Health & Social Care

Quality is everybody’s business

Consultation:
September – December 2013

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL
1. Preface

In 2012 Bristol City Council asked people about their daycare and residential care. They challenged us to look more closely at all the services we, as a council, pay for to make sure these are of high quality. The case of Winterbourne View, just a few miles away from Bristol, made people realise how important it is to ensure that poor services do not stay hidden.

Some of the services are regulated and inspected by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) but others have no national inspection body. In a time of austerity we have to consider carefully the council’s role in quality-checking these services and decide where to spend our limited budget.

To this end, we are going to need everyone who has contact with services for vulnerable people in Bristol to tell us about them. We want to hear from service users, their families and friends, people who might need these services in the future, who own or work in organisations who provide care and support, come into contact with these services in other ways, or are simply interested in them.

In short, quality has to be everybody’s business. Together, we must make sure that people in Bristol receive the high standards of care and support that we all expect.

Alison Comley
Strategic Director, Health & Social Care
Bristol City Council
2. Introduction

What services are included in the survey?

This survey is about care and support in Bristol. It covers:
- residential and nursing homes
- care and support in people’s own homes
- respite care
- community support, including day centres and opportunities, sitting services ….

What do we mean by ‘quality’?

‘Quality’ means different things to each of us, and when we talk about care and support services it means something very specific, but hard to describe. The surveys we carried out in 2012 showed just how important quality is to people who need care and support services. They said:
- well-trained, friendly and conscientious staff are the most important aspect of care
- being treated with dignity and respect is the next most important, followed by (for couples) being able to stay together
- services should meet people’s diverse individual needs.1

Why do we need to change the way we check quality?

The council has a very small quality team and it pays for over 400 different kinds of services, so we can’t visit all of them regularly. We also know, from cases like Winterbourne View and Mid-Staffordshire that even with inspection, poor services can stay hidden. We need to decide which services are the most important to check, and the best ways to do this.

We also need to find new ways of involving more people in finding out about the quality of services, but we have to do this in a structured way that is fair to the people who receive services and the organisations who provide it.

The next section in this report sets out our proposals. The consultation asks for your opinions.

3. Quality is everybody’s business: our proposals

Our quality framework has three stages:

**Stage 1:** Hearing about the quality of services
**Stage 2:** Visiting services to check how good they are
**Stage 3:** Telling people what we have found out

The tables below tell you what we do now and how we intend to change things in the future. The survey asks you for your opinions about these changes.

We also want to have a Quality Mark for some services that are not regulated by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). We are looking at a national scheme for small businesses and voluntary/community organisations who deliver services in people’s own homes or in the community. There are more details about this in section 4.

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1 Bristol City Council Report to Cabinet: delivering an Effective Social Care System, 26 June 2012
### Stage 1: Hearing about the quality of services

<table>
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<tr>
<th>What we do now</th>
<th>What we propose</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Comments from staff</strong>&lt;br&gt;Bristol City Council has online forms for its staff to send compliments or comments that are not serious enough to be complaints or safeguarding alerts (these are dealt with separately).</td>
<td>To encourage more staff to send comments.&lt;br&gt;To widen the scheme to other organisations (such as NHS).&lt;br&gt;To make a summary of comments and send it to all staff.</td>
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<td><strong>Comments from service users</strong>, their families and friends and Bristol citizens&lt;br&gt;People can send compliments and comments by telephone, by post or email, or by using Bristol City Council's on-line ‘Fair Comment’ form.</td>
<td>To encourage more people to send compliments and comments.&lt;br&gt;To make a summary of compliments and comments and publish these for anyone to see.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Complaints</strong>&lt;br&gt;Organisations who give care and support must have a Complaints Policy that helps people complain to them and sets out what they will do about the complaints they receive. They have to tell the council about all the complaints they receive (and if they are regulated they also have to tell CQC). If you are worried about an organisation, or you haven’t had a fair response from them, you can send your complaint directly to the council. We know, though, that sometimes people worry that if they complain, the service user will be treated badly.</td>
<td>To make it easier for people to complain.&lt;br&gt;To encourage organisations to see complaints as a positive thing, so that they can look at what they do, and make improvements.&lt;br&gt;To make sure that people are not afraid to complain when services go wrong.</td>
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<td><strong>Safeguarding alerts</strong>&lt;br&gt;For serious concerns about abuse, we have ‘No secrets in Bristol’ that tells people who to contact (see Bristol City Council website). The council deals with safeguarding alerts together with CQC, the NHS and the police, as necessary. We tell everyone involved in a safeguarding alert about the steps being taken and the eventual outcomes.</td>
<td>To make sure ‘No Secrets in Bristol’ is kept up-to-date.</td>
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<td><strong>Whistleblowing</strong>&lt;br&gt;Organisations who give care and support must have a Whistleblowing Policy to help their staff and volunteers tell them about any concerns they have. Bristol has a Whistleblowing Best Practice Guide (see VOSCUR website) and we expect</td>
<td>We will monitor whistleblowing to make sure staff feel safe to use it.</td>
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| **Self-assessment by care and support organisations**  
We don’t currently ask organisations to do this. | To have a self-assessment form for organisations to fill in and send to Bristol City Council on a regular basis.  
This will give organisations a chance to look carefully at the quality of their services and think about any changes they need to make.  
We know that some organisations already do this and we will try to tie our new system in to current schemes. |
|---|---|
| **‘Mystery shoppers’ – feedback from service users and their families and friends**  
We don’t currently have a way of asking for regular feedback from people. | To recruit service users, their families and friends to be ‘mystery shoppers’ when they apply for an assessment or when they get a service.  
This would help us test the quality of services from different points of view, right from the first telephone call to Care Direct, through to receiving regular care and support services. |
| **Peer review by care and support organisations**  
‘Peer review’ is a system for organisations to visit each other to look at parts of each other’s work, to see how well they are doing and to share ideas.  
We don’t currently do this. | To set up a system and encourage organisations to use peer review to test how well they are doing and to share good ways of giving care and support. |
| **Sharing information**  
We share information about the quality of services with other agencies (such as CQC and NHS and sometimes the police), where we are working with the same organisations and we share responsibility for checking quality.  
We also share information with other councils, where Bristol City Council pays for people to live in care homes/ supported living schemes (or when people from other areas have their care/support paid-for by other councils in Bristol). | To carry on sharing important information with CQC, the NHS, police and other councils, where this will help each of us to get a full picture of the quality of services.  
To set up ways of sharing information with other departments in Bristol City Council, where this will help to improve services (e.g. transport, food hygiene, Trading Standards). |
Stage 2: Visiting services to check how good they are

