



Australian Government
Australian Aged Care Quality Agency

Pilot for the Draft Aged Care Quality Standards and Development of Guidance Material

June 2018

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Australian Aged Care Quality Agency (the Quality Agency) thanks all who participated in the consultations on the draft guidance material for the draft single set of quality standards (Aged Care Quality Standards), including providers who participated in the pilot process, and those who made submissions during the public consultation.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Department of Health has developed the final draft Aged Care Quality Standards. This new single set of standards will replace the:

- Accreditation Standards
- Home Care Standards
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care Program Quality Framework Standards
- Transition Care Standards.

The Aged Care Quality Standards will apply to all aged care services including residential care, home care, flexible care and services under the Commonwealth Home Support Program. There will be flexibility in the way the new standards are applied to different services.

The Aged Care Quality Standards focus on quality outcomes for consumers rather than provider processes. This is intended to make it easier for consumers, their families, carers and representatives to understand what they can expect from a service. It will also make regulation simpler for providers working across multiple aged care services, and encourage innovation, excellence and continuous improvement.

From February to June 2018 the Quality Agency undertook a staged pilot process, to test the draft Aged Care Quality Standards and draft guidance materials which included field testing with service providers, consumers and quality surveyors in a range of aged care settings and service types.

The purpose of this report is to:

- provide an overview of the pilot process conducted by the Quality Agency to test the draft Standards and guidance materials.
- provide a summary of the key findings from the pilot process
- outline the broader consultation on the guidance and the next steps in finalising the draft guidance materials.

The key findings of the pilot of the draft Standards were:

- The draft Aged Care Quality Standards are applicable across the different aged care programs that are currently subject to four different sets of standards
- The draft Standards are scalable in terms of evidence collection that is relevant to the context of service. Sufficient evidence was available to validate the draft Standards in a variety of service types, settings and service sizes.
- The focus on consumer outcomes and consumers' lived experience was evident and welcomed by stakeholders in testing the draft Standards and was central to the audit process.
- A potential gap was identified in the draft Standards in relation to emotional, spiritual and psychological wellbeing.
- A need for further support in the guidance on concepts of cultural safety for National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers was identified.
- Suggested improvements to wording or the sequencing of some requirements were identified in order to clarify the draft Standard's intent or measurability.
- Some requirements of the draft Standards created duplication in assessment and changes were suggested to remove duplication and / or clarify intent of the requirements.

Feedback received on the draft Standards during the pilot process was provided to the Department of Health for consideration by the Standards Development Technical Advisory Group (made up of consumer groups, service providers, academics and experts in the development of aged care or health standards).

INTRODUCTION

Standards

The new Aged Care Quality Standards, developed by the Department of Health, will be legislated from July 2018, subject to Government agreement and parliamentary processes, with a 12 month transition period until July 2019.

Guidance material

Since the release of the draft Standards in 2017, the Quality Agency has been consulting and developing draft guidance material to support their implementation. There has been positive engagement during consultations and detailed feedback has been received from service providers, consumers and their representatives, peak bodies and subject-matter experts.

The guidance material will assist service providers to understand the intent of each standard and the individual requirements under each standard. The guidance includes reflective questions for service providers to consider and examples of ways that a service can demonstrate their performance.

Pilot of the Standards and Guidance

In addition to the development of supporting guidance for the draft Standards the Quality Agency has been responsible for piloting the draft Standards in order to test their application, clarity and measurability.

The development of the pilot framework and the draft guidance material has been informed by the Standards Guidance Reference Group. Convened in September 2018, the reference group includes 36 members from peak bodies, industry and consumer representatives. The Standards Guidance Reference Group has met regularly to provide input to the development of guidance materials. (Membership of the Standards Guidance Reference Group is at [Attachment A](#)).

CONSULTATION ON THE STANDARDS GUIDANCE

Provider resources

The Quality Agency's Better Practice forums in 2017 ran a series of national workshops to consult with the industry about what supports and guidance material the Agency might provide to assist the industry to transition to a single set of quality standards for aged care.

