



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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Health Standards Framework

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Part 1

Introduction

In 2013, Welsh Government agreed the need for a review of the Standards for Health Services in Wales and the Fundamentals of Care Standards providing an opportunity to align standards in healthcare for the NHS. This new Health Standards Framework (Health Standards) has been designed to be implemented in all health care services, settings and locations. (References to “organisations” also apply to healthcare teams and services).

Every person in Wales who uses health services or supports others to do so, whether in hospital, primary care, the community or in their own home has the right to receive excellent quality care. In Wales, like other countries, there are many examples of good health care. However there are examples of people who use health services being let down by the quality and safety of the service they receive. The NHS in Wales needs to demonstrate that it is doing the right thing, in the right way, in the right place, at the right time and with the right staff.

In order for people in Wales to understand what to expect when they access health services and what their responsibilities are, there is a need for Health Standards which will drive continuous improvements in quality. These will be centred on individuals and their needs across all life stages. They will set out the expectations for the people of Wales whether they are receiving health care or providing it. It is important that the development of the new Health Standards Framework for Wales is developed and owned by people who deliver services and people who use them.

Legislative Framework

Welsh Ministers are required by legislation (Section 47 of the Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003), to prepare and publish a statement of standards in relation to the provision of health care by and for Welsh NHS organisations. The Welsh Government is also required to keep the standards under review and publish amended statements whenever it considers it appropriate.

Vision and Principles

Wales has strong systems in place to ensure quality and safety in the NHS. Safe Care, Compassionate Care: A National Governance Framework www.wales.gov.uk/docs/dhss/report/130710safecarefen.pdf sets out the expectations that all services should be patient centred and driven by their needs. Achieving shared values and expectations is achieved by:

- doing the right things well
- being a listening organisation and knowing how well we are doing
- being open and honest in everything we do
- care, compassion and commitment
- leading by example

The Welsh Government Quality Delivery Plan for the NHS in Wales (2012 – 2016) www.wales.gov.uk/docs/dhss/publications/120517planen.pdf sets out the clear vision for a quality-driven NHS Wales which is to achieve the triple aim of:

- providing the highest possible quality and excellent experience
- improving health outcomes and helping reduce inequalities
- getting high value from all our services

The Health Standards Framework will form the cornerstone of the overall quality assurance system within the NHS in Wales. Alongside the Framework for Assuring Service User Experience (2013) www.wales.nhs.uk/governance-emanual/opensdoc/214368 will help to ensure that people have positive first and lasting impressions, that they receive care in safe, supportive and healing environments and that they understand and are involved in their care.

Wales has committed to Co-production which is central to the Social Services and Well Being Act. It is an approach to public services which involves people, communities, and the professionals who support them, pooling their expertise to deliver more effective and sustainable outcomes and an improved experience for all involved. The basic concept is equal partnership between those who provide a service and those who receive it. The core is in that word **'equal'**.

To support the vision of quality and safety the NHS in Wales is embracing a prudent healthcare approach. These are built around a set of principles which state that any service or person providing care should:

- Do no harm. The principle that interventions which do harm or provide no clinical benefit are eliminated;
- Carry out the minimum appropriate intervention. The principle that treatment should begin with the basic proven tests and interventions. The intensity of testing and treatment is consistent with the seriousness of the illness and the patient's goals;
- Organise the workforce around the "only do, what only you can do" principle. The principle that all people working for the NHS in Wales should operate at the top of their clinical competence. Nobody should be seen routinely by a consultant, for example, when their needs could be appropriately dealt with by an advanced nurse practitioner.

- Promote equity. The principle that it is the individual's clinical need which matters when it comes to deciding NHS treatment;
- Remodel the relationship between user and provider on the basis of co-production.

All these principles are underlined by a commitment to rebalance the healthcare system by strengthening primary and community-based care to support the establishment of an equal relationship between patient and professionals and changing the relationship between healthcare services and the public.

Purpose

The Health Standards have been designed so that they can be implemented in all health care services, settings and locations. They create a basis for improving the quality and safety of healthcare services by identifying strengths and highlighting areas for improvement.

