

NHS Quality Accounts – Establishing a process for responding to 2022-23

To: Adults and Health Committee

Meeting Date: 9 March 2023

From: The Monitoring Officer

Electoral division(s): All

Key decision: No

Forward Plan ref:

Outcome: For the Committee as part of its statutory function of scrutiny of the NHS to provide a response to NHS Provider Trusts Quality Accounts.

Recommendation: The Adults and Health Committee is asked to note the requirement for NHS Provider Trusts to request comment form Health Scrutiny committees and

- a) to delegate approval of the responses to the Quality Accounts to the Head of Public Health Business Programmes acting under instruction the members of the Committee appointed to the Task and Finish Group.
- b) to appoint those members of the committee that participate in the quarterly liaison groups to become members of the associated Task and Finish group on NHS Quality accounts.

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1. Background

- 1.1 NHS Healthcare providers are required under the Health Act 2009 to produce an annual Quality Account report. A Quality Account is a report about the quality of services by an NHS healthcare provider.
- 1.2 Quality Accounts are an important way for local NHS services to report on quality and show improvements in the services they deliver to local communities and stakeholders. The quality of the services is measured by looking at patient safety, the effectiveness of treatments that patients receive, and patient feedback about the care provided.
- 1.3 This paper outlines the proposed response to the Quality Accounts received by the Health Committee and the internal deadlines to respond to the NHS Trusts.

2. Main Issues

- 2.1 It is a requirement for NHS Healthcare providers to send to the Health Committee in its Overview and Scrutiny function a copy of their Quality Account for information and comment. Statements received from Healthwatch and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees must be included in the published version.
- 2.2 NHS Healthcare providers are required to submit their final Quality Account to the Secretary of State by 30th June each year. For foundation trusts the Quality Accounts are required to be submitted to NHS Improvement by 31st May for audit purposes. However, each provider will have internal deadlines for receipt of any comments from relevant statutory consultees.
- 2.3 As discussed at the Health Committee meeting in previous years, the timing of the Quality Account deadlines puts the Committee in a difficult position to provide an adequate response. Often NHS Trusts are unable to send copies of their draft Quality Accounts until mid to end of April, resulting in a short timescale for the committee members to formally agree a response. There is no statutory requirement for the Adults and Health Committee to respond to the Quality Accounts.
- 2.4 Due to the pressures NHS Trusts were under in dealing with the pandemic the requirement to produce Quality Accounts 2019/20 was paused in 2020. Quality Accounts were produced by some Trusts for the 2020/21 year but a process was not established for the Adults and Health Committee to respond to these adhoc requests.
- 2.5 A new process was introduced in 2018 whereby the Health Committee appointed members of the committee to a task and finish group. This group reviewed the content of the Quality Accounts that they were in receipt of and feedback was provided to the Trust. The Head of Public Health Business Programmes was responsible for submitting final statements to each Trust. It is a legal requirement for the Trusts to publish these statements as part of their complete quality account.
- 2.6 Selected members in the committee currently participates in the following quarterly liaison meetings

3. Responding to NHS Quality Accounts

- 3.1 Under the committee system of governance, it is not possible to delegate decisions to individual elected members or groups of members, but scrutiny regulations require that scrutiny be carried out by elected members and not delegated to officers.
- 3.2 Due to time constraints identified in section 2.2, responses before 2018 were limited to details of where the Trust has attended the Health Committee for the purposes of health scrutiny. Any recommendations made by the committee were submitted within the statement. Feedback received from the Trusts noted that they had expected more of a reflection and comment on the content of the Quality Account rather than an overview of scrutiny actions.

In 2022 this process was replicated to review the Quality Accounts received for 2021/22 and membership to task and finish group was agreed at committee. However, it was difficult for committee members who were not familiar with particular trusts to comment on their Quality Accounts. Therefore it is proposed that for 2022/23 Quality Accounts members of the existing quarterly liaison meetings that meet with senior representatives from these trusts form the associated task and finish group.

- 3.3 The following NHS Trusts have established quarterly liaison meetings:
- Cambridgeshire Community Services (CCS)
 - Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Foundation Trust (CPFT)
 - Cambridge University Hospital NHS Trust (CUH)
 - North West Anglia Foundation Trust (NWAFT)
 - Royal Papworth Hospital Trust (RPH)
- 3.4 As in previous years the scheduling of the committee meeting does not allow for members to discuss the responses at the next Committee meeting scheduled for June 2023 prior to the deadline the Trusts will require a response.
- 3.5 If the Adults and Health Committee want to submit a response to the Quality Accounts received by NHS Trusts then agreement is needed to establish a task and finish group (as proposed in section 3.2) that has delegated authority to respond to the Quality Accounts on behalf of the Adults and Health Committee

4. Source Documents

| Source Documents | Location |
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| NHS Choices information on Quality Accounts | http://www.nhs.uk/aboutNHSChoices/professionals/healthandcareprofessionals/quality-accounts/Pages/about-quality-accounts.aspx |
| Reports to and minutes of Health Committee | https://cmis.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/ccs_live/Committees/tabid/62/ctl/ViewCMIS_CommitteeDetails/mid/381/id/6/Default.aspx |