How we decide which services to visit

Bristol City Council pays for around 400 different care and support services and has a team of just three Quality (QA) officers to visit them. This means that we have to use the officers’ time very carefully. At the moment, they spend most of their time visiting and writing reports about care homes and homecare (that is, care in people’s own homes). These services are also inspected by CQC. All services are visited at least once every two years, but if we have heard anything about a service that concerns us, or if we find something during a visit that needs to be improved, we visit them more often.

What happens during a QA visit

We have a quality framework (a series of checklists) that helps us test how well organisations work and how good their services are.

QA officers use the framework to:
- ask service users how well their needs are being met by the service they receive
- check that service user ‘care and support’ files contain the right information
- inspect the condition of care homes and supported living schemes
- ask service users’ families and friends about the service received by the person they support
- look at feedback from anyone else who comes into contact with the service
- observe and interview staff to check how well they give care and support.

We want other people to be involved in these visits, to bring a ‘fresh pair of eyes’ to the checks that are carried out.

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<tr>
<th>What we do now</th>
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<td><strong>Involvement</strong></td>
<td>To involve other council and NHS staff in the visits:</td>
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<td>Visits are currently carried out by the council’s</td>
<td>senior managers</td>
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<td>small team of QA officers</td>
<td>a ‘pool of experts’ with different skills and knowledge, such as: social workers, people with expertise in ‘moving and positioning’, medications, managing the contracts.</td>
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Senior managers of organisations who give care and support

When we visit care homes we don’t give any warning, so that we see how the organisation ‘normally’ works.

This means, though, that there isn’t always a senior manager on site so they may not get to hear about our visit until we send our report.

To check organisations who give care and support to people in their own homes, we visit a sample of service users.

To make stronger links with the senior managers in organisations that give care and support, we propose to:
- interview the senior care home manager during our visit. If he/she is not there, we will leave a survey for them to fill in, with a deadline for it to be sent back to the council
- if we find things that we are concerned about, we will tell the senior manager within 24 hours and ask them to send us an action plan.
We check beforehand with each service user but we don’t expect to see anyone from the organisation. Again, it may mean that it is some time before a senior manager knows about our visit.

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<th>Voluntary lay assessors</th>
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<td>It is useful for services to be checked by 'a fresh pair of eyes' so we sometimes ask people from outside the council's QA team to visit, either with the team or separately. We call these volunteers 'lay assessors'. They bring different knowledge, experience and views to quality checking.</td>
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<td>Lay assessors from the Retired and Senior Volunteer Programme in the West of England (RSVP West) have been involved in checking care homes in Bristol. So have members of BOPF’s Management Committee.</td>
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<tr>
<td>We propose to work with Healthwatch, RSVP and other groups to recruit volunteers who are service users, their families and friends and other Bristol citizens. We want the lay assessors to represent the wide mix of Bristol people who need care and support services. We know that there will be a cost to provide the right training, supervision and expenses for lay assessors, so we will have to decide whether this is a priority.</td>
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<tr>
<td>We think that the skills the lay assessors learn may also be useful to them for employment and other volunteering opportunities. Training will include being aware of equalities issues and knowing what high quality services look like; we will expect lay assessors to agree to terms and conditions of conduct, including confidentiality.</td>
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<tr>
<td>We will need to decide how the lay assessors would be managed (by the council or another organisation), what they would do during a quality visit and whether there are other things they could do to help improve the quality of services.</td>
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<td>We will consider recruiting councillors and Neighbourhood Partnership representatives as lay assessors to visit organisations in their wards.</td>
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Stage 3: telling people what we have found out

At the end of each quality visit, QA officers give their first feedback to the organisation (the provider). This includes an action list if they have seen things that worry them. They write a longer report after the visit, describing what they have found and how good they judge the service to be. This report is used by the council and is sent to the organisation. We want to find ways of making at least part of this information public in future, to help people to choose services, based on what we know about their quality.

