

Voices into action

Your part in our assessment of health and adult social care in 2009/10



A guide for local involvement networks (LINKs), overview and scrutiny committees, local safeguarding children boards, foundation trusts' boards of governors, learning disability partnership boards, local voluntary organisations and representative groups

November 2009

It is important for us to hear what people who use services have to say about their experiences. We are therefore grateful to those groups who work hard to gather comments from local people. You can now send us information when you want to about the health and adult social care issues that matter to you. This guide will explain how you can do this.

Key messages

You do not need to write a commentary this year about your NHS trust's declaration for the NHS performance ratings in 2009/10.

To help us judge how well NHS providers meet essential standards, please send us information about any NHS provider by the **end of January 2010**.

To help us judge how well social care providers and independent healthcare providers meet essential standards, please send us information about them by the **end of March 2010**.

You can also send us information at any time of the year. We will use your information whenever you send it, as part of our ongoing checks on services.

You can now tell us about any health or adult social care service provider. You can also tell us about primary care trusts and local councils that commission services to make sure the right services are provided in your area.

You can send us information, including your own reports, using a new form on our website from 1 December. You can also share it with our local area managers.

We also encourage you to share any information with local services to help improvement.

We do not have powers to deal with individual complaints.

What is the Care Quality Commission?

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) is the new independent regulator of all health and adult social care in England. We inspect all health and adult social care services in England. We also protect the interests of people whose rights are restricted under the Mental Health Act.

We promote the rights and interests of people who use services and we have a wide range of enforcement powers to take action on their behalf if services are unacceptably poor.

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 plan to involve people by reading *Voices into Action* – our ‘statement of involvement’ www.cqc.org.uk/db/documents/A4_Report_2009_01.pdf

Which services and organisations do we check on?

We check on all health and social care services **provided** by the NHS, local authorities, voluntary organisations or private companies. These include acute and community hospitals, ambulance services, foundation trusts, services for people with mental health or learning disabilities, community nursing services, hospices, care homes, supported living services, transport by an NHS provider and substance misuse rehabilitation services. For a full list of services regulated by the Care Quality Commission go to our website: www.cqc.org.uk/aboutcqc/whatwedo/activitiesweregulate.cfm

We also check on primary care trusts and local councils that **commission** health and social care services. Commission means that they arrange the local services that people need in their area.

Who can send us information about health and social care services?

We want to make it as easy as possible for you to tell us about local people’s views of both health and adult social care services, and to do this at any time of the year. Anyone can send us information about their experiences of using these services. This includes representatives of people who use services, their carers and families, representatives of the public, as well as individuals themselves. We will try to use as much information as we can when we assess services.

In our first year, we are building relationships with local groups that represent people who use services. The main groups we are working with at the moment are local involvement networks (LINKs), overview and scrutiny committees and foundation trusts’ boards of governors.

We are also inviting learning disability partnership boards and local safeguarding children's boards to send information to us, building on their involvement in the NHS performance ratings in 2008/09 (known before as the annual health check).

From 2010, we will be inviting a much wider range of representative groups to contribute their views and experiences of services into our assessments. We will also be finding out the best ways to bring more individual voices and experiences into our assessments. We will tell you more about this in 2010.

How can you send information to us?

You can tell us your views and experiences by talking to your local area manager at CQC (contact details from our National Contact Centre – see back page) and sharing reports with them, or sending your information through our website at www.cqc.org.uk/localvoices from 1st December 2009. There is a form on the website to help you structure your information, or you can directly send us reports and surveys.

You can share information with your local area manager in whatever way suits you best. They may ask you some questions to make sure they know how many people the information covers, or whether it has been discussed with other organisations.

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.

What can you send us information about?

We are interested in any information that will help us check up on health and adult social care services. You can give us your views and experiences of any of the services and organisations we regulate, or tell us about how they work together in your area.

You can tell us where you think a service is providing good care, as well as examples where care is poor. We are especially interested in 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.

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 the complaints page on our website.

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 the safeguarding page on our website.

Telling us about health and adult social care service providers

From April 2010, all organisations that provide health and adult social care services in England will be required to register with us to be able to operate. To do this they will have to meet essential standards of safety and quality. You can give us your views and experiences about any of these standards.

Standards for health and adult social care service providers

Involvement and information

We are looking at how people are involved in their care

- How do people understand about the care they are getting?
- How do people receive the information they need about their care?
- How do people give their informed consent to treatment and care?
- How are people supported to say what they think about their care?

Personalised care, treatment and support

We are looking at how people are given the individual care and welfare they need

- How do people receive the food and nutrition they need?
- How do service providers cooperate with other services to meet people's needs?

Safeguarding and safety

We are looking at how vulnerable people who use services are looked after safely

- How are medicines given at the right time and in the right way?
- How are medical devices used and managed properly?
- How suitable and safe are premises?
- How safe do people feel?
- How available, safe and suitable is equipment for individuals' needs?

Standards for health and adult social care service providers (contd)

Suitability of staffing

We are looking at how people get the right care from the right staff

- How do services choose staff with the skills to match people's needs?
- How do services make sure that there are enough staff to do the work?
- How do services make sure staff are properly trained?

Quality and management

We are looking at how people know they are getting the best and safest services

- How are services being made better?
- How are people supported to say how they feel?
- How are checks done to make sure that staff do their job properly?

Suitability of management

We are looking at how people's care and treatment are being met

- Are staff registered with their professional bodies if they need to be?
- Are staff supported to do their job well?
- How do staff use what they are told to make services better?

Telling us about primary care trusts and local councils

You can tell us what you think about primary care trusts and local councils that commission or arrange the local services in your area. These are some of the areas of performance we are looking at:

- 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?

Telling us about how well services work together

You can tell us whether services work well together in your area:

- How well people are cared for when they move between services such as hospitals or care homes and community services.
- How well information about people's care or treatment is shared between different services.
- How well people's care is planned across different services.

Giving us information for our national reviews and studies

You can also tell us about services that we are looking at in our national reviews and studies, such as our review of health and social care for families with disabled children and young people. We will let you know if there are opportunities for you to support local improvement work in services as part of these studies.

Top tips for sending us your views and experiences

- ✓ Tell us what matters most to your group and the people in your community. What are the most important points you want to get across?
- ✓ Think about examples of good practice, as well as problems or areas that you think should be improved.
- ✓ Read about the new essential standards for quality and safety that we expect all health and social care services to meet. Try to match these standards (on pages 4 and 5 of this guide) with the information you want to 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.
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ It will help us to know whether the views or experiences you tell us about are common among the people in your group or community.

Our local area managers can offer advice on putting together your information and evidence.

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.

We may also use your information:

- To look at how commissioners of services (like primary care trusts) find out what services people need, and if money is being spent wisely to provide services in the local area.
- To help us check what local councils tell us about their own performance in their self-assessments in 2010.

Over the next few months, we will be giving you more information about how we are going to assess commissioners and how we would like to involve you in this.

How will we give 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 area managers about how we are using what you have told us.

How else can people get involved in the work of CQC?

Giving us advice

We have set up an advisory group and sounding board for LINKs, overview and scrutiny committees and other representative bodies 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.

Responding to consultations

Please see **www.cqc.org.uk/getinvolved/consultations.cfm** for more details of our latest consultations.

Further information

To send us information about local views and experiences of health and social care, please visit our web page **www.cqc.org.uk/localvoices** from 1 December 2009.

For more information, please visit our website **www.cqc.org.uk**.

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.

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