

Core Standards

Health and Social Care Standards and Planning Framework 2005/06–2007/08

Healthcare bodies are required to meet all of the standards listed below unless stated otherwise. They should be met from the date of publication of this document (July 2004). The outcome for these standards is specified for each domain.

First Domain – Safety

Domain Outcome

Patient safety is enhanced by the use of health care processes, working practices and systemic activities that prevent or reduce the risk of harm to patients.

Core standard C1

Health care organisations protect patients through systems that:

- a) identify and learn from all patient safety incidents and other reportable incidents, and make improvements in practice based on local and national experience and information derived from the analysis of incidents; and
- b) ensure that patient safety notices, alerts and other communications concerning patient safety which require action are acted upon within required timescales.

Core standard C2

Health care organisations protect children by following national child protection guidance within their own activities and in their dealings with other organisations.

Core standard C3 (does not apply to the Mental Health Services)

Health care organisations protect patients by following NICE Interventional Procedures guidance.

Core standard C4

Health care organisations keep patients, staff and visitors safe by having systems to ensure that:

- a) the risk of health care acquired infection to patients is reduced, with particular emphasis on high standards of hygiene and cleanliness, achieving year-on-year reductions in Methicillin –Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA);
- b) all risks associated with the acquisition and use of medical devices are minimised;

- c) all reusable medical devices are properly decontaminated prior to use and that the risks associated with decontamination facilities and processes are well managed;
- d) medicines are handled safely and securely; and
- e) the prevention, segregation, handling, transport and disposal of waste is properly managed so as to minimise the risks to the health and safety of staff, patients, the public and the safety of the environment.

Second Domain – Clinical and Cost Effectiveness

Domain Outcome

Patients achieve health care benefits that meet their individual needs through health care decisions and services based on what assessed research evidence has shown provides effective clinical outcomes.

Core standard C5

Health care organisations ensure that:

- a) they conform to NICE technology appraisals and, where it is available, take into account nationally agreed guidance when planning and delivering treatment and care;
- b) clinical care and treatment are carried out under supervision and leadership;
- c) clinicians continuously update skills and techniques relevant to their clinical work; and
- d) clinicians participate in regular clinical audit and reviews of clinical services.

Core standard C6

Health care organisations co-operate with each other and social care organisations to ensure that patients' individual needs are properly managed and met.

Third Domain – Governance

Domain Outcome

Managerial and clinical leadership and accountability, as well as the organisation's culture, systems and working practices, ensure that probity, quality assurance, quality improvement and patient safety are central components of all the activities of the health care organisation.

Core standard C7

Health care organisations:

- a) apply the principles of sound clinical and corporate governance;
- b) actively support all employees to promote openness, honesty, probity, accountability, and the economic, efficient and effective use of resources;
- c) undertake systematic risk assessment and risk management (including compliance with the controls assurance standards);
- d) ensure financial management achieves economy, effectiveness, efficiency, probity and accountability in the use of resources;
- e) challenge discrimination, promote equality and respect human rights; and
- f) meet the existing performance requirements set out in Appendix 1.

Core standard C8

Health care organisations support their staff through:

- a) having access to processes which permit them to raise, in confidence and without prejudicing their position, concerns over any aspect of service delivery, treatment or management that they consider to have a detrimental effect on patient care or on the delivery of services; and
- b) organisational and personal development programmes which recognise the contribution and value of staff, and address, where appropriate, under representation of minority groups

Core standard C9

Health care organisations have a systematic and planned approach to the management of records to ensure that, from the moment a record is created until its ultimate disposal, the organisation maintains information so that it serves the purpose it was collected for and disposes of the information appropriately when no longer required.

Core standard C10

Health care organisations:

- a) undertake all appropriate employment checks and ensure that all employed or contracted professionally qualified staff are registered with the appropriate bodies; and
- b) require that all employed professionals abide by relevant published codes of professional practice.

Core standard C11

Health care organisations ensure that staff concerned with all aspects of the provision of health care:

- a) are appropriately recruited, trained and qualified for the work they undertake;
- b) participate in mandatory training programmes; and

- c) participate in further professional and occupational development commensurate with their work throughout their working lives.