The Health Standards:

- embrace the principles of co-production and prudent health care
- offer a common language to describe what high quality, safe and reliable healthcare services look like
- can be used by people of all ages to understand what high quality safe healthcare should be and what they should expect from a well-run service
- enable a person-centred approach by focusing on outcomes for service users and driving care which places people at the centre of all that the service does
- create a basis for improving the quality and safety of healthcare services by identifying strengths and highlighting areas for improvement
- can be used in day-to-day practice to encourage a consistent level of quality and safety across the country and across all services
- promote practice that is up to date, effective, and consistent
- promote accountability to service users, the public and funding agencies for the quality and safety of services by setting out how providers should organise, deliver and improve services
- enable people to contribute fully to their own health and well-being
- recognise the quality standards for other care and support providers issued under the Social Services Regulation and Inspection Bill.

Part 2

The Health Standards

Quality Themes:

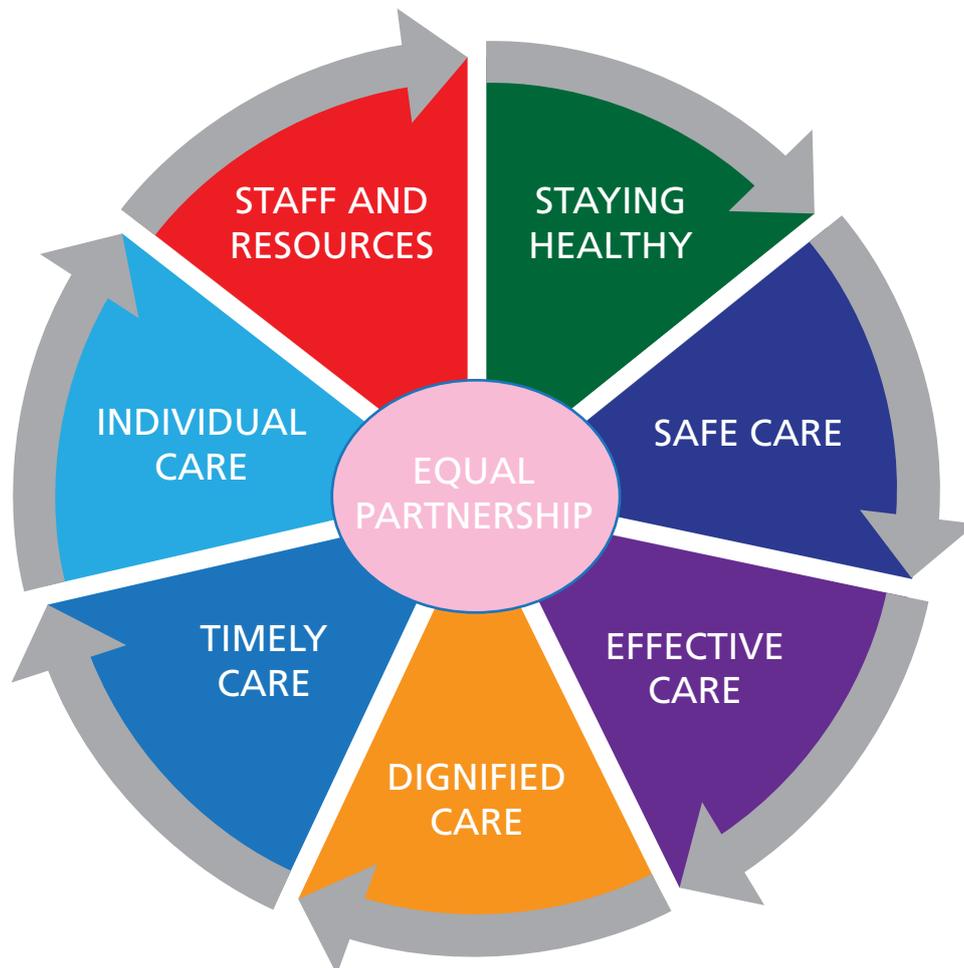
The Health Standards Framework is based on seven quality themes which include a number of standards. The standards are not listed in priority order and it is recognised that there is some overlap across themes and standards. There are certain standards that flow through the document, although they are identified as individual standards namely, governance and accountability, information management and technology including records management, research development and innovation, equality diversity and human rights and effective communication.