Since release of the draft Standards by the Department of Health in January 2018, the Quality Agency has broadened its consultation on the development of guidance material and has continued to engage with service providers, industry experts and specific subject-matter experts to review the content of guidance. (A full list of consultation undertaken is at [Attachment B](#)). Feedback was also received from consultation with the Department's Technical Advisory Group for the development of the Standards, and through workshops held with the Aged Care Sector Committee Diversity Sub-Group and the Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing.

"The reflective questions in the guidance really supported the service provider to consider a wider range of ways they could demonstrate compliance, it really changed the direction of the conversation, it was more about innovation and what they did well ..."

Quality surveyor / pilot.

Guidance material for Standard 3 Clinical and Personal Care is still being finalised. Consultation has been undertaken with the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care to identify key clinical areas and risks to be addressed in the guidance material. Clinical care subject matter experts were sought via the National Aged Care Alliance (NACA) Professionals and Unions Forum and the Australian Association of Gerontology. A range of other professionals have also provided content and reference material for consideration by the Quality Agency in finalising the draft guidance for Standard 3.

The guidance material was made available for public comment on the Quality Agency website for four weeks in May 2018. Structured questions requesting feedback on the guidance for each individual standard were designed to assist submissions, specific questions were also asked to

identify any potential gaps. The option to provide a submission or additional information by email was also made available.

Over 900 subscribers who registered an interest in keeping up to date on the draft Standards, as well as peak bodies, pilot participants and other relevant stakeholders were notified and invited to make submissions on the draft guidance material. A total of 101 submissions were received, where permission has been granted, submissions will be published on the Quality Agency website. (A full list of public submissions is attached at [Attachment C](#)).

“The holistic nature of the draft Standards, in contrast to the listing of individual aspects of a person such as, continence and skin, shifts the focus to health, wellbeing and quality of life ...”

Quality Surveyor /pilot

Consumer resources

The Quality Agency is also working with consumers to develop appropriate, accessible and consumer-driven information to support the implementation of the new Aged Care Quality Standards. This includes conducting consumer workshops and consulting with the NACA Consumer Forum, their constituent networks and other key stakeholders.

The consumer resources will provide information about the new Aged Care Quality standards, the accreditation process, the guidance material and required consumer outcomes. The resources will help consumers understand the new standards, how they can participate in quality assessment of their service, and what they can do if expected outcomes of care are not being met.

Consultations are being undertaken in two phases:

- Phase 1 - Learning about the information channels and key themes that consumers find most helpful.
- Phase 2 - Piloting information resources.

“Caring for someone as they age is much broader than providing good clinical care, emotional and spiritual care seems to be missing in the draft Standards ...”

Quality Surveyor / pilot

Phase 1

Consultations for this phase have been completed. Phase 1 consultations sought to build on existing knowledge of consumers’ priorities around quality in care and were conducted at a range of metropolitan and regional consumer forums. Consumers consulted included those currently receiving care and services and potential service users. Participants included consumers living with dementia, consumers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, consumers from lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex communities, vulnerable consumers and advocates.

Phase 2

The findings of Phase 1 have informed the development of draft consumer resources, and key messages and formats are now being tested with consumers.

Indigenous consultations:

Work has also commenced on developing Indigenous-specific consumer resources. Further to advice from NACA Consumer Forum’s Indigenous representatives, the Quality Agency is seeking to undertake guided consultations within local Indigenous communities regarding their information needs regarding the new standards.

“A key learning is that assessment teams need to be more adept at understanding what evidence has been collected and how to apply it, a single set of standards promotes an integrated approach and the assessment process will need to reflect this.”

Project team member

THE PILOT PROCESS

The Quality Agency conducted the pilot process for aged care service providers, quality surveyors and consumers, to test and provide feedback on the application of the draft Aged Care Quality Standards, and the content and helpfulness of the associated guidance material.

