Care Quality Commission Standards

Since 1 April 2009 the Care Quality Commission (CQC) has taken over the duties of the Healthcare Commission, the Commission for Social Care Inspection and the Mental Health Act Commission. It has responsibility for the delivery of the 2008/2009 annual health check of all NHS Trusts, including the core standards based assessment from 1 April 2009.

The Care Quality Commission has provided two sets of criteria for the assessment of the performance of Primary Care Trusts – one for their provider role and the other for their role as commissioners of services. Other than that, the only changes made to Standards for Better Health have been to make the rationales clearer and more explicit.

The Commission continues to encourage respect within services for people’s human rights and for their diversity, and to promote action to reduce inequalities in people’s health and experiences of healthcare. They also expect that healthcare organisations will interpret and implement the standards in ways which challenge discrimination, promote equity of access and quality of services, reduce inequalities in health, and which respect and protect human rights.

Standards for Better Health set out the expectations for the safety and quality of publicly funded NHS provision (the core standards) and their commitment to continuous service improvement (the developmental standards) – which sit alongside the National Service Frameworks. The Commission assesses the NHS against a set of targets through the Annual Health Check.

Equality and human rights runs through a number of core standards but the main Standard that should guide our work in this field is Core Standard C7e:
Core standard 7e
Healthcare organisations challenge discrimination, promote equality and respect Human Rights

Element one
The healthcare organisation challenges discrimination and respects human rights in accordance with the Human Rights Act 1998 & other legislation

Acting in accordance with the general and specific duties imposed on public bodies (including, among other things, equality schemes for race, disability and gender, along with impact assessments) under the following statutes:
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- Equality Act 2006
And, where appropriate, having due regard to the associated codes of practice.

Acting in accordance with employment and equalities legislation

Element two
The healthcare organisation promotes equality, including by publishing information specified by statute, in accordance with the general and specific duties imposed on public bodies (including, among other things, equality schemes for race, disability and gender, along with impact assessments) under:
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- Equality Act 2006
And where appropriate, having due regard to the associated codes of practice; and in accordance with Delivering Race Equality in Mental Health Care (Department of Health, 2005)

Core Standard 8b
Healthcare organisations support their staff through having organisational and personal development programmes which recognise the contribution and value of staff, and address, where appropriate, under-representation of minority groups.
Core Standard C13
Healthcare organisations have systems in place to ensure that staff treat patients, their relatives and carers with dignity and respect.

Core Standard C16
Healthcare organisations make information available to patients and the public on their services, provide patients with suitable and accessible information on the care and treatment they receive and, where appropriate, inform patients on what to expect during treatment, care and after care.

Core Standard C17
The views of patients, their carers and others are sought and taken into account in designing, planning, delivering and improving healthcare services.

Core Standard C18
Healthcare organisations enable all members of the population to access services equally and offer choice in access to services and treatment equitably.

Core Standard C20a
Healthcare services are provided in environments which promote effective care and optimise health outcomes by being a safe and secure environment which protects patients, staff, visitors and their property, and the physical assets of the organisation. Amongst others, this caters for the requirements of the DDA 2005.

Core Standard C21
Healthcare services are provided in environments which promote effective care and optimise health outcomes by being well designed and well maintained with cleanliness levels in clinical and non-clinical areas that meet the national specification for clean NHS premises. Amongst others, this caters for the requirements of the DDA 2005.

Core Standard C22 a) and c)
Healthcare organisations promote, protect and demonstrably improve the health of the community served, and narrow health inequalities by: a) co-operating with each other and with local authorities and other organisations; and c) making an appropriate and effective contribution to local partnership arrangements.
including Local Strategic Partnerships and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships.

The PCT actively works with other healthcare organisations, local government and other local partners to promote, protect and demonstrably improve the health of the community served and narrow health inequalities, such as by working to improve care pathways for patients / service users across the health community and between the health, social care and the criminal justice system, and/or participating in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and health equity audits to identify population health need.