



Clinical governance

The flipbook guides have been designed as supplementary supports for the learning modules. The guides include key messages and insights for your continued reflection.

Disclaimer: The new Aged Care Act 2024 (the Act) starts on 1 November 2025. The Act replaces existing aged care legislation. The Aged Care Rules (the Rules) are expected to be finalised before the Act starts. The Rules give more information about how the new Act will work. This resource is in draft. We will update it when both the Act and the Rules come into force.

Need to know: Clinical governance

Governing bodies and executives are responsible for leading an aged care provider through the aged care reforms and improving outcomes for consumers. An essential part of this process is clinical governance.

What is clinical governance?

Effective clinical governance supports your workforce to deliver safe, high-quality, evidence-based clinical care. Governing bodies and executives offer a framework for their providers to organise and structure how they deliver good clinical outcomes for consumers. It's a way of thinking about clinical quality and safety, and should be embedded within:

- Operations
- Culture and leadership
- Workforce profile and skill mix
- Systems and policies and procedures.

Where does it fit in?

To ensure effective clinical governance is evident in the above, governing bodies and executives need a diverse skillset not just limited to fiscal or operational governance. Increased clinical governance knowledge, skills and experience are required for governing bodies in the sector to support continuous improvement in the delivery of safe, high-quality care to consumers.



Need to know: Clinical governance (continued)

Clinical governance systems are about more than meeting minimum standards. They can and should support organisations to achieve excellence in consumer-centred care.

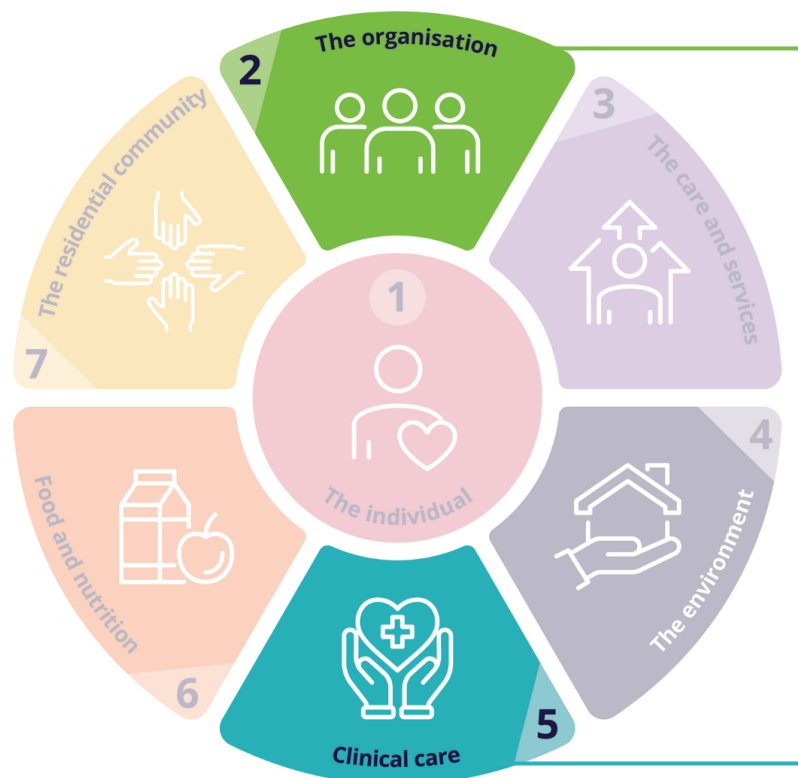
To maximise the potential for these outcomes, governing bodies need to use a continuous improvement approach to actively pursue excellence in providing clinical care and services. Ultimately, clinical governance should be of equal importance to financial risk and other business governance, as decisions related to the quality and safety of clinical care can affect an organisation's finances and strategy.

Clinical governance obligations & accountabilities

Aged care providers have a range of obligations set out under the *Aged Care Act 2024* and the strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards related to clinical governance. Governing bodies need to ensure they remain aware of and responsive to these clinical governance obligations.



Need to know: Clinical governance (continued)



Standard 2 – The organisation

The governing body must meet the requirements of the strengthened Quality Standards and deliver quality funded aged care services through setting strategic priorities for the organisation and promoting a culture of safety and quality. The governing body is also responsible for driving and monitoring improvements to funded aged care services, informed by engagement with older people, their supporters and aged care workers, and data and information on care quality.

Standard 5 – Clinical care

The governing body must meet its duty to individuals and continuously improve the safety and quality of clinical care services delivered to individuals. It must ensure a clinical governance framework is implemented and to monitor its effectiveness in supporting aged care workers to deliver quality clinical care services.



Effective implementation of clinical care governance and Standard 5 - Clinical care is reliant on the systems and processes from **all Standards 1–7**. These systems and processes establish a baseline expectation which supports the delivery of person-centred and safe clinical care services, ensuring that risks of harm to older people from clinical care services are minimised and support continuous quality improvement.