The standards framework will be underpinned by supporting guidance produced for health services. This will be posted on the NHS Wales Governance e-Manual website and will include:

- identification of the theme
- the outcome
- a description of the scope of each standard relevant to each theme
- what the standard means for patients, service users, carers, staff and organisations
- signposting to relevant legislation, requirements, tools and supporting information.

Guidance will be updated as necessary to reflect new areas for improvement and national priorities. The NHS Wales Governance e-Manual can be accessed at: www.wales.nhs.uk/governance-emanual/

Health Standards Framework – Quality Themes



Equal Partnership Between Those Who Provide A Service And Those Who Receive It

Standards:**Theme 1: Staying Healthy**

Outcome: People in Wales are well informed to manage their own physical and mental health

Standards:

Health Promotion protection and Improvement – Organisations and people in Wales will work together to improve health and well-being and reduce health inequalities by:

- knowing and understanding what care, support and opportunities are available
- supporting people to engage, participate and feel valued in society
- supporting people to be healthy happy and lead an active life
- making sure that children have a good healthy start in life
- having systems in place to identify and act upon significant public health issues
- supporting people to make decisions about their health and behaviour that impacts on their health and the health and wellbeing of their children
- supporting people to avoid harm to their health, by making healthy choices and accepting opportunities to prevent ill health
- promoting healthy and safe workplaces
- promoting the health and well being of staff
- ensuring that needs assessment and public health advice informs service planning, policies and practices
- having systems and plans to prevent and control communicable diseases and provide immunisation programmes; and having effective programmes to screen and detect disease
- improving population health

Theme 2: Safe Care

Outcome: People in Wales are safe and protected from harm and protect themselves from known harm

Standards:

Safe and Clinically Effective Care

Organisations will provide people with safe, effective treatment and care by:

- supporting people to protect their own and their families' health
- keeping people safe and protecting them from avoidable harm through appropriate care, treatment and support
- ensuring people receive a high quality safe service whilst in the care of the NHS which is:

based on agreed best practice and guidelines including those defined by National Service Frameworks, National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE), NHS Wales Patient Safety Solutions, and professional bodies; that complies with safety and clinical directives in a timely way; and which is demonstrated by procedures for recording and auditing compliance with and variance from any of the above.

Preventing pressure and tissue damage

Organisations will ensure that people are helped to look after their skin and that every effort is made to prevent people from developing pressure and tissue damage.

Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) and Decontamination

To protect people and their families from avoidable harm organisations will comply with legislation and guidance on IPC and decontamination, in order to:

- eliminate or minimise the risk of healthcare associated and community acquired infections
- emphasise high standards of hygiene and reflect best practice
- support, encourage and enable patients, service users, carers, visitors and staff to achieve and maintain high standards of hygiene
- segregate, handle, transport and dispose of waste so as to minimise risks to patients, service users, carers, staff, the public and environment
- handle human tissue and subsequently dispose of it appropriately and sensitively

Nutrition and hydration

In order for people to live a healthy life and recover swiftly from illness or injury organisations will ensure that individual nutritional needs are fully met, complying with legislation and guidance to ensure that:

- individual nutritional and fluid needs are assessed, recorded and addressed
- any necessary support with eating, drinking or feeding and swallowing is identified and provided
- breast feeding is promoted and supported
- where food and drink are provided: a choice of food and drink are offered, which is prepared safely and meets the nutritional, therapeutic, religious and cultural needs of all; and is accessible 24 hours a day

Medicines Management

To ensure people receive medication for the correct reason, the right medication at the dose and at the right time, organisations will ensure that:

- there is compliance with legislation, licensing and good practice guidance for all aspects of medicines management including controlled drugs
- health professionals are qualified and trained in prescribing, dispensing and administering medicines within their individual scope of practice
- there is timely, accessible and appropriate medicines advice and information for patients, service users, their carers and staff including the reporting of drug related adverse incidents

