**Up to Standard Episode 3: Main changes to the strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards explained**

Video transcript

Hello and welcome to the third episode of our Up to Standard video series, where we answer your questions about the draft strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards.

Through this video series, we’re aiming to support the sector to be prepared for the upcoming changes and answer some of the questions raised in the February sector webinar where we shared how we are supporting sector readiness for the new strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards.

I’m Lisa Peterson, Assistant Commissioner for Sector Capability and Regulatory Strategy here at the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission.

Today’s episode will focus on the main changes to the strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards, including the move to graded assessment.

The first question for today is: **What are the main changes to the strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards?**

To support the aged care sector to understand the changes, we compared the current Quality Standards with the draft strengthened Quality Standards published by the Department of Health and Aged Care in December last year.

Under the current arrangements we have 8 Standards with 42 requirements.  We are moving to 7 Standards, 33 outcomes and 146 actions. This might sound daunting; however, the actions that will apply to you will depend on the circumstances of your service and the needs of the people that you care for.

Among the main changes is greater focus and additional requirements in five key areas as recommended by the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.

These include diversity, dementia care, clinical care, provider governance and food and nutrition.

To learn more about this, you can read the [Strengthened Quality Standards Framework Analysis report](https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/about-us/stronger-standards-better-aged-care-program#the-strengthened-quality-standards-pilot-project).

You can view a copy by using this QR code or visiting our website.

The second question is: **How will providers be assessed against the strengthened Standards?**

We will use a graded assessment at the outcome level and at the Standard level of each strengthened Standard when evaluating provider performance.

Graded assessment is designed to provide greater transparency to older people and the sector about provider performance. It also aims to promote continuous improvement.

Providers will be assessed against one of four gradings:

The 4 grades will be:

* Conformance – we are satisfied with performance against the Standards.
* Minor non-conformance – opportunities for improvement or gaps are identified in the provider’s systems and process that are not systemic and don’t represent high risk to older people.
* Major non-conformance – where we see gaps in provider systems that are systemic and where we see issues that create high risks for the care of older people.
* Exceeding – we are still working on the framework for this.  Our current thinking is that this would apply where a provider has achieved conformance against all the standards and can meet some additional criteria.

How a provider responds to any areas of minor or major non-conformance will inform what regulatory action we will take.

Our last question for the day is:**Why are the strengthened Quality Standards released before the Act is completed, and will they change once the Act is finalised and released?**

This is a great question.

The answer is that there has already been extensive public consultation on the strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards which started back in 2021.

The Department of Health and Aged Care has released what we think is the final draft of the strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards to assist the aged care aged care sector to prepare for implementation.

The Department is now translating the strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards into law under the new Aged Care Act.

As this drafting process continues, there might be some minor wording adjustments to make sure that the standards are consistent with the legislation. If there are any changes, we’ll certainly let you know.

The timing for the implementation of the strengthened Standards will be determined by the timing of the new Aged Care Act.   The new Act has to be in place before the Standards can commence.

We are still consulting on our draft guidance resources until the end of April. Your responses will help us to produce resources that are fit-for-purpose, easy-to-understand and support the delivery of quality, person-centred aged care.

You can access the draft documents and consultation survey on our website or through the QR code on the screen.

And that’s a wrap up of our Up to Standard Episode for today.  We’ll be back soon with our next episode.

If you have any other questions about the strengthened Standards, please email us at agedcarereform@agedcarequality.gov.au. Your questions or feedback are important and help us with the work we are doing to help to prepare the sector. Thanks everyone, and see you next time.