

Health and Social Services Committee

HSS(2)-13-04(p.6)

Date: Wednesday 3 November 2004

Venue: Committee Room 3, National Assembly for Wales

Title: A Statement of Healthcare Standards – Standards for NHS Care and Treatment in Wales –
Publication of a Consultation Document

Purpose

1. To invite the Committee to note the publication of a consultation document for the development of Statements of (healthcare) Standards in Wales. The document will be published on 3 November 2004 for widespread public consultation across Wales. Hard copies will be sent direct to H&SSC members and also placed in the Assembly library. A PDF version will be made available on the Assembly's Internet and Intranet sites.

Summary / Recommendations

2. The proposals, which will be consulted on between 3 November 2004 and 3 February 2005, aim to cut bureaucracy and simplify the current complicated set of healthcare standards so that they can be easily applied and understood.

3. I want to produce a common framework of healthcare standards to support the NHS and partner organisations to provide effective, timely and quality services across all healthcare settings, from GP surgeries to hospitals. This will cut through the current complicated array of healthcare standards.

4. The standards will form the basis of how health providers will report to Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW), who will focus on local inspection and investigation of NHS bodies in Wales to ensure quality, patient safety and national healthcare standards are complied with. HIW will also work with other regulators to reduce the burden of inspection on the health and social care sector generally.

5. The standards are key to my drive to continuously improve the health service and ensure that no matter where in Wales or in what healthcare setting the patient receives treatment, they will have access to the same high-quality service. It will also help identify where additional resources need to be directed to deliver services that patients expect from the NHS.

6. The standards will be targeted at all NHS-funded providers of healthcare, for health managers, commissioners and for patients as well as applying to those in the independent and voluntary sector who provide care to NHS patients. In the longer term, my aim is to bring all standards, inspection and review procedures that apply to all NHS organisations, social care services, the independent and voluntary healthcare sectors closer together. This will improve patient care and reduce bureaucracy on the sector.

Background

7. Based on work that has been progressed by the Department of Health in England, the consultation document has been developed by the Advisory Board for Healthcare Standards in Wales which draws its membership from a wide range of NHS and partner organisations including public/patient groups. In my remit to the Board, I asked that the Statement of Standards be developed with the following underlying principles in mind:

- To simplify the complicated array of healthcare standards that currently apply to modern healthcare providers and not create another layer of standards;
- To organise existing standards into four domains, and that these should be the Patient Experience; Clinical Outcomes; Healthcare Governance and Public Health;
- To illustrate clearly the healthcare settings in which the standards would apply; and
- To allow for flexibility to be exercised by health professionals in their methods of achieving the standards.

Compliance

8. Section 47 of the Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003 (Standards set by the Assembly) gives the Assembly the power to prepare and publish Statements of Standards in relation to the provision of health care by Welsh NHS bodies. These powers have been delegated to me, as Assembly Minister for Health and Social Services.

Financial Implications

9. The proposals seek to simplify the existing complicated array of healthcare standards that apply to healthcare providers. They will not place additional financial burdens on the NHS, but will rationalise the healthcare standards that already exist in Wales.

Cross Cutting Themes

10. The Statement of Standards document will need to be taken into account by all NHS funded providers of healthcare, for health managers, commissioners and for patients as well as applying to those in the independent and voluntary sector who provide care to NHS patients in Wales at present. In the future, I will bring all the standards, inspection and review procedures that currently apply to NHS

organisations, social care services, the independent and voluntary healthcare sectors, closer together.

Action for Subject Committee

11. The committee is invited to note the paper.

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Minister for Health and Social Services

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