The role of the governing bodies and executives

Aged care provider governing bodies and executives work closely together to ensure the strategic outcomes of the organisation are understood and met. Governing bodies and executives have different roles. Governing bodies are accountable for clinical quality and safety and must take an active role in clinical governance arrangements, whereas executives are delegated responsibility for the overall operational management of the organisation.

Read the information on the following pages to determine if there is an adequate understanding of and delineation between the roles and responsibilities of the governing body and executives in your organisation.



Governing Body



Executives

It may be beneficial for your governing body to regularly review and assess whether there is a clear delineation between the governing body, committees and executives to ensure effective clinical governance arrangements with a focus on continuous improvement.

The role of the governing bodies and executives (continued)



Governing body

My governing body:

- has set a clear vision and strategic direction that drives consistent, safe, high-quality consumer-centred clinical care
- is aware of its role in setting and facilitating a strong organisational best care culture that drives safe, high-quality consumer-centred care
- has clear, robust and easily accessible clinical governance arrangements, policies and procedures implemented across the organisation to effectively support and empower our workforce
- regularly reviews and discusses the key clinical risks for our organisation, and ensures that the required controls and mitigations are in place to address them
- regularly reviews clinical quality and safety performance data to inform the monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of our organisation's clinical care
- regularly discusses how we can better delegate the responsibility for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of our organisation's clinical governance arrangements to the organisation's senior executives and relevant committees
- establishes effective systems and processes to inform and support and help with problem solving and suggesting improvements (e.g. quality care advisory body).

The role of the governing bodies and executives (continued)



Executives

My organisation's executive team:

- provides visible leadership and commitment in delivering and supporting the strategic direction and culture set by the governing body regarding the quality and safety of clinical care
- determines the best approach to planning, implementing, evaluating and improving clinical quality and safety
- prioritises and focuses on the key clinical quality and safety issues and risk areas for the organisation
- ensures that adequate support, education, information and opportunities are provided to the workforce to enable them to fulfil their roles in providing safe, high-quality clinical care
- provides adequate resources that are directed towards ensuring consistently safe, high-quality clinical care
- presents analysis and discussion of clinical quality and safety data to the governing body, including feedback from consumers, audit results, accreditation reports, incidents, and compliments and complaints
- monitors the implementation progress of clinical governance activities and other actions to improve clinical quality and safety and take further action as needed
- understands and sets the tone for what 'better practise' clinical care looks like.

Six core elements of clinical governance

Better practice incident learning is not only a responsibility of a provider's workforce and management, but also of a provider's governing body and executives. The governing body must have confidence that when an incident occurs, it is identified and managed correctly, with lessons from the incident used to inform ongoing quality of care practices.

There are six steps to effective incident learning. Read about them on the following pages.



Six core elements of clinical governance (continued)

Leadership and culture

- The governing body has set a culture that supports and promotes consistent, safe and high-quality consumer-centred clinical care and is focused on improved clinical outcomes for consumers.
- The governing body ensures that clinical governance is integrated into corporate governance.
- The governing body has encouraged a culture of transparency and openness about performance, partnership, learning and continuous improvement within their organisation.
- There is accountability for clinical quality and safety performance within the organisation.

Consumer partnerships

- There is an ongoing partnership with consumers to ensure they can provide input on clinical care elements that affect them.
- Clinical care balances dignity of risk and duty of care.
- Consumers are encouraged and supported to provide feedback (either through an established consumer advisory body, or other compliments and complaints process) about their clinical care experience which is responded to in a timely manner, and the consumer feels heard.
- Consumers are engaged in the ongoing design and implementation of elements of clinical care.

Six core elements of clinical governance (continued)

Organisational systems

- The aged care provider has adequate policies, processes and systems in place to actively manage clinical risk and to guide and improve clinical quality and safety.
- The aged care provider's processes and systems are designed to support consumers and their representatives to be partners in the planning of care, organisational design and evaluation of consumer outcomes.

Communication and relationships

- Consumer information about clinical needs, goals and preferences is recorded, updated and accessible.
- The workforce is supported and encouraged to raise concerns about quality and safety.
- A multidisciplinary approach to clinical care is supported and encouraged.
- Open disclosure processes are used.

Monitoring and reporting

- Providers should be collecting data so they can assess the quality and safety of their clinical care and report on performance. This data can also be used to support continuous improvement activities.

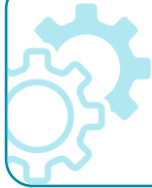
Effective workforce

- The workforce understands their roles and responsibilities.
- The workforce is appropriately qualified and skilled.
- The workforce is actively involved in improving clinical care.
- The workforce understands their role and responsibility in identifying and reporting clinical events or incidents.
- The workforce complies with mandatory reporting requirements.

Additional resources



[Aged Care Act 2024](#)



[Strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards](#)



[Clinical Governance](#)



[Provider Governance](#)



[Governing for Quality Aged Care](#)



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