

NHS Quality Accounts – Establishing a process for responding to 2021-22

To: Adults and Health Committee

Meeting Date: 17 March 2022

From: Fiona McMillan - Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer

Purpose: For the Committee, as part of its Health Scrutiny function, to agree the process to respond to statements on the Quality Accounts provided by NHS Provider Trusts.

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

Where there is more than one recommendation, please use lower case letters as set out below and not numbers or roman numerals:

- a) to consider if the committee wishes to respond to Quality Accounts and if so prioritise which Quality Accounts the committee will respond to.
- b) 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.
- c) to appoint members of the committee to a 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 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.
- 2.5 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.

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.
- 3.3. As a result of this feedback, in 2018 a new process was introduced whereby the previous Health Committee appointed a task and finish group to review the Quality Accounts provided by trusts and provide a more detail critical analysis. Feedback from the Trusts was positive and some examples of how the Trusts used the information from the responses received is provided below.

North West Anglia Foundation Trust (NWAFT)

- The Trust held a stakeholder review meeting whereby all responses received from statutory partners and Trust Governs were discussed with the stakeholders in attendance. Where appropriate changes were made to the Quality Account providing further clarification or building on the feedback.

Cambridgeshire Community Services (CCS)

- The Trust responded to a number of points of clarification that were raised and the Quality Account was altered to address these.

4. Proposed Process for Responding to Quality Accounts 2022

- 4.1 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 2022 prior to the deadline the Trusts will require a response.
- 4.2 There are three options are available for the Adults and Health Committee to consider in organising a response to the Quality Accounts
 - a) agreement that the Adults & Health Committee will not respond to the Quality Accounts received by NHS provider Trusts.

Or agree that a response will be provided and

- b) establish a task and finish group that has delegated authority to respond to the Quality Accounts on behalf of the Adults and Health Committee

5.0 Source Documents

Source Documents	Location
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/ccclive/Committees/tabid/62/ctl/ViewCMIS_CommitteeDetails/mid/381/id/6/Default.aspx