Core standard C12

Health care organisations which either lead or participate in research have systems in place to ensure that the principles and requirements of the research governance framework are consistently applied.

Fourth Domain – Patient Focus

Domain Outcome

Health care is provided in partnership with patients, their carers and relatives, respecting their diverse needs, preferences and choices, and in partnership with other organisations (especially social care organisations) whose services impact on patient well-being.

Core standard C13

Health care organisations have systems in place to ensure that:

- a) staff treat patients, their relatives and carers with dignity and respect;
- b) appropriate consent is obtained when required for all contacts with patients and for the use of any patient confidential information; and
- c) staff treat patient information confidentially, except where authorised by legislation to the contrary.

Core standard C14

Health care organisations have systems in place to ensure that patients, their relatives and carers:

- a) have suitable and accessible information about, and clear access to, procedures to register formal complaints and feedback on the quality of services;
- b) are not discriminated against when complaints are made; and
- c) are assured that organisations act appropriately on any concerns and, where appropriate, make changes to ensure improvements in service delivery.

Core standard C15 (does not apply to the ambulance services)

Where food is provided, health care organisations have systems in place to ensure that:

- a) patients are provided with a choice and that it is prepared safely and provides a balanced diet; and
- b) patients' individual nutritional, personal and clinical dietary requirements are met, including any necessary help with feeding and access to food 24 hours a day.

Core standard C16

Health care organisations make information available to patients and the public on their services, provide patients with suitable and accessible information on the care and treatment they receive and, where appropriate, inform patients on what to expect during treatment, care and after care.

Fifth Domain – Accessible and Responsive Care**Domain Outcome**

Patients receive services as promptly as possible, have choice in access to services and treatments, and do not experience unnecessary delay at any stage of service delivery or of the care pathway.

Core standard C17

The views of patients, their carers and others are sought and taken into account in designing, planning, delivering and improving health care services.

Core standard C18

Health care organisations enable all members of the population to access services equally and offer choice in access to services and treatment equitably.

Core standard C19

Health care organisations ensure that patients with emergency health needs are able to access care promptly and within nationally agreed timescales, and all patients are able to access services within national expectations on access to services.

Sixth Domain – Care Environment and Amenities**Domain Outcome**

Care is provided in environments that promote patient and staff well-being and respect for patients' needs and preferences in that they are designed for the effective and safe delivery of treatment, care or a specific function, provide as much privacy as possible, are well maintained and are cleaned to optimise health outcomes for patients.

Core standard C20

Health care services are provided in environments which promote effective care and optimise health outcomes by being:

- a) a safe and secure environment which protects patients, staff, visitors and their property, and the physical assets of the organisation; and
- b) supportive of patient privacy and confidentiality.

Core standard C21

Health care services are provided in environments which promote effective care and optimise health outcomes by being well designed and well maintained with cleanliness levels in clinical and non-clinical areas that meet the national specification for clean NHS premises.

Seventh Domain – Public Health**Domain Outcome**

Programmes and services are designed and delivered in collaboration with all relevant organisations and communities to promote, protect and improve the health of the population served and reduce health inequalities between different population groups and areas.

Core standard C22

Health care organisations promote, protect and demonstrably improve the health of the community served, and narrow health inequalities by:

- a) co-operating with each other and with Local Authorities and other organisations;
- b) ensuring that the local Director of Public Health's Annual Report informs their policies and practices; and
- c) making an appropriate and effective contribution to local partnership arrangements including Local Strategic Partnerships and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships.

Core standard C23

Health care organisations have systematic and managed disease prevention and health promotion programmes which meet the requirements of the National Service Frameworks and national plans with particular regard to reducing obesity through action on nutrition and exercise, smoking, substance misuse and sexually transmitted infections.

Core standard C24

Health care organisations protect the public by having a planned, prepared and, where possible, practised response to incidents and emergency situations which could affect the provision of normal services.