

## Bringing Clarity to Quality in Care and Support

- Good care is about people and personal relationships, not organisations and processes. Good care and support services are underpinned by an ongoing human connection between staff, people with care and support needs, and their families. Like every successful human relationship, care and support must be based on mutual respect between the people involved.
- Establishing a clear concept of quality makes it easier for staff to deliver services they are proud of and for people to receive care and support services that treat them with dignity and respect and fully meet their needs.
- *Transparency in Outcomes: a framework for quality in adult social care*<sup>1</sup> started a process of government working together with providers and the public on quality. The *Caring for our future* engagement exercise identified that not all staff, or the wider public, were clear about what quality is and what the roles and responsibilities of organisations are in care and support.
- People need to know what to expect when they use care and support services, and everyone working in these services – providers, staff, users, carers and other key organisations (such as the Care Quality Commission) – need to understand, and be clear about, their roles and responsibilities.

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<sup>1</sup> *Transparency in Outcomes: a framework for quality in adult social care*, Department of Health, March 2011.

## High quality care – principles and standards

The Government believes it is vital that everyone understands what high quality in both home care and residential care looks like, what people should expect when using care and support, and the roles and responsibilities of different organisations to deliver this.

Different care services support people who are at different stages of their lives, including those at the end of their lives. So, in care and support, good quality does not have the same meaning for everyone because good quality depends on the point of view of the person who needs services. However, there are still some basics that services have to get right if they are going to deliver high quality care. A high quality care and support service must consist of the following core components:



The three components of safety, effectiveness and a positive experience of care are linked. A service cannot be judged to be good quality because it is safe whilst ignoring its effectiveness or people's experiences.

A high quality service is one which actively involves people as partners in delivery of that service and enables them to say:

- I am supported to become as independent as possible.
- I am treated with compassion, dignity and respect.
- I am involved in decisions about my care.
- I am protected from avoidable harm, but also have my own freedom to take risks.
- I have a positive experience of care that meets my needs.
- I receive a personalised service that lets me keep control over my own life.
- I feel like part of a community that I participate in.
- The services I receive represent excellent value for money.

Local Authorities, sector organizations and groups can sign up to the *Making it Real* markers of progress, published by the *Think Local, Act Personal* partnership. Signing up to the *Making it Real* markers enables organizations to track progress towards delivering truly personalised, community-based support.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

