or Large Scale S42 Safeguarding Enquiry status, Hampshire County Council purchasing status, CQC enforcement action, leadership of service, quality involvement and operational intelligence.

This is to ensure a breadth of information is used to determine any pro-active, or re-active action required by the County Council. It is important that, where possible, provider dashboards are updated by any team working with a provider, to reflect any recent visits, intelligence, current circumstances with a provider as well as responding to requests for feedback.

Depending upon the outcome of the evaluation, the Provider Quality Team will take action to support and advise the provider (Amber), intensively work with the provider by visiting and working with partners and colleagues in a supportive capacity (Red) or generate a self-assessment (Green).

10. Self-Assessment

The Local Authority has a duty under the Care Act 2014 to shape and oversee the local care market. Together with regulators the local authority also has a duty to ensure good quality and sustainable care and support. To enable Adults' Health and Care to have a standardised insight on as many Hampshire social care providers as possible this framework introduces pilots of a new provider self-assessment approach.

The self-assessment approach will be utilised initially as part of a joint contract and quality monitoring approach for the **Care Home Framework**. Providers will be required to complete a Self-Assessment form twice a year informing Adults' Health and Care about areas of activity within their services, including information such as:

- data regarding staffing and management of the service
- staffing structure
- training information such as, dementia care, behaviour support, person centred approach and recognising early changes in need
- data regarding complaints and safeguarding incidents

This information will be used to inform prioritisation of visits, RAG ratings and interim quality review