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<th>What we do now</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>First feedback to provider</strong></td>
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<td>At the end of the visit, the QA officer gives written feedback to the provider’s manager-on-site. This shows what is being done well and lists anything that needs action. It means that concerns can be looked at by the organisation straightaway.</td>
<td>To send a copy of the written feedback to a senior manager in the provider organisation within 24 hours of the visit. This will make sure that senior managers in the organisation know about our visit and any concerns/required actions we have raised.</td>
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<td><strong>Longer report</strong></td>
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<td>The QA officer writes a more detailed report of what has been found during the visit and sends this to the provider within 2 weeks. The report also goes to other teams in the council, including the H&amp;SC Safeguarding Team if there are serious concerns. A copy of the report is always sent to CQC. If we think the service needs to be improved, an action plan is put in place. The actions needed, and the time allowed for these, are agreed with the provider and more quality visits are set up to check on progress.</td>
<td>Making reports public We want to publish our quality reports in future, either ‘whole’ or as a summary, to help people to get a clear picture of how good each service is. Publishing reports will also mean that we can show the ways that the best providers care for and support people. The published reports must be fair to providers so we will need to decide how they could publish their response to our report.</td>
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<td><strong>Managing the contract</strong></td>
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<td>If a provider fails to give people a high quality service (in line with contract) we use the action plan to check very carefully what they are doing to improve. If the action plan is not achieved, or further information is received that makes us think service users are not safe, then we will stop placing people with the provider, and in serious cases we will consider moving people to other service providers.</td>
<td>• closing a contract if the provider doesn’t improve (but this would mean finding a new provider for their service users) • getting back the money the council has spent on poor services • publishing our actions on the Bristol City Council website.</td>
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</table>
We have terms and conditions in our contracts about ‘breach of contract’ and some of these are to do with quality. This gives us more power to act if we think services are not good enough. However, our contracts do not all include the same conditions.

We want to think about how we can build other penalties into contracts, in case services are not good enough. These might include:

- **Warning providers about a poor service and setting a deadline for them to improve**

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<th>4. Quality mark</th>
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Alongside the new approach to QA, we want to introduce a quality mark for excellent services. This would be for services in the community (such as day opportunities and sitting services) and in people’s own homes. It would particularly apply to people working on their own, small companies and voluntary/community organisations who deliver services that are not currently regulated by CQC.

People who receive services, and those who might need them in the future, would be able check which providers had met the standards for the quality mark and to choose services based on this information.

Services that could get the quality mark might include:

- personal assistants (PAs)
- personal care and support
- day services
- community outreach
- mobility shops and assistive technology providers
- cleaning, de-cluttering
- gardening
- house maintenance, handyman services
- plumbing and electrical work

When we consulted providers, they said they would like any proposed scheme to:

- use a nationally-accredited award
- avoid a lot of extra paperwork
- either be cost-free or have only a small cost.

In response to these views, we are looking at national schemes. One option is a scheme that is run jointly by Health & Social Care and Trading Standards and is used by a number of councils across the country. It uses an accreditation system that checks that organisations are stable and are working to high quality standards, but is not too difficult for small companies to apply. Organisations who get the quality mark have to renew their
membership every year. This means that we can be sure they carry on giving good service.

5. **How to get involved**

**Fill in the survey**

The consultation will run for 12 weeks, until 9 December 2013.
To fill in the survey, go directly to: [www.bristol.gov.uk/everybodysbusiness](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/everybodysbusiness)
Or go to: [www.bristol.gov.uk/consultation](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/consultation), then click on ‘See all consultations’ and select ‘Quality is everybody’s business’

You can also pick up a paper copy of the survey from your local library, GP surgery or community centre, or contact Jan Connett on jan.connett@bristol.gov.uk or 0117 352 5135 and ask for a paper copy to be sent to you.

**Other ways to get involved**

We are setting up a number of meetings and events across the city, between now and December. We will show you our proposals and invite you to ask questions and share your views. The times, dates and venues for these events are on the website and in the paper copy of the survey.

**What happens next**

After the consultation ends we will look at all the results from the survey and the discussions from the events. We will summarise these and use them to draw up our new quality framework.
The survey results and the new framework will be published on Bristol City Council’s website in the New Year. We will tell you how you can continue to be involved, and it is likely that we will ask for volunteers for some of the new tasks.