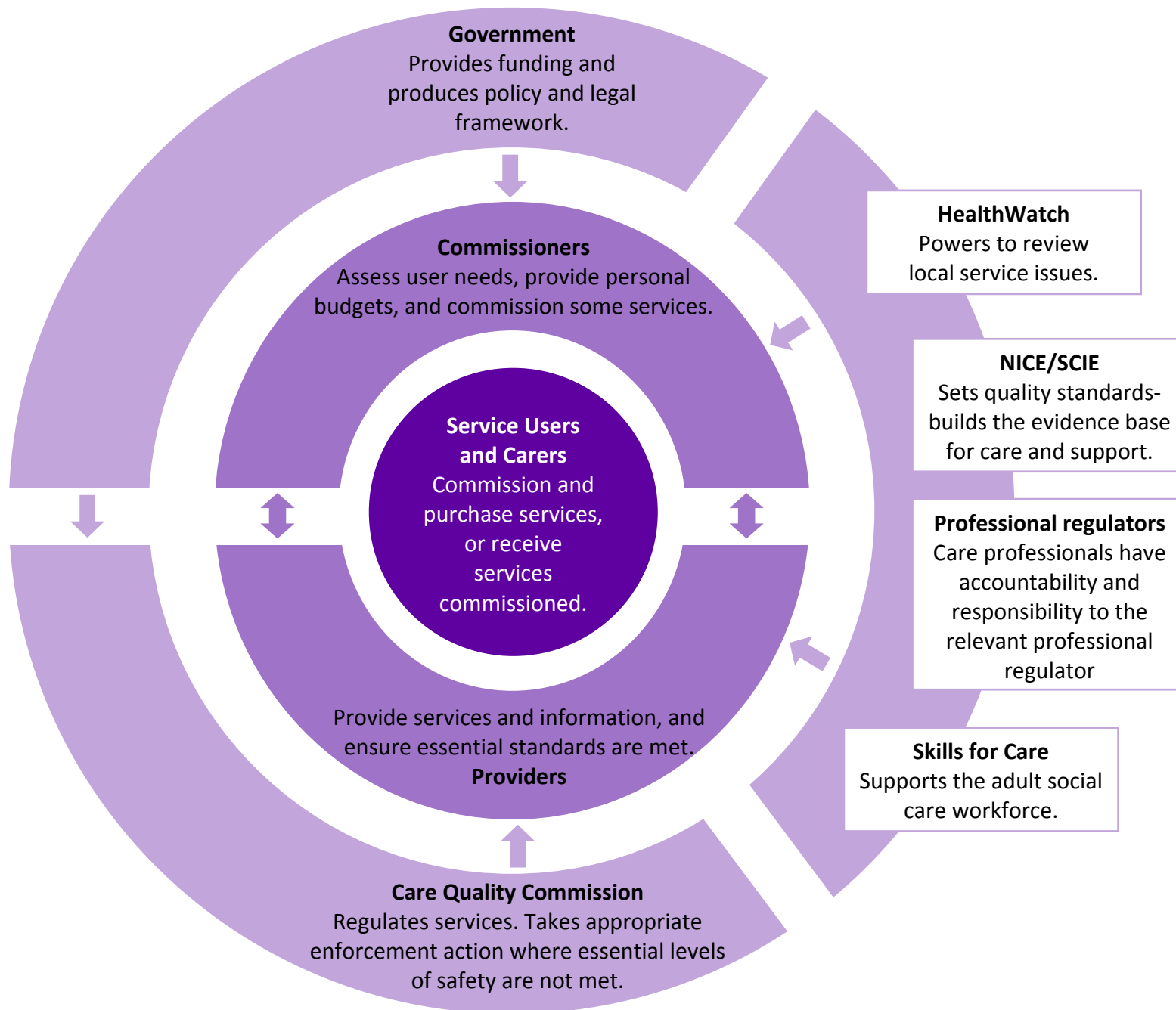
Clear roles and responsibilities for those involved in the commissioning and provision of care and support need to be set out at all levels. **Above all, the quality of care and support is first and foremost the responsibility of providers.** Management Boards, non-executive directors and leaders must ensure that systems and processes are in place which accurately assure themselves, service users and their families and the public that the essential requirements are being met.

Government will work with staff, carers, people who use services and the public to ensure that a clear concept of care and support quality is embedded and understood. **We must also secure high profile leadership for quality in the sector, and we have asked the Think Local Act Personal partnership (TLAP) to develop this work.** A final version of this framework will be published before the end of 2012, taking into account feedback from the sector and TLAP's work.

*As good care is about personal relationships, the quality of the relationship between staff and the people using services is paramount. In good quality care services, people using services and staff work effectively together, and people using services remain independent for longer because staff help service users meet their own care needs.*

*All staff working in an organisation providing care- the nurse, the care assistant, the chef, the gardener, the manager or any other staff member- determine the overall quality of care and support an organisation provides. The manager or team leader is particularly important in determining the quality of the service provided.*

*All organisations need to remember that people using services are the ultimate arbiters of quality. To ensure that people have a positive experience, services need to seek constant feedback and address any concerns quickly in a sympathetic and respectful manner that protects individuals' privacy and safety.*



**Providers**

- Successful care organisations put quality improvement and innovation at the heart of all they do and clearly set out their commitment to quality- e.g. in published compacts.
- The law describes the essential ‘standards of quality and safety’ that apply to all providers of regulated care services. All staff must understand the ‘essential levels of quality and safety’, and help to ensure they are met. All organisations that deliver care services must continuously ensure that they meet the legal standards.
- Management Boards, non-executive directors, and leaders have an even greater responsibility for the quality of care. They should ensure systems and processes are in place which accurately assure themselves, service users and their families and the public that the essential requirements are being met.
- The Government is working with providers to develop ways of making information about their services more widely available, whilst reducing and rationalising duplications in requests for information. Easily understood information ensures that care providers can compare and improve their performance, and commissioners and providers can agree priorities for improvement.
- Providers and professionals have a 'duty of care' - a clear moral and social responsibility to look after the people in their care effectively. This means that the wellbeing of the service users – and a commitment to treat people with dignity and respect – should always be central to their work. Where providers fall seriously short of the expected standards, we expect the full range of sanctions – through enforcement, to civil and criminal prosecution – to be applied.
- Exemplary providers are open to their local communities, playing an active role in society- the people who use these services feel part of that community.

