Introduction
About the Aged Care Quality Standards

Organisations providing Commonwealth subsidised aged care services are required to comply with the Aged Care Quality Standards (Quality Standards) from 1 July 2019. Organisations will be assessed and must be able to provide evidence of their compliance with and performance against the Quality Standards.

The Quality Standards are made up of eight individual Standards:
1. Consumer dignity and choice
2. Ongoing assessment and planning with consumers
3. Personal care and clinical care
4. Services and supports for daily living
5. Organisation’s service environment
6. Feedback and complaints
7. Human resources
8. Organisational governance.

The Quality Standards focus on outcomes for consumers and reflect the level of care and services the community can expect from organisations that provide Commonwealth subsidised aged care services.
Each of the Standards is expressed in three ways:

- a statement of outcome for the consumer
- a statement of expectation for the organisation
- organisational requirements to demonstrate that the Standard has been met.

Compliance with the Quality Standards is mandatory from 1 July 2019. Organisations are required to demonstrate performance on an ongoing basis to meet Australian Government requirements. The Australian Government may take action when providers do not comply. This includes under aged care legislation or through the funding agreement with the organisation.

The Quality Standards provide a framework of core requirements for quality and safety. Some Standards will apply differently to organisations, depending on the types of care and services they provide. Many organisations will go beyond these core requirements to provide a higher quality of care and services for consumers.

About this Guidance material

This Guidance material is intended to assist organisations to implement and maintain their compliance with the Quality Standards. It describes the intent of the Standards and expectations of performance, along with supporting information, and examples of evidence of compliance. This also provides an indication of the matters that Aged Care Quality Assessors (quality assessors) consider in assessing compliance.

This Guidance material is not a legal document and does not form part of the Quality Standards. It guides compliance with the Quality Standards but does not purport to provide comprehensive guidance in relation to best practice provision of aged care services. Further, compliance with the Quality Standards in accordance with this Guidance material does not relieve organisations of their obligation to comply with all relevant laws of the jurisdiction in which they operate. Organisations are also expected to take account of other recognised guidance that might be specific to the services they deliver. This includes guidance produced by the Department of Health, and other relevant authorities.

Using the Guidance material

This Guidance material has been written for organisations that provide Commonwealth subsidised aged care services. It is designed to support organisations and their workforce to:

- understand the Quality Standards and what is expected when the Standards are assessed
- reflect on everyday practice and areas for improvement
- know when they are being achieved
- undertake ongoing performance reviews against the Quality Standards.

In relation to each of the Standards, this Guidance material provides:

- some background information about each Standard
- the intent of each Standard and how it supports the consumer outcome
- key resources relevant to each Standard
- legislation relevant to each Standard.

This Guidance material also provides (described as part of each Standard):

- the intent of the requirement and how it supports the consumer outcome
- reflective questions on everyday practice
• examples of the types of evidence that an organisation may use to demonstrate that it is meeting the requirements
• case studies.

The organisation is responsible for meeting the Quality Standards and deciding how to do this. They are expected to show how their approach enables them to meet the requirements of the Quality Standards. Aged care organisations vary in size and structure and will have different ways of meeting the Quality Standards. This Guidance material doesn’t cover all possible strategies or sources of evidence that could be used by an organisation. Examples of strategies and evidence that are not listed can also be used to demonstrate performance. Each organisation should interpret the Guidance material considering its own service delivery model.

Importantly the Guidance material is not prescriptive, nor is it clinical guidance. It doesn’t include instructions or ‘how to’ information on the different aspects of care. Organisations are expected to take account of other recognised guidance that might be specific to the services they deliver. This includes guidance produced by the Department of Health, and relevant authorities.

**Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission assessment of performance**

The structure of the Quality Standards allows quality assessors’ processes for assessment and monitoring to focus on consumer outcomes and consider evidence of the consumer’s experience and the systems and processes that the organisation has in place to support the provision of safe and quality care and services.

For each of the requirements, quality assessors expect the organisation and their workforce to demonstrate that they:

• understand the requirement
• apply the requirement, and this is clear in the way they provide care and services
• monitor how they are applying the requirement and the outcomes they achieve
• review outcomes and adjust practices based on these reviews to keep improving.

Quality assessors are proportionate in how the Quality Standards are applied to different types of services. Quality assessors consider the size and type of services and the relevance of the requirement to the service provided. The strategies used to achieve the outcomes will vary in complexity, scope and scale, based on the type of organisation, the consumer profile, and the risk to the safety, health and well-being of consumers.

The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission will consider this Guidance so that the intent of the Standard is applied consistently when deciding whether an organisation meets the requirements of the Quality Standards.

Subcontracted services will not be separately assessed against the Quality Standards. The organisation that receives funding directly from the Australian Government is expected to ensure its workforce (including subcontractors) meets its responsibilities. This is because ultimately the funded organisation will be held responsible for the delivery of safe and quality care and services in accordance with the Quality Standards.