

Practical approaches to quality improvement

Quality improvement is a systematic approach to strengthening the service, which within adult social care provider means delivering higher standard of care to the people you support.

The following recommendations are aimed at supporting services to achieve effective quality improvement processes. This information may be useful to newer frontline managers and other staff who have limited experience of quality assurance processes.

<p>Make improvement a priority</p>	<p>Ensure improvement is a priority of your business, and that this is included and detailed in your business planning and supported by your resourcing.</p> <p>Develop a culture of improvement, ensuring that managers, senior managers, and your wider governance roles are committed to driving forward quality.</p> <p>Use our Guide to Improvement (pages 12 to 20).</p>
<p>Take a person-centred approach to quality improvement</p>	<p>When looking at quality improvement, start with the individual needs of the people you support and ensure this is at the centre of improvements.</p> <p>A goal of improvement – however, big or small - should be to support and enable their needs, preferences and priorities wherever possible. Try to ensure that your people are equal partners in the improvement journey by involving them at each part of the improvement journey.</p>
<p>Use quality assurance to identify improvements</p>	<p>Regularly review identified by the Quality Assurance process and seek practical and timely ways to address.</p>
<p>Learn from accidents and incidents</p>	<p>Ensure that you learn from every accident and incident. Use our Learning from events module to strengthen your skills on this and be in a strong position to avoid reoccurrence.</p>

<p>Develop your staff</p>	<p>Support your staff to pursue professional development and learning to build their capability and confidence to strengthen your quality improvement processes. This can help strengthen your service and retain staff.</p> <p>Provide opportunities for emerging talent to develop new skills to drive forward improvements. Look for staff who regularly discuss ways to improve your service, they often have the enthusiasm and insight to develop your service further.</p> <p>Involve staff in quality assurance related development opportunities such as shadowing Quality / Compliance Leads to being empowered to lead an improvement project.</p>
<p>Look outside of your own service</p>	<p>The CQC is increasingly expecting that adult social care providers connect with one another and work together in improving the quality of care.</p> <p>Build networks and links using our Guide to improvement (pages 42 to 47). This is as much about you sharing good practice and ways to improve with others as it is about learning from other providers.</p> <p>Connect to local networks for managers for peer support and our national Facebook Group enable wider sharing of support, including ideas on good and best practice.</p>
<p>Look at online solutions to help your quality improvement</p>	<p>Be aware of new technological solutions and local and national schemes that can help you to develop your care quality processes.</p> <p>Organisations such as QCS provide online quality assurance and quality improvement resources.</p>
<p>Develop your improvement plans or strategies</p>	<p>For major change, improvement plans, or strategies will be needed, including clear decisions about what outcomes are you aiming to achieve and how.</p>
<p>Own your improvements</p>	<p>Ensure that every improvement you aim to achieve has an owner who can ensure this is delivered. The owners of these improvements can be people you support, your staff, trustees, managers etc.</p>

<p>Benchmark first and then monitor progress</p>	<p>Before commencing your improvement activity, ensure you:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have clearly benchmarked what quality looked like before the new work began. 2. How you will practically monitor progress. 3. How you will know if the quality improvement has been achieved.
<p>Evidence your improvements</p>	<p>Regularly review the improvements that have been made and be ready to demonstrate this. Ensure your evidence highlights how it has resulted in people receiving better care and support.</p> <p>Don't oversell your achievements – present an honest picture of your service, backed up by robust evidence. For everything that the CQC inspector is told, they may ask to see further evidence.</p>
<p>Promote your improvements</p>	<p>Talk to the people you support, your staff and other stakeholders about the improvements that have been made following their input, as well as planned improvements that they can contribute to.</p> <p>This is another route to involve them in the process and a way to celebrate the shared effort of those involved in the service. Without awareness of what improvements have been made, they will not be able to share with others (such as the CQC inspectors)</p>
<p>Continually improve</p>	<p>The goalposts for quality continue to change and what the CQC regarded as good in previous expectations will evolve further over time.</p> <p>Keep striving to strengthen the levels of care being provided by the service and keep engaged on what other good and best practice there is that can be applied to your service.</p>