Blood Management

Organisations will ensure that there are robust governance systems in place to maintain a safe sufficient supply of blood, blood components and blood products to support timely appropriate and effective use for all through:

- compliance with legislation and national guidance on the supply and appropriate use of blood, blood components and products
- the use of schemes and systems to actively manage stock, minimise wastage, and effectively plan for shortages
- a continuous innovative programme of education, training and competence assessment for all staff involved in the transfusion process in line with national strategy

- processes that enhance the safety of blood transfusion and support the recognition, reporting of, and shared learning from all incidents, adverse blood events and reactions
- a collaborative approach to optimal blood management

Medical Devices, Equipment and Diagnostic Systems

Organisations must ensure the safe and effective procurement, use and disposal of medical equipment, devices and diagnostic systems that:

- conform to health, safety and environmental legislation and guidance
- are maintained, cleaned and calibrated in accordance with manufacturer's guidelines
- are appropriate for their intended use and for the environment in which they are used
- decontaminates reusable medical devices properly
- is supported by an ongoing programme of training and competence assessment for staff and users
- there is timely reporting and management of any device, equipment or system faults

Patient Information and Consent

Organisations will recognise and address the needs of people by:

- respecting people's rights so they have a voice and control
- involving people in making decisions that affect their lives
- considering individual circumstances
- providing opportunities to discuss and agree options
- letting them speak for themselves or to have someone who can do it for them
- providing timely and accessible information on people's conditions and care, medication, treatment and support arrangements
- treating their information confidentially
- obtaining valid consent, in line with best practice guidance; and assessing and caring for people in line with the Mental Capacity Act 2005, and when appropriate the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards 2009

Safeguarding Children and Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults

People will be protected from abuse and neglect by ensuring that organisations and services promote and protect the welfare and safety of children and vulnerable adults by:

- conforming with legislation and guidance
- ensuring effective multi-professional and multi-agency working and co-operation
- training and supporting staff to recognise and act on issues and concerns, including sharing of information; and sharing good practice and learning
- demonstrating assurance of safeguarding across all levels of the organisation

Citizen engagement and feedback

Organisations will ensure that people are actively involved in giving feedback both positive and negative in order to contribute to the continuous improvement of services. People, who receive care, and their families, must be empowered to describe their experiences to those who provided their care so there is a clear understanding of what is working well and what is not. There will be a wide range of approaches to support this partnership such as:

- engaging with partners in the design, planning and delivery of services
- seeking feedback from patients, service users and carers, about their experiences. Demonstrating that their views and feedback are taken into account in making changes to improve services

Dealing with concerns and managing incidents

Organisations will comply with legislation and guidance to deal with complaints, incidents, near misses, and claims – known collectively as ‘concerns’ which ensure that they:

- report, act upon and respond to concerns in an appropriate and timely manner; ensuring they are handled and investigated openly, effectively and by those appropriately skilled to do so
- offer patients, service users and their carers support including advocacy and where appropriate redress
- provide appropriate support to health staff; and learn and share lessons from local and national reviews to improve services

Theme 3: Effective Care

Outcome: People in Wales receive the right care and support as locally as possible and are enabled to contribute to making that care successful

Standards:

Information Management and Communications Technology

Organisations must have processes in place to operate and manage information and data effectively and to maintain business continuity. Organisations must ensure that data quality is robust and timely, and that they use information to review assess and improve services, and share information with relevant partners using protocols when necessary.

Organisations and services support and facilitate patient care and service delivery by:

- developing and using safe and secure information systems in accordance with legislation and within a robust governance framework
- having processes to operate and manage information and data effectively and to maintain business continuity
- ensuring data quality is robust and timely
- using information to review, assess and improve services
- sharing information with relevant partners using protocols when necessary
- supporting the provision of high quality services by promoting the effective and appropriate use of information
- understanding their own performance and managing improvement in a systematic and effective way.