Service providers were given the opportunity to register their interest to be involved in the pilots through the Quality Agency website. Pilot participation was promoted through monthly Quality Standards newsletter, provider contacts and industry events, with participants selected from the register.

The design of the pilot was informed by best practice from the International Society for Quality in Health Care, a pilot design team of quality surveyors, a representative from the Department of Health and advice from the Quality Agency's Standards Guidance Reference Group.

The sampling methodology included service providers that registered their interest and others the Quality Agency approached to request their participation, in order to ensure a representative sample. Participants included service providers delivering:

- Residential aged care
- Transition care
- Short term restorative care in a residential setting
- Home Care Packages
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care Program and the
- Commonwealth Home Support Programme.

Participants also had experience in delivering care and services to special needs groups such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex communities and consumers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. A list of services participating in the field testing (those who have given permission for their service name to be published by the Quality Agency is at [Attachment D](#)).

A team of two quality surveyors visited each pilot site. Wherever possible the team had a mix of quality surveyors from different assessing backgrounds, different lengths of tenure and as needed from different States. This allowed the project team to obtain the broadest feedback possible from the team for each pilot visit.

The pilot process was conducted in three stages to test the draft Standards, guidance material, and assessment process, with feedback analysed and incorporated at each stage.

- STAGE 1: was undertaken February – March 2018. Standards 1,4,5,7 and 8 were tested in this phase. Eighty one service providers who expressed their interested were asked to respond to detailed online surveys on one or more of the draft Standards and the guidance material. A total of 31 providers (38%) responded, completing a total of 51 individual surveys (some provided feedback on more than one standard). (An example of the structure of stage one collated feedback is provided at Attachment E).
- STAGE 2: was undertaken in March – April 2018. Quality Surveyors conducted field testing at a range of services to test selected standards and guidance material with 11 providers. Stage 2 also sought to identify any areas of clarity needed on the draft Standards themselves when applied during an ‘assessment’ visit
- STAGE 3: was undertaken in April – May 2018. Quality Surveyors conducted end-to-end field testing in an ‘audit’ scenario with 11 service providers. This stage of the pilot focused on the guidance material only, enabling the Quality Agency to test forms of evidence and lines of enquiry with staff and consumers in an audit.

KEY FINDINGS FOR THE STANDARDS

Relevant feedback received on the draft Standards during the pilot process was provided to the Department of Health Technical Advisory Group for consideration. Key findings included:

- The draft Aged Care Quality Standards are applicable across the different aged care programs that are currently subject to four different sets of standards.
- The draft Standards are scalable in terms of evidence collection that is relevant to the context of service. Sufficient evidence was available to validate the draft Standards in a variety of service, types, settings and service sizes.
- The focus on consumer outcomes and consumers’ lived experience was evident and welcomed by stakeholders in testing the draft Standards and was central to the audit process.
- A potential gap was identified in the draft Standards in relation to emotional, spiritual and psychological wellbeing.
- A requirement for further support in the guidance on concepts of cultural safety for National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers was identified.

- Suggested improvements to wording or the sequencing of some requirements was identified in order to clarify intent or measurability.
- Some requirements of the draft Standards created duplication in assessment and changes were suggested to remove duplication or clarify the intent of the requirements.

“The guidance material and the draft Standards put the consumer central to the assessment process, it is a good approach which builds on the way we use the consumer experience interview questions.”

