

<b>Decision maker:</b>	<b>Director of Adults and Communities</b>
<b>Decision date:</b>	<b>Monday 7 January 2019</b>
<b>Title of report:</b>	<b>Quality Assurance Strategy for commissioned care and support services for Adults</b>
<b>Report by:</b>	<b>Head of partnerships and integration</b>

## **Classification**

Open

## **Decision type**

Non-key

## **Wards affected**

(All Wards);

## **Purpose and summary**

To approve the updated, joint health and social care quality assurance strategy following a review of the existing quality assurance framework.

The strategy sets out Herefordshire Council's and Herefordshire Clinical Commissioning Group's (HCCG) approach to assuring the quality of commissioned care and support services for adults in Herefordshire. It is a review and update of the current quality assurance framework and the main changes are as follows:

- Developed as a joint strategy with HCCG
- Quality standards have been reviewed and updated
- Processes have been streamlined and simplified
- Clearer and more transparent approach and processes giving greater clarity to service providers

## **Recommendation(s)**

**That:**

- (a) the joint health and social care quality assurance strategy for commissioned care and support services at appendix 1 be approved.**

## **Alternative options**

1. Do Nothing: This is not a viable option as Herefordshire Council is required to ensure it is compliant with the Care Act 2014 and has a duty to ensure the quality of its commissioned care and support services.
2. To implement a quality assurance strategy for Herefordshire Council without involvement from Herefordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (HCCG): This is not a viable option due to collaborative working required to drive quality improvements.

## **Key considerations**

3. The Care Act requires that councils help develop a provider market that delivers a wide range of sustainable high-quality care and support services that will be available to their communities. In addition, it states that when buying and arranging services, councils must consider how they might affect an individual's wellbeing. The council therefore has a duty to ensure that the care and support services it commissions support and promote the wellbeing of people receiving those services.
4. The Care Act also sets out a clear legal framework for how councils and other parts of the health and care system should protect adults at risk of abuse or neglect, with local service providers working together to spot those at risk and take steps to protect them. The council therefore has a duty to ensure that those with care and support needs and in receipt of commissioned care and support services are kept safe from abuse or neglect.
5. The quality assurance strategy is therefore required to ensure the council is fulfilling its duty in respect of the Care Act to monitor the quality and performance of providers. The current quality assurance framework that is in place has been reviewed and updated and this report seeks approval of the strategy.
6. The strategy (in appendix one) sets out our approach to assuring the quality of commissioned care and support services in Herefordshire and in turn ensures that we fulfil the duties placed on us by the Care Act.
7. It is an opportunity to develop a joint approach to quality assurance in partnership with Herefordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (HCCG) with whom the council jointly commissions some residential and nursing home providers.
8. It is also an opportunity to streamline and align our quality assurance processes to avoid duplication, give consistency and greater clarity and transparency to our commissioned care and support providers. It sets out an approach that is based on collaborative working and supporting providers to achieve and sustain good levels of quality.
9. The quality assurance strategy also incorporates and endorses revised quality standards for service provision, in line with changes implemented by the Care Quality Commission

(CQC), which are person-centred and based on delivering outcomes for individuals (quality outcomes framework).

10. Having a quality assurance strategy in place will:

- Ensure the best level of care is being provided to service users.
- Ensure a consistent and clear set of standards.
- Ensure good quality and safe practice.
- Ensure a person-centred approach.
- Enable more efficient and effective working.
- Give trust and confidence in the service.
- Support continuous improvement.

11. The current position with regards the quality of care in Herefordshire demonstrates a clear need to have an effective quality assurance strategy and process in place as there has been a decline in quality over the past 6 months. In June 2018 there were 13 care homes requiring improvement and this rose to 16 in September 2018. For care at home services there were 2 service providers requiring improvement in June 2018 and there were 3 in September 2018. The quality assurance strategy will support providers to improve by:

- Establishing a clear set of quality standards (quality outcomes framework) to work towards.
- Providing a mechanism and process for assuring the quality of care based on a range of robust and consistent intelligence which will allow for concerns to be identified at an earlier stage.
- Enabling appropriate and consistent monitoring against clear quality threshold levels.
- Enabling appropriate and consistent action to be taken where areas of concern are identified.
- Creating a culture of continuous improvement that recognises, celebrates and shares good practice.

12. The existing quality assurance strategy (quality assurance framework) established the current quality assurance processes that are in place. This current framework is out of date and in need of reviewing. The review identified that there is a lack of clarity around processes by providers and feedback from providers also suggest that there is some duplication between council and HCCG processes. The quality assurance strategy has therefore been developed jointly with HCCG to implement more efficient and effective processes that avoid duplication. It also focuses on streamlining and simplifying processes to make it easier for providers to understand and give greater clarity and transparency around how we will quality assure and monitor providers. The current quality standards (quality outcomes framework) have also been updated to reflect the changes made by the CQC to their inspection framework which focuses on five key areas (called key lines of enquiry) – safe, effective, caring, responsive and well-led.

13. Once the strategy has been implemented, its effectiveness will be monitored and measured by a reduction in the number of notices issued by the CQC and the council and also by a reduction in the number of providers being rated as 'requiring improvement' or 'inadequate' by the CQC.

14. Once the quality assurance strategy has been approved and signed off it will be located in the adult social care section of the strategies and policies directory on the council's

website and also the policies section of the adults and communities SharePoint site with the links publicised to staff. It will also be located in the strategies and plans section of HCCG's website and communicated to all relevant HCCG staff through their internal communication processes.