**Commissioners**

- Local authority social services departments commission and fund some services, working with people to assess their care needs, and the needs of wider populations, and match them to available services. In doing so, Local Authorities need to ensure they consider human rights obligations and equalities considerations.
- The Local Authority’s commissioning decisions affect the way the local care and support market develops. As a result, Local Authorities have a role, which the forthcoming Care and Support Bill will formalise, to encourage continuous improvement in the quality of local care services.
- Local Authorities also have a responsibility for the care and support needs of the population of their local area- for example, in terms of taking preventative measures to safeguard people from abuse and neglect. The Local Safeguarding Adults Board, convened by the local authority, has a key role in enabling the relevant agencies, including the police and the NHS, to work together to tackle safeguarding issues.
- The Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF) shows how well local authorities have done in meeting the needs of users and carers in their area.

**Individuals**

- Individual users often buy care services through direct payments, or through self-funding from their own resources. This gives individuals more power to tailor care and support services to meet their needs.
- People expect to be able to judge the quality of services on offer. This enables people who need care to make informed choices about services they could purchase. Providers are working with Government to make information on the quality of services available and accessible. This is part of a wider strategy on information to empower individuals using care and support.

**Voice**

- Local Healthwatch will ensure that the voices of people using care and support are heard by commissioners and care providers. Local Healthwatch will have the powers to enter and view providers and to scrutinise and comment upon service quality, passing on information to the local authority, the Care Quality Commission, or Healthwatch England for further action.
- Local and national voluntary organisations are key in supporting people who access services, by, for example, helping to connect people and services to their wider community.

<p><b>Care Quality Commission</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Care Quality Commission (CQC) regulates health and care services in England. It is responsible for assuring the quality of registered care providers, and determining whether services meet essential standards.</li> <li>• Organisations providing specified services must register with the CQC. These registered service providers must comply with the registration requirements- known as the ‘essential standards of quality and safety.’</li> <li>• A failure to meet the registration requirements constitutes a failure to meet the legal requirements. CQC uses a compliance framework and has a range of enforcement powers to help it monitor services and ensure compliance.</li> <li>• Effective regulation and compliance with the essential standards is one lever to help ensure the delivery of quality services. However, delivering quality services also depends on transparency and responsiveness to users; clarity about quality expectations and staff and organisational roles; and empowerment of care users and staff. Local authorities also use sector-led improvement to identify other levers to drive improvement.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Professionals</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professionals, such as social workers and occupational therapists, play a vital part in driving up quality in care and support by providing expert advice and support to staff and service users and ensuring that appropriate care is provided to those in need so that the best outcomes are achieved.</li> <li>• Professionals have a responsibility and an accountability to their professional regulator. For example, the General Social Care Council (whose responsibilities will move to the Health Professions Council) is the regulator of the social work profession and ensures that only properly trained professionals practise social work.</li> <li>• Skills for Care supports the adult social care workforce, helping to make sure appropriately skilled people are available, working to deliver high quality social care.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Government</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government’s role is to provide direction, leadership, and funding, and ensure that an appropriate legal framework is in place.</li> <li>• Through legislation, the government sets the essential requirements for quality and safety that all organisations carrying out ‘regulated activities’ must meet, overseen by the Care Quality Commission.</li> <li>• Government constantly reviews the priorities for action in care, and helps to provide conditions where care and support services can develop.</li> <li>• Government is ultimately accountable for ensuring that the people in the most vulnerable situations are safe, and supported and encouraged to participate in their communities.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Evidence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) will be working on the development of the first set of standards for care and support to be taken forward from April 2013. SCIE gathers information about best practice in care and support and produces practical resources for the sector.</li> </ul>