Quality Surveyor / pilot

KEY FINDINGS FOR THE GUIDANCE

Quality surveyors and service providers who participated in the pilot attended feedback forums in May 2018 and June 2018. Key findings included:

- The statement on the intent of the guidance at the beginning of each standard was key to understanding the scope of the standard and what evidence might be used to demonstrate compliance.
- The addition of a clear statement on the assessment process against each standard has been beneficial in terms of clarity of the scope of assessment.
- A need to reduce duplication or overlap between the guidance material in an end to end edit.
- A need for case studies, particularly in areas such as balancing consumers’ dignity of risk and duty of care and balancing the rights of the individual in a communal living environment.
- Greater clarity required around whether the guidance outlines minimum requirements or a range of ways that a service provider might evidence compliance.
- The iterative approach to developing the guidance worked well in terms of guidance development, however short lead times in providing updates impacted service provider’s ability to prepare for the visit and in some instances a greater reliance on the draft Standards.
- Consider how the guidance can be broken up and made more accessible, including through web access to the various elements.

“The guidance material is detailed and the document long, during the transition year there needs to be ways for staff, who work day to day with consumers, to engage with the guidance material using adult learning approaches and technology.”

Standards Guidance Reference Committee

NEXT STEPS

The final version of the draft Standards and guidance material will be published shortly after the draft Aged Care Standards are passed (anticipated 1 July 2018), the final guidance material will incorporate feedback received during the pilot process and public consultation period.

There will be one further revision of the guidance towards the end of 2018 prior to compliance assessments against the new standards from July 2019. This revision will incorporate any further feedback received, and include any refinements the Quality Agency identifies when considering its assessment methodology against the new standards. The guidance material will be subject to ongoing annual reviews after July 2019. Resources for consumers on the new standards will be released in 2019 prior to the application of the new standards.

Standards Guidance Reference Group Membership 2017/2018

Member	Number of representatives
Australian Aged Care Quality Agency	Project Team
Australian Commission on Safety & Quality in Health Care	2
All About Caring	3
Aged and Community Care, Mercy Health	1
Roper Gulf Regional Council	1
Dietitians Association of Australia	1
Resthaven Incorporated	1
Bankstown City Aged Care	1
Hesse Rural Health	2
National LGBTI Health Alliance	2
UnitingCare Australia	1
Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia	3
Community Partnerships Unit, Melbourne Health	1
My Nutrition Clinic	1
National Aged Care Alliance Consumers Constituency Group	3
Aged Care Complaints Commissioner	1
Serbian Orthodox Church, St Simeon Village, Sydney	1
RSL Life Care	1
Gay Lesbian Health Victoria	1
Sydney University	1
Benetas Home Care	1
Institute for Urban Indigenous Health	2
Quality Reform Branch, Department of Health	2
Independent	1
Uniting (NSW.ACT)	2
Multicultural Care – In-home Aged Care	1
Samarinda Ashburton Aged Services	1

**Consultations undertaken by the Quality Agency on the draft Guidance Material to support new
Aged Care Quality Standards (as at 20 June 2018)**

Date	Event/Activity	Participants
2017 May - Oct	Better Practice Conferences in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adelaide • Brisbane • Darwin • Melbourne • Perth • Sydney 	1,500 delegates from Aged Care providers
2017	State Office consultations in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brisbane • Parramatta • Adelaide 	Providers, consumer groups and specialist consultant groups
2017 Apr	Department of Health webinar regarding Single Quality Framework. The Agency responded to questions about the guidance material, provider training and consumer resources.	2,000 viewers
2017 June - Ongoing	Standards Technical Advisory Group meetings	15 peak body, industry and consumer representatives
2017 July	Consultation with aged care provider Catholic Healthcare	Consumers, representatives and staff
2017 July 2017 October	Consultations with Indigenous aged care providers in the Northern Territory	10 Indigenous Aged Care providers