Organisations will ensure that all records are in accordance with legislation and guidance so that they are:

- designed, prepared, reviewed and accessible to meet the required needs
- stored securely, maintained, are retrievable in a timely manner and disposed of appropriately
- accurate, up-to-date, complete, understandable and contemporaneous in accordance with professional standards and guidance; and shared when appropriate

Communicating effectively

If co-production is to become a reality effective two way communication is critical to an equal relationship between people and professionals and changing the relationship between healthcare services and the public.

Organisations and services will comply with legislation and guidance to ensure effective, accessible, appropriate and timely communication, paying particular attention to:

- the purpose of communication
- effectiveness of communication
- methods of communication
- security of communication
- appropriateness of communication internally and externally with patients, service users, carers and staff using a range of media and formats
- about patients, service users and their carers on the full range and locations of services they provide
- addressing language and communication needs e.g. dementia, stroke, Welsh speakers and people with sensory loss

Research development and innovation

The Welsh NHS provides an excellent environment for research and innovation, because of its comparatively compact and integrated structure, its planned and co-ordinated approach to delivery, and its animating principles of prudent healthcare. The importance of demonstrating clear visible leadership, a strong collaborative approach with university and industry partners and an expanded NHS capacity to support cutting edge clinical research and innovation support is now vital in driving improvements in NHS Wales.

Organisations and services will:

- consistently apply the principles and requirements of the Research Governance Framework for Health and Social Care
- ensure that research and innovation has a direct impact on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of services, and delivering better health and wellbeing outcomes for people
- have a structured approach to promoting and supporting research and innovation

Organisations and services will be responsible for reducing waste, variation and harm by:

- including audit and recognised improvement methodologies
- identifying and participating in quality improvement activities and programmes
- supporting and enabling teams to identify and address local improvement priorities
- using recognised quality improvement methodologies
- measuring and recording progress, and spreading the learning

Theme 4: Dignified Care

Outcome: People in Wales are treated with dignity and respect and treat others the same

Standards:

Dignity and Respect

Organisations will ensure that people's experience of health care is one where everyone is treated with dignity, respect, compassion and kindness. Where possible organisations will respond flexibly to meet people's needs rather than expect them to conform to what suits the organisation. Organisations will recognise and address the physical, psychological, social, cultural, linguistic, spiritual needs and preferences of individuals and that their right to dignity and respect will be protected and provided for.

Dignity and Respect encompasses:

Privacy – in terms of personal space, modesty and privacy in personal care and confidentiality of treatment and personal information

Self esteem, self worth, identity and a sense of oneself – a clean and respectable appearance, being able to exercise choice, and being listened to

Autonomy – based on opportunities to make informed decisions and choices

The following fundamentals of care will be met:

Rest and Sleep

Consideration will be given to people's environments and comfort so they may rest and sleep

Ensuring comfort and alleviating pain

People will be helped to be as comfortable and pain-free as their condition and circumstances allow

Personal hygiene appearance and foot and nail care

People will be supported to be as independent as possible in taking care of their personal hygiene, appearance and feet and nails

Oral health and hygiene

People will be supported to maintain a clean, healthy, comfortable mouth and pain-free teeth and gums, enabling them to function (including eating and speaking) and prevent related problems

Toilet needs

Appropriate, discreet and prompt assistance will be provided as necessary taking into account peoples' specific needs and privacy

Theme 5: Timely Care

Outcome: People in Wales have timely access to services based on clinical need and are actively involved in decisions about their care

Standards:

Care planning and provision

Organisations will ensure that people have timely access to health services, and to ensure the best possible outcome peoples conditions will be diagnosed promptly and treated according to clinical need. Peoples' needs will be met by:

- enabling people to get help, when they need it in the way they want it
- providing all aspects of care including referral, assessment, diagnosis, treatment, transfer of care and discharge including care at the end of life, in a timely way consistent with any national timescales, pathways and best practice
- providing support to develop competence in self-care and promote rehabilitation and re-enablement; and working in partnership with other services and organisations, including social services and the third sector

