

National healthcare standards for Scotland

Introduction to the national healthcare standards

Healthcare Improvement Scotland is the national health and social care improvement organisation for Scotland. The standards we develop are informed and shaped by people who commission, deliver and use services.

The standards we develop are informed by:

- the experience and outcomes of people with lived/living experience
- learning from improvement programmes and examples of good practice
- published evidence relating to clinical research, best practice guidelines and international standards.

Currently every set of standards developed by Healthcare Improvement Scotland contains key cross-cutting standards related to staff, person-centred care, service design and clinical leadership and governance. To reduce duplication and support nationwide improvements in the quality of care, we are developing a set of core standards outlining the requirements for all healthcare services.

Deciding the scope of the national standards

We invited stakeholders to comment on the proposed scope of the standards through an online public consultation survey. The consultation survey ran for six weeks from 21 February to 3 April 2024. Sixty-five responses were received and considered.

During this period we also ran a scoping workshop. Participants were informed about the proposed aims, population, settings and areas for development for the national healthcare standards for Scotland. Feedback from the workshop was also used to inform the scope of the standards.

Title

Proposal: The proposed title of the standards is 'National healthcare standards for Scotland.'

Response: Just over half the stakeholders in the consultation survey agreed with this title. Some respondents highlighted a lack of clarity in this title, where others highlighted that they saw no explicit reference to social care.

Outcome: The final title of the standards will be agreed by the standards Development Group. The standards will be referred to in the interim as the '**National healthcare standards for Scotland**'.

Aims

Proposal: The standards will:

- set out the essential components for safe, effective and person-centered healthcare services
- provide high-level standards for clinical and care governance
- describe the quality of service that people can expect to experience
- provide a national standard for integrated services and teams to work towards.

Response: These aims were individually put to stakeholders as part of the consultation survey. Each aim was supported by a minimum of 48 out of 65, or three-quarters, of respondents.

Following consultation feedback, the standards will also be underpinned by the principles and aims of Realistic Medicine, including specifically:

- prevention and early intervention
- reducing health inequalities
- promoting rights, compassion, dignity and respect.

Outcome: additional aim to be added.

Population that will be covered

Proposal: The standards will apply to everyone who receives assessments, treatment or support from healthcare professionals.

Response: This was supported by over 80% of survey respondents.

Outcome: The standards will apply to everyone who receives assessments, treatment or support from healthcare staff.

Setting

Proposal: The standards will apply in all settings where people receive assessments, treatment or support from healthcare professionals. This includes hospitals, primary care, community healthcare facilities, hospital at home services, prisons and care homes. It also includes independent health providers.

Response: 50 out of 65 respondents indicated their agreement with the proposed setting.

Outcome: The standards will apply in all settings where people receive assessments, treatment or support from health professionals. This includes hospitals, primary care, community healthcare facilities, hospital at home services, prisons and care homes. It also includes independent health providers.

Some respondents highlighted a preference for the standards to apply to social care settings. The Health and Social Care Standards (2017) apply to all settings across health and social care. The proposed national healthcare standards aim to complement and not replace the Health and Social Care Standards. Core standards, guidance or frameworks related to specifically to social care may be developed if required by the relevant agencies and partners.

Areas for standards development

Proposal: The standards will cover the following themes:

- clinical governance
- staff training and leadership
- shared care
- involving people
- assurance
- quality management
- adverse events
- research, innovation and system learning

The standards will not cover the following areas:

- specific treatment or therapy options and clinical pathways
- standards for national screening programmes
- the development of HIS quality indicators or key performance indicators
- implementation, which is for local determination by local services or partnerships

Response: Three-quarters of respondents expressed agreement with each theme presented.

Outcome: The standards will cover the themes proposed in the consultation survey.

Timelines

Work on the national healthcare standards for Scotland will begin around June 2024, with expected publication of the final standards spring 2025.

Appendix 1: Key documents

This work will be informed by evidence, pathways and practice and build on and align with a range of Scottish Government policies and priorities including:

1. NHS Scotland - blueprint for good governance: second edition
2. Excellence in Care framework
3. Scottish Patient Safety Programme: Essentials of Safe Care Toolkit
4. Adverse events framework
5. National whistleblowing standards
6. Organisational duty of candour: guidance
7. Quality Management System (QMS) framework
8. Core screening standards
9. Health and Social Care Standards: my support, my life
10. Audit Scotland NHS Report 2023
11. HIS SPSP perinatal and paediatric programmes
12. NHS Scotland Quality Strategy
13. Independent Review of Adult Social Care in Scotland
14. Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014
15. Scottish Approach to Service Design
16. Delivering value based health and care: a vision for Scotland
17. Human Learning Systems: A Practical guide
18. IHI Framework for Safe, Reliable and Effective Care
19. Carers (Scotland) Act 2016
20. Your rights to equality from healthcare and social care services: Equality Act 2010, Guidance for service users
21. Duties of a doctor in the workplace - professional standards
22. HIS Quality Assurance Framework
23. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
24. United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
25. United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
26. United Nations Convention on the Rights of Disabled People
27. General Comment No. 22 from the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
28. Realistic Medicine – doing the right thing (2023)
29. Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000
30. My Health, My Care, My Home – healthcare framework for adults living in care homes (2022)
31. Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act (2019)
32. Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act 2019: statutory guidance
33. Health and Social care: data strategy (2023)
34. Discovering meaning, purpose and hope through person centred wellbeing and spiritual care: framework
35. Person-centred Design and Improvement Programme
36. Scottish Learning and Improvement Framework for adult social care support and community health

Appendix 2: Development group membership

The membership of the standards development group will reflect service provision from across NHSScotland and where appropriate, the independent healthcare sector in Scotland. The proposed specialist representation for developing the standards will include:

- Clinical governance lead
- Quality management and improvement lead
- Nurse directors
- Inspectors
- Assurance managers.

The Healthcare Improvement Scotland standards and indicators project team will include a Programme Manager, a Project Officer, Administrative Officer support and support from the Team Lead.