



Title: **Quality**

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### 1 **DIRECTORATE KEY PURPOSE**

1.1 This document sets out Walsall Council's approach to quality in adult social care services. It is designed to promote high quality standards and outcomes for citizens and carers who use adult social care services. It seeks to provide mechanisms that will:

- 1.2
- promote the independence, dignity, health and wellbeing of citizens who use services
  - encourage delivery of care that promotes choice and independence for citizens
  - ensure dignity and the citizen's own desired outcomes are at the centre of the service
  - assure the ability of care providers to deliver safe and appropriate quality services

### 2 **DIRECTORATE APPROACH**

2.1 The directorate has adopted a **Quality Framework** within which the following elements should be in place for a service:

- high quality *outcomes* as defined by individual service users or their representatives
- a level of service established by comparison to a set of commonly accepted *standards*
- a service culture typified by rigorous management *processes* and governance
- an overarching set of *values* that reinforces and nurtures the above

2.2 Individual provider models will vary but all high quality services include these four complementary elements: Outcomes, Standards, Processes and Values. The relationship between these elements is depicted in Appendix 1. Outcomes are the primary consideration and values are at the core.

2.3 **Quality Assurance** is the process by which these elements are established and co-ordinated. All services will experience setbacks and challenges, staff turnover, management change, and a challenging external market environment. A Quality Assurance approach enables services to overcome problems, identify shortfalls and restore user, purchaser, and commissioner confidence in the quality of provision

2.4 **Promoting Quality Assurance:** The Council gives recognition to high quality services and supports continuous improvement by actively supporting and promoting good practice and innovation throughout all care services. As part of this approach to quality assurance, the council, its health and regulatory partners, will provide guidance for care agencies to help develop policies and procedures and ensure that their employees are well trained.

2.5 Close and proactive working arrangements with care providers will seek to ensure that the providers themselves embed their own version of quality assurance, with effective arrangements in place to raise and maintain the quality of care. It is the care providers who are responsible for ensuring that standards are achieved.

### 3 **ESSENTIAL ACTIONS**

3.1 The following initiatives form part of the quality assurance framework:

- 3.2
- A Self Assessment Tool, completed on a six monthly or quarterly basis
  - Completion of an annual monitoring tool, the Quality Assurance Improvement Tool

(QAIT) to review the quality of provision, recognise areas of good practice and identify areas for improvement

- An incentive scheme to encourage innovative practice in demonstrable improved outcomes for care home residents

- 3.3 Service quality assurance appraisals undertaken through monitoring visits and reports. These are conducted by Quality Assurance Officers (QAOs) as part of an agreed and prioritised annual work programme. This is supported by other feedback on outcomes for citizens, including:
- Routine individual reviews undertaken by social workers
  - Intelligence from voluntary and community sector partners eliciting the experiences of citizens and carers
- 3.4 Provision of consistent specialist quality assurance advice in line with changing Government guidance and evolving best practice. Central to this is the role of Quality Assurance Officers who are allocated to individual care providers as a key point of contact and will identify excellence in service delivery, facilitate quality forums and devise specialist projects and plans to raise standards.
- 3.5 Develop and maintain an interactive quality assurance intelligence hub, which will support the specialist advice function above and collate information on service quality from a wide range of internal and external sources. This will enable robust analysis of quality assurance indicators, trends and comparative data.
- 3.6 The quality assurance function will work closely with other statutory agencies, including the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and NHS, and the Council's own safeguarding, contracting and commissioning services, to ensure that any concerns about a provider's performance and care practice are reported and managed through appropriate channels.
- 3.7 Walsall's quality standards and minimum requirements are set out in the Walsall Care Pledge. Expectations on providers are included in the Better Care Services for Walsall leaflet. Both documents can be found together with operational guidance documents for quality assurance, on [www.walsall.gov.uk/quality](http://www.walsall.gov.uk/quality)
- 3.8 A multi-agency Walsall Partnership Quality Board has been established to oversee quality improvements in the local adult care sector. This Board is jointly chaired by senior officers from the Council and NHS Walsall.
- 3.9 This policy statement should be read in conjunction with the directorate's other policy statements and accompanying procedural guidance, including:
- Commissioning
  - Support Planning
  - Support Plan Reviews

#### 4 **LINKS TO NATIONAL POLICY AND LEGISLATION**

- 4.1 The Government regularly releases key policy documents setting out the strategic direction of adult social care. These can be found on the Department of Health website. The Essential Standards of Care are available from the Care Quality Commission.
- 4.2 Care providers are subject to legal and regulatory requirements, including health & safety and employment law.

## Appendix 1 –Quality Framework

