

## Practical approaches to quality assurance

Quality assurance involves the monitoring and evaluation of the service to ensure that the quality is being met. The following recommendations are aimed to supporting services to deliver effective quality assurance and evidence care that meets regulatory expectations. This information may be useful to newer frontline managers and other staff who have limited experience of quality assurance processes.

<b>Ensure that your systems and processes are effective</b>	<p>Your quality assurance systems and processes need to be easy to manage and quick to demonstrate.</p> <p>Online solutions can save time and avoid an abundance of paperwork. Our <a href="#">Guide to improvement</a> includes what to consider when choosing systems and processes (pages 21 to 27).</p> <p>Whether you are using an off-the shelf system or one you have developed internally, ensure those using your system understand how to use it.</p>
<b>Ensure you understand what good governance looks like</b>	<p>CQC regulated providers need to be able to demonstrate that they meet <a href="#">Regulation 17</a> focused on Good Governance.</p> <p>This will require both awareness of the regulation and ensuring staff involved in your quality assurance processes understand how to effectively check that quality care is being delivered.</p> <p>Our <a href="#">Good and outstanding care guide</a> provides some examples of good governance (pages 245 to 251) and quality assurance (pages 259 to 268).</p>
<b>Involve more people</b>	<p>Involve a wide range of staff and others in your quality assurance. This does not need to be limited to those directly working for your service.</p> <p>Ensure that the process engages with the people you support, their families, advocates, external professionals, the wider community and different levels of your staff team from frontline carers to senior managers and trustees.</p> <p>Involving more people in quality assurance can build people's pride and commitment to your service and it a great example of Well-led care and support.</p>
<b>Develop the skills for your workforce</b>	<p>To ensure that your quality assurance processes are sustainable, avoid limiting it to simply management or quality / compliance leads.</p> <p>Look to develop internal expertise across different levels of your staff team. Provide practical opportunities to build confidence across a wide range of frontline staff (for example provide handover of parts of the internal audit process, empower them to become quality champions etc.)</p>

<p><b>Measure your performance with what you and the regulator expect</b></p>	<p>Ensure that the way that you measure your ongoing performance enables you to know if quality is being achieved (and potentially improved upon). If your current method means you do not know, it is not effective enough.</p> <p>Closely align how you can measure quality to what the CQC expect too so you can demonstrate your performance to them during inspections.</p> <p>If you need to provide evidence to multiple different sources (e.g. CQC, local authority, head office), try to agree the most practical ways to avoid duplication when reporting.</p>
<p><b>Use multiple methods to capture and record quality</b></p>	<p>This might include using mock inspections, spot checks, care plan audits, feedback from general engagement with people and staff, e-surveys, focus groups, and incident and accident reviews.</p> <p>Discuss with the people you support, staff and others to determine what are the most practical and effective methods for your service.</p> <p>Ensure you have robust methods of storing the latest evidence, with secure online records preferable. Regularly review your evidence to ensure it is timely and a strong recent example of delivering quality care.</p>
<p><b>Decide the frequency of your quality assurance processes</b></p>	<p>Discuss with your people, your staff and stakeholders what is needed to maintain quality care. Examples below show some of the frequency and variance across adult social care on quality assurance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Internal auditing – daily, weekly, monthly</li> <li>■ Mock inspections or equivalent – monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly, every 6-months, annually</li> </ul>
<p><b>Build the confidence of your staff to talk confidently about quality</b></p>	<p>Ensure that your staff team are capable and confident to be able to share practical examples of the quality of care that is delivered.</p> <p>Provide opportunities for them to understand that the CQC and others may be looking for as part of their development. Use supervisions and team meetings to check their understanding.</p>
<p><b>Evidencing your quality</b></p>	<p>Ensure findings from your quality assurance processes are clearly documented, and actioned where required.</p> <p>Look at Skills for Care’s <a href="#">Good and outstanding care guide</a> to learn how other services prepare for inspection and evidence quality.</p> <p>Consider how your audience (from trustees to your CQC inspector) will want to view the evidence and ensure it can be easily collated and presented.</p>
<p><b>Corroborate your evidence</b></p>	<p>It is important that the evidence provided can be corroborated by different staff and the people who you care and support.</p> <p>Our <a href="#">Information video</a> provides more insight into effective ways to corroborate evidence (fast-forward to 8.58 in the film).</p>

<p><b>Maintain quality</b></p>	<p>Take steps to ensure you can maintain quality and compliance whenever issues arise.</p> <p>Quickly review and prioritise issues where quality improvement is needed (see our <a href="#">Practical approaches to quality improvement</a> to help).</p> <p>Ensure management and those overseeing compliance are made aware of any emerging issues impacting quality. Try to identify if these are standalone issues or unpick issues that might be impacting multiple areas of care.</p>
<p><b>Review your process</b></p>	<p>Follow a regular cycle of planning, action and review. Make sure your evidence feeds into this process to ensure you build on this data and can respond to the needs of your service users and staff.</p> <p>Consider how quality issues can be effectively addressed through strengthening your workforce planning, productivity, and quality. Skills for Care's <a href="#">Workforce productivity and quality model</a> can help.</p>

**Further information and advice about Quality improvement and quality assurance is available from**  
[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/COVID-19webinars](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/COVID-19webinars)