The strategy will be communicated to relevant staff during January and February 2019 through the following mechanisms:

- Core Brief
- Email updates to staff
- Presentations at relevant team meetings and manager team meetings
- Extended updates/briefings will be provided to those teams to whom the strategy particularly applies.
- Briefings at relevant HCCG meetings
- Briefing to the safeguarding adults board
- Briefing to the health and wellbeing board
- Briefing to CQC and Healthwatch
- Briefing to Making it Real Board

Additionally, the strategy will be communicated to stakeholders and service providers as follows:

- Provider engagement workshops
- Presentations and market-stall display at provider forums and other relevant provider events
- Engagement through the provider quality assurance task and finish group to support the communication and implementation of the strategy
- Regular meetings with representatives from the multi-agencies associated with quality assurance
- Promoted through the adults and communities provider newsletter
- Strategy to be distributed digitally to all service providers
- Further communication and implementation as part of quality team visits
- Communicated through appropriate HCCG communication channels

Easy read versions of the strategy and processes will be developed for different audiences.

A full implementation plan will be developed that includes communications and engagement to support the implementation of the strategy.

## **Community impact**

15. Successful delivery of the quality assurance strategy will support Herefordshire Council's corporate plan (2016-2020) by ensuring people in receipt of care and support are 'able to live safe, healthy and independent lives'. This will be achieved by ensuring providers are meeting the quality standards as set out in the quality outcome framework, which puts individuals at the centre of their care and support and is based on delivering positive outcomes for those individuals. It also supports the council's priority to secure better services, quality of life and value for money as the strategy focuses on fostering and embedding a culture of continuous improvement where continued improvement in quality can be delivered with better, innovative and cost effective outcomes that promote the wellbeing of people who need care and support. The strategy also supports the health and wellbeing strategy as the quality outcomes framework is based on promoting and

supporting the health and wellbeing of individuals in receipt of care. The strategic aims as outlined in the quality outcomes framework also represent the strategic aims and priorities from the BCF (Better Care Fund) plan which is also One Herefordshire.

16. Also, under the Care Act, councils have a duty to ensure that people in its area are in receipt of services that prevent their care needs from escalating, can get the information and advice they need to make good decisions about their care and support and have a range of provision of high quality, appropriate services to choose from. The quality assurance strategy supports the council in fulfilling these functions for people in receipt of care and support in Herefordshire.
17. The quality assurance strategy's vision is that the quality of our care and support services becomes everyone's responsibility, where information is routinely and consistently shared and effectively responded to so that service users, family members and carers can be confident that the support and care being delivered is of a good quality. It focuses on fostering and embedding a culture of high quality and continuous improvement in care and support services across Herefordshire.
18. The strategy supports the establishment of positive, proactive and supportive partnership working with providers to achieve and sustain good levels of quality in the delivery of care and support services to the people they support.
19. In line with the responsibilities placed on the council by the Care Act, the quality assurance strategy sets out an approach that is person centred and based on delivering outcomes. It focuses on ensuring service users, their families and carers are listened to about their needs and aspirations and are involved in their care planning.
20. When buying and arranging services councils must consider how they might affect an individual's wellbeing. The quality assurance strategy therefore sets out an approach that promotes the wellbeing of people in receipt of commissioned care and support services.
21. There are no direct health and safety implications associated with the implementation of the strategy. However the quality assurance process does ensure that providers have health and safety policies in place.

## **Equality duty**

22. The revised quality assurance strategy continues to pay due regard to Herefordshire Council's public sector equality duty. As the proposed strategy does not represent any significant change in the council's approach but is more clearly aligned to the CQC; there is no anticipated negative impact on individuals with protected characteristics as identified under the Equality Act 2010. The proposed strategy will apply to all individuals equally, regardless of protected characteristics.

Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;

- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
  - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
23. An underlying principle of the strategy is that the delivery of outcomes for service users are at the centre of care and support services and reflect the principles and values as outlined in [Herefordshire's Safeguarding Adults policy](#).

## Resource implications

24. There are no financial implications associated with the implementation and delivery of the new quality assurance strategy as it is a revision of current organisational policy and procedure that maintains statutory corporate responsibilities for quality monitoring of care and support services. A very small budget may be needed to undertake some further provider engagement activity, but this will be minimal. There is no identified HR or IT implications associated with the implementation of the quality assurance strategy.

## Legal implications

25. There are no specific legal implications in the recommendations. The strategy is in accordance with the council's statutory duties under Care Act 2014.

## Risk management

26. If the updated and revised quality strategy is not approved and implemented the council would be at risk of not being legally compliant with the Care Act 2014 and there could be an increased risk of provider failure and further providers being assessed as requiring improvement or inadequate.

## Consultees

27. Council and HCCG officers and managers have been consulted in the development of the quality assurance strategy through a series of workshops and their views used to shape and inform the strategy.
28. Providers have been consulted in the development of the quality assurance strategy through a number of provider engagement workshops, and their views used to inform the final draft. This included feedback on a clearer approach and process particularly around the quality thresholds, a better understanding of the support available from the council in relation to improving and maintaining quality and the sharing of best practice to be a key element.
29. A provider task and finish group has also been established to support the development and implementation of the strategy. There will be further engagement with providers as part of the implementation of the strategy.

## Appendices

Appendix 1: Quality Assurance Strategy for Commissioned Care and Support (Adults) Services

# Background papers

None identified.