Theme 6: Individual Care

Outcome: People in Wales are treated as individuals with their own needs and responsibilities

Standards:

Promoting Independence

- people will be supported to engage and participate and feel valued in society
- the care that people receive will respect their choices in making the most of their ability and desire to care for themselves
- people will be treated with the understanding that they have the right to be who they are, to be understood, considered and recognised as an individual
- support will be given to ensure that people have the right to make decisions about their life

Equality Diversity and Human Rights

Organisations have Strategic Equality Plans setting out their equality priorities in accordance with legislation which ensure that they recognise and address the:

- needs of individuals whatever their identity and background, and uphold their human rights
- need to challenge discrimination, promote equality and human rights and seek to reduce health inequities through their strategies, policies, practices and procurement processes
- rights of children in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- rights for older people in Wales in accordance with the Declaration of Rights for Older people in Wales
- spiritual and religious needs of people and their carers

Theme 7: Staff And Resources

Outcome: People in Wales can find information about how their NHS is resourced and make careful use of them

Standards:

Governance and Accountability

Organisations will focus on the delivery of an efficient, high quality and safe service.

Organisations will:

- put people at the heart of everything and focus on their needs and experiences; making the organisations purpose the delivery of a high quality service
- ensure that everyone involved in service delivery understands their own and each others roles and accountabilities
- work in constructive partnership, within the organisation and with external organisations
- ensure good governance when working in partnership with others
- uphold organisational values and standards of behaviour
- comply with relevant regulatory, accreditation, licencing requirements, standards, directions and instructions
- secure the efficient and economic use of resources
- safeguard and protect all assets including its people

Workforce

Organisations will ensure that people can learn and develop to their full potential. The leaders of any organisation have a duty to set an appropriate tone and promote the right culture, and ensure that individuals can fulfil their responsibility to deliver high quality and safe services.

Organisations work with partners to develop an appropriately skilled and sustainable workforce by:

- having effective workforce plans which are integrated with service and financial plans
- meeting the needs of the population served through an appropriate skill mix

- reflecting the demographic profile of its population
- promoting the continuous improvement of services through better ways of working
- enabling the supply of trainees, students, newly qualified staff and new recruits and their development
- ensuring plans reflect cross organisational/regional/all Wales workforce where appropriate.

Organisations and services will ensure that their workforce:

- have all necessary recruitment and periodic employment checks and are registered with the relevant bodies
- are appropriately recruited, trained, qualified and competent for the work they undertake
- act, and are treated, in accordance with identified standards and codes of conduct
- are able to raise, in confidence without prejudice, concerns over any aspect of service delivery, treatment or management
- are mentored, supervised and supported in the delivery of their role
- are dealt with fairly and equitably when their performance causes concern
- are provided with appropriate skills, equipment and support to enable them to meet their responsibilities to consistently high standards

Organisations and services ensure that their workforce is provided with appropriate support to enable them to:

- maintain and develop competencies in order to be developed to their full potential
- attend induction and mandatory training programmes
- have an annual appraisal and a personal development plan
- enabling them to develop their role
- demonstrate continuing professional development
- access opportunities to develop collaborative practice and team working
- work closely together, preventing duplication of effort and enabling more efficient use of resources

Environment

Organisations and services must comply with legislation and guidance to provide environments that are:

- accessible
- well maintained
- fit for purpose
- safe and secure
- protect privacy
- sustainable

Civil contingency and emergency planning

Organisations and services are able to deliver a robust response and ensure business and service continuity in the event of any incident or emergency situation.

Managing Risk and promoting Health and Safety

Organisations and services will have systems and processes in place which comply with legislation and guidance that:

- applies best practice in assessing, managing and mitigating risk
- ensures that risk management and health and safety is embedded within all healthcare settings and it is monitored to ensure continuous improvement
- ensures access to 'competent advice' to enable it to identify, prioritise and manage real risks that may cause serious harm
- focuses on protecting and improving, the health, safety and well-being of staff, contractors, patients; services users and the public
- acts upon safety notices, alerts and any such communication
- prevents serious harm or death where controls are well known and established.