



STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS with Lorraine Poulos

How to prepare for the new quality standards



Lorraine Poulos

Most of you would be aware of the new draft single set of quality standards called the Aged Care Quality Standards, which are designed to replace the four sets of standards currently covering residential care, home care, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care program and transition care.

It is anticipated the new standards will be in place from July 2018 when the 12-month transition phase begins.

Providers of human services are often required to meet several sets of standards in order to receive government funding. The new standards will hopefully streamline this process in aged care.

At Lorraine Poulos and Associates, we are currently developing an easy mapping document to assist providers to understand and implement the changes.

I hope the following observations and suggestions assist as you prepare for the introduction of the new standards.

NEXT STEPS

According to the health department, providers will be supported during the transition period and are encouraged to:

- align their system, policies and practices with the new standards
- support staff to understand the requirements of the new standards
- support care recipients and their families, carers and representatives to understand what the changes mean for them.

The Australian Aged Care Quality Agency and industry peak bodies will be supporting providers and consumers to implement and understand the new standards.

WHAT'S NEW?

If we compare the Home Care Standards and the draft Aged Care Quality Standards

there are many similarities and some new requirements. Firstly, the current Home Care Standards have always had a strong consumer focus with Standard 3 – 'Service user rights and responsibilities' being a key part of the framework.

The new standards include a consumer outcome statement which is an indication of the future focus on outcomes for consumers. It is hoped this will encourage innovation and excellence in care provision. This is followed by an organisation statement outlining the overarching expectations of providers and a list of requirements organisations must demonstrate.

“Consider having a consumer advisory group to encourage a stronger consumer voice.”

There are many similarities with the current standards and the draft new standards. For example, standard 8 – 'organisational governance' in the new framework covers areas such as risk management, clinical governance, continuous improvement, identifying and responding to abuse and neglect and ensuring clear responsibilities and accountabilities.

Many of these requirements are included in the expected outcomes in the current standard 1 – 'effective management'. What has changed is that there is more detail and a much stronger focus on protecting the consumer and their rights. Standard 2 in the current Home Care Standards – 'appropriate access and service delivery'

can also be closely aligned with the new standard 2 – 'ongoing assessment and planning with consumers'.

The promotion of independence is a key component of the Home Care Standards via expected outcome 3.5 Independence. However, the new Standard 4 – 'services and supports for daily living' is more prescriptive and includes requirements relating to shared care. For example, the standard states that when others are involved in care there is a requirement for a more inclusive model and accompanying documentation. These examples should help you to review your current policies and practices and start to match them to the new standards.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PROVIDERS

1. Review your clinical care practices and governance framework.
2. Review your care plans when clinical care is provided and when care is shared with families and others.
3. Invest in an auditing program that aligns with the new standards.
4. Consider having a consumer advisory group to encourage a stronger consumer voice within your organisation and services.

As many providers actively work towards achieving a model of care that is more centred around the needs of consumers, it is important that organisational policies match your practice.

I believe the new standards will deliver better outcomes for consumers and raise the standard of care. As always, I welcome your feedback and suggestions. ■

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