Date	Event/Activity	Participants
2017 July 2018 Jan	Literature reviews of key complex topics identified within guidance material	Research consultants engaged via Sydney University and Latrobe University
2017 Sept - Ongoing	Technical review of guidance materials to ensure accordance with Best Practice in health care standards	Jan Mackereth-Hill – Quality improvement consultant and accredited surveyor with the International Society for Quality in Healthcare
2017 Sept – Ongoing	Standards Guidance Reference Group: 8 meetings held to date 1 further scheduled for Oct/Nov 2018	36 peak body, industry and consumer representatives
2018 Feb	Meeting with Australian Commission on Safety and Quality Health in Health Care to discuss Clinical Care recommendations from Senate Standing Committee	Australian Commission of Safety and Quality in Healthcare
2018 Feb	Department of Health webinar regarding Single Quality Framework. The Agency responded to questions about the guidance material, provider training and consumer resources.	2,000 viewers
2018 Feb	Collaboration with National Aged Care Alliance Consumer Forum to develop Consumer Engagement Plan	National Aged Care Alliance Consumer Forum
2018 Feb – May	Pilot of draft Aged Care Standards and the guidance to support the Standards	Stage 1: 31 providers Stage 2: 11 providers Stage 3: 11 providers
2018 Mar	Workshop with Aged Care Sector Committee Diversity Sub-Group	Aged Care Sector Committee Diversity Sub-Group Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing , and Department of Health

Date	Event/Activity	Participants
2018 Mar – Apr	Subject matter expertise sought on identified clinical care high risk and high prevalence topics for consumers of aged care services	12 Clinical care subject matter experts, identified via the National Aged Care Alliance Professionals Subcommittee and Australian Association of Gerontology
2018 Mar	Consumer consultations held in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brisbane • Caboolture • Canberra • Melbourne • Sydney 	Consultations at 6 aged care facilities, & 3 focus groups, arranged in partnership with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dementia Australia, • ACON • Aged and Disability Advocacy Australia Consumers included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • people living with dementia • CALD groups • vulnerable consumers and their representatives • LGBTI elders • regional consumers
2018 Apr	Consumer consultant engaged to seek direct feedback from consumers of aged care services regarding the guidance material	<i>The Plug-in</i> , independent consumers sourced by the Council of the Ageing SA (COTA),
2018 May	Public consultation on draft guidance via the Quality Agency website	100 external submissions received

**Public Submissions received by the Quality Agency on the draft Guidance Material to support
new Aged Care Quality Standards**

1	Laundry Association Australia	43	Name withheld
2	Pets and Positive Ageing Inc.	44	Name withheld
3	Name withheld	45	Name withheld
4	Confidential	46	Confidential
5	Confidential	47	Confidential
6	Confidential	48	Name withheld
7	Name withheld	49	Name withheld
8	Confidential	50	ACT Disability, Aged and Carer Advocacy Service
9	Confidential	51	Name withheld
10	Diversitat	52	Name withheld
11	Quality Aged Care Action Group Inc.	53	Name withheld
12	Confidential	54	Griffith Aged Support Service
13	Name withheld	55	Name withheld
14	Name withheld	56	Name withheld
15	Name withheld	57	Confidential
16	Confidential	58	Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association of NSW Inc.
17	Name withheld	59	Australian Community Industry Alliance
18	Confidential	60	The Pharmacy Guild of Australia
19	Confidential	61	HammondCare
20	Confidential	62	Lutheran Aged Care Albury
21	Name withheld	63	Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation
22	DHHS Tasmanian Infection Prevention and Control	64	Name withheld
23	Confidential	65	Pain Australia
24	Name withheld	66	Confidential
25	Country Home Services	67	Baptist Care Australia
26	Name withheld	68	Flavour Creations Pty Ltd
27	Name withheld	69	Older Persons Advocacy Network
28	Name withheld	70	NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association
29	Leading Age Services Australia	71	Confidential
30	Name withheld	72	Name withheld
31	Speech Pathology Australia	73	Name withheld
32	Confidential	74	Confidential
33	Deafness Forum Australia	75	Mercy Community Services SEQ Ltd.
34	Name withheld	76	Name withheld
35	Name withheld	77	Name withheld
36	Name withheld	78	Confidential
37	The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Council's of Australia	79	Melbourne Society Equity Institute
38	Confidential	80	Australian Medical Association
39	Confidential	81	Australian Pain Society
40	Name withheld		
41	Confidential		
42	LGBTI Community Ageing Network Sunshine Coast		

