



FACTSHEET 13

The Care Bill – Health and social care ratings

"There is a clear gap in the provision of clearly presented, comprehensive and trusted information on the quality of care of providers which might properly inform the public and users about the quality of care, as well as improve the accountability of providers to the public."

The Nuffield Trust – Rating Providers for quality: a policy worth pursuing? March 2013

Why do we need ratings?

A key lesson of the Francis Report was that the current system did not pick up on serious problems with quality of care quickly enough.

It said we needed much better ways of checking whether people are being treated safely and with the kindness and compassion they deserve.

A new ratings system is part of the Government's response to this. Like Ofsted's reports on schools, it will allow people to see and compare how different providers, such as hospitals and care homes, are performing.

How was this plan developed?

At the moment there is no easy way for people to know how hospitals and care homes compare with each other.

The Secretary of State for Health therefore asked the Nuffield Trust, renowned for its evidence-based research and policy analysis on improving health care, to look at whether a new ratings system could work – and, if so, how best to design it.

The report *Ratings providers for quality: a policy worth pursuing?* set out advice on an aggregate rating for GP practices, hospitals, care homes and domiciliary care,

It suggested an overall approach to ratings that would allow complex organisations, particularly hospitals, to be assessed not just at an organisational level but at different levels with service-specific ratings where possible.

As a result, the Government has agreed to ask the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to develop and publish a new, independent system of ratings. Like Nuffield, the Government recognises that a rating on its own will not necessarily help identify all examples of poor care. But it will be a marker of poor performance and can help uncover the details about underperforming organisations.

Why do we need to change the law?

The Government is making changes to the way that the ratings system can operate. The main change is that the development of ratings will be the sole responsibility of CQC. There will be no role for Ministers in agreeing the method of ratings. This will make the system of ratings more independent.

What does the Bill do?

The Bill will enable the Secretary of State to make regulations to set out which services or providers, of those registered with CQC under

the Health and Social Care Act 2008, will be reviewed by CQC.

This will mean the CQC can focus on rating the types of services that matter most, such as those provided in hospitals and care homes.

CQC will decide how services and providers will be rated. It will need to consult with the Secretary of State and others on this, but it will ultimately be up to CQC to confirm what form the ratings system takes.

The CQC will then publish its ratings methodology, giving the key measures of quality that will determine what rating a provider receives.

On 17th June 2013, the CQC published a consultation on changes to the way it regulates, inspects and monitors care. This document includes further detail on how the CQC intends to develop ratings. The consultation will close on 12th August 2013.

To summarise, the Bill will:

- require the CQC to review organisations and services as set out in regulations;
- allow the CQC to devise the new ratings system;
- require the CQC to consult with the Secretary of State and other key stakeholders on the new system.

FURTHER INFORMATION

- Patients First and Foremost: The Government's Initial Response to the Report of the Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust Inquiry (March 2013) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-initial-response-to-the-mid-staffs-report>
- Ratings providers for quality: a policy worth pursuing? (March 2013) <http://www.nuffieldtrust.org.uk/ratings-review/about>
- A new start: Consultation on changes to the way CQC regulates, inspects and monitors care (June 2013) <http://www.cqc.org.uk/public/sharing-your-experience/consultations/consultation-changes-way-we-inspect-regulate-and-monito>