82	Confidential
83	Macular Disease Foundation Australia
84	Confidential
85	Confidential
86	BUPA Australia
87	Resthaven Incorporated
88	Name withheld
89	Diversional and Recreation Therapy Australia
90	Name withheld
91	Dieticians Association of Australia
92	Name withheld

93	Confidential
94	Aged and Community Services Australia
95	Confidential
96	Meaningful Ageing Australia
97	Confidential
98	National LGBTI Health Alliance
99	COAT Australia
100	QLD Nurses and Midwives' Union
101	Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation

Explanatory notes:

Name withheld indicates permission to publish de-identified submissions has been granted.

Confidential indicates submissions will not be published, as permission to publish has not been granted.

Stage 2 and 3 field testing: Pilot Participants

Stage 2:

Provider	Location	Services Provided
Anglican Aged Care Services Group	Caulfield, VIC	Residential
Anglican Community Services	Beecroft, NSW	Residential
Care Assessment Consultants Pty. Ltd.	Rosny Park, TAS	Home care, CHSP
East Arnhem Regional Council	Angurugu, NT	CHSP, NATSIFACP
Ethnic Community Services Co-operative Ltd.	Marrickville, NSW	CHSP
Jewish Care Inc.	Melbourne, VIC	Home care, CHSP
Maurice Zeffert Home Inc.	Dianella, WA	Residential
Resthaven Inc.	Port Elliot, SA	Residential
Sarina Aged Residential Home Inc.	Sarina, QLD	Residential
Dalby and District Aged Persons' Homes Ass.	Dalby, QLD	Residential
The Uniting Church in Australia Property Trust	Weston, ACT	Home care, CHSP

Stage 3:

Location	State/ Territory	Services Provided
Alpine Health	Myrtleford, VIC	Home care, CHSP
BaptistCare NSW & ACT	ACT	Residential
Boandik Lodge Inc.	Mount Gambier, SA	Community
Central Desert Regional Council	Alice Springs, NT	Community, NATSIFACP
Illawarra Retirement Trust	Campbelltown, NSW	Residential
Open Arms Care Incorporated	Bellingen, NSW	Community
Regis Aged Care Pty. Ltd.	Chancellor Park, QLD	Residential
Rumbalara Aboriginal Co-operative Ltd.	Shepparton, VIC	NATSIFACP
Southern Cross Care (Tas) Inc	Low Head, TAS	Residential, community
Southern Cross Care (WA) Inc	Kalgoorlie, WA	Residential
The Uniting Church in Australia Property Trust	Orange, NSW	Residential

CHSP = Commonwealth Home Support Program

NATSIFACP = National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care Program

Example of Phase 1: Structure of collated feedback**Standard 1 - Consumer dignity and choice**

		Standards				Guidance			
		Clear	Relevant	Provide Evidence	How Different	Relevant	Clear	Sufficient	Helpful for CI
Standard 1 Requirements - Overall Satisfaction Rating 8/10									
1.1	Each consumer is treated with dignity and respect, and their identity, culture and diversity is valued	8	9	8	4	8	7	6	7
1.2 a-d	Each consumer is able to (and supported to as needed) exercise choice and independence, including to: make decisions about their own care and the way that care and services are delivered; make decisions about when family, friends, carers or others should be involved in their care; communicate their decisions; make connections with others and maintain relationships of choice, including intimate relationships.	8	8	8	4	8	7	7	7
1.3	Where a consumer's choice involves risk to their health and/or safety, they are informed about the risks, the potential consequences to themselves and others, and how risk can be managed to assist the consumers to live the life they choose	8	9	7	5	7	7	8	7
1.4	Information provided to each consumer is current, accurate and timely, and communicated in a way that supports the consumer's understanding and the exercise of choice	9	9	8	4	8	8	8	7
1.5	Each consumer's personal privacy is respected and information is kept confidential	9	9	8	3	8	8	8	7