Transcript

Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission

The Strengthened Quality Standards in Practice Workshop

Overview and Resources

 **Presented by:**

Speaker

[*Opening visual of slide with text saying ‘Australian Government with Crest (logo)’, ‘Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission’, ‘The strengthened Quality Standards in Practice Workshop’, ‘Overview and Resources’*]

[The visuals during this webinar are of the speaker presenting via video, with reference to the content of a PowerPoint presentation being played on screen]

§(Music Playing)§

**Speaker:**

Welcome to this prerequisite video to the Strengthened Quality Standards in Practice Workshop. This short 15 minute video will cover an overview of the strengthened Quality Standards and the resources currently available to support aged care providers and staff preparation.

In the spirit of reconciliation the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission acknowledges the traditional custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, water and community. We pay our respect to Elders past, present and emerging and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The Commission is committed to supporting provider preparation for the introduction of the strengthened Standards through the Stronger Standards Better Aged Care Program. You can find a variety of resources on the Commission’s website.

The Department of Health and Aged Care released what we understand is the final draft of the strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards in November 2023. There has been extensive public consultation as well as pilots on the strengthened Standards which have led to the final draft. The strengthened Standards were released before the Act is completed to assist the aged care sector prepare for implementation.

They will come into effect with the commencement of the new Aged Care Act. The introduction of the Act is a priority for the Australian Government. It is anticipated that the commencement date of the new Act will be the 1st of July 2025 to align with the launch of the new Support at Home Program. We won’t be able to give any definitive information on the finalisation of legislation, timeframes or guidance material however the Commission aims to be open and transparent.

Future workshops and education resources developed by the Commission will further support you and your workers in understanding audit methodology and the types of evidence to demonstrate conformance and self-assessment and monitoring of your systems and practices to ensure high quality care and services are delivered. During this workshop we will outline resources you can access now to get an idea of how we expect things to work once the Act is in place.

A key finding of the 2024 National Aged Care Providers Conference in Adelaide was the high level of awareness among providers of upcoming reforms and that work is already well underway to get ready for the changes ahead.

A first step for every provider is to be clear about which Standards will apply to your service. Standards that apply are not the same for everyone and will depend on your registration category and the types of services you provide. The strengthened Standards apply to provider registration categories 4 through to 6.

Details regarding the service types and application of the Quality Standards are still subject to decision of Government and may change as the legislation is introduced to Parliament.

Attending this workshop will assist you to understand new topics and enhanced expectations of the strengthened Standards, identify current practices and what you are already doing to achieve outcomes in the strengthened Standards, identify opportunities to further strengthen practices and processes to achieve a high level of quality care and services, and use information, ideas and activities to support staff preparation.

In the workshop we will focus on the actions that introduce new topics or raise expectations for the improved Standards and the relevant practices that can be applied. There will be a 30 minute question and answer session with our subject matter experts from the Policy and Quality Assessment and Monitoring Divisions. This session is an opportunity for you to submit questions and clarify information.

Lastly we will share ideas on how you can further support your staff to prepare for the introduction of the strengthened Standards.

It is important to be clear about the foundations of the strengthened Standards which are high quality care and older people’s rights. The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety noted an aged care provider’s most important objectives should be to enhance the wellbeing of older people by providing them with safe and high quality care and to put the older person’s wishes and needs first. Embedding the concept of high quality care in the new Act sends a strong message that providers and workers are not to just comply with the minimum requirements. They are to innovate, continuously improve and strive to deliver high quality care at all times.

To do this a shared understanding of the standard of care must be established in the sector. The proposed definition of ‘high quality care’ is person-centred and consistent with the Statement of Rights, but in addition it will prioritise kindness and respect for mental health and wellbeing, timely and responsive delivery of care and services, tailoring of care to the personal needs, aspirations and preferences of older people, keeping older people mobile and engaged, participation in meaningful activities, supporting older people to remain connected, and inclusive policies, procedures and environments to ensure culturally appropriate care and services.

Let’s have a listen to some perspectives of older people about what good care means to them.

[*Visual of slide with text saying ‘Australian Government with Crest (logo)’, ‘Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission’, ‘What good care means to me’, ‘Perspectives of people receiving care and services’*]

[START VIDEO PLAYBACK]

Speaker 1:

I couldn’t really walk anywhere but now having help has made it possible for me to stay where I am in my home which I love. It’s been a godsend for me.

§(Singing)§

Joy:

It’s good fun here. I love it. I really do love it. A lot of people think I’m crazy. Fancy saying that. But I do. I’ve made such a lot of friends since I’ve been in here. I like to get out and about and be with people and do things. Physi, quizzes, music. We have a classical music afternoon. It’s great. I’m very, very happy here.

Patricia:

Well I like to go to exercise classes and I love the bus trips every Tuesday. It takes you out and you see different scenery and that. It’s very, very nice. I enjoy that very much.

§(Music Playing)§

Chris:

Now since I’ve sort of worked on the garden a lot more people are utilising the area. Always fascinated me just watching things grow and the beauty that they show once they’re grown.

[*Visual of slide with text saying ‘Australian Government with Crest (logo’, ‘Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission’*]

[END VIDEO PLAYBACK]

Speaker:

The strengthened Standards help older people to feel secure and supported giving families confidence that their loved ones are looked after. They also ensure aged care providers and workers know what is expected of them, whatever the service’s size, location or offering.

The Standards have been strengthened to include more detail and objectivity, to improve measurability and clarity, and assist providers in understanding their obligations. Under the current arrangements we have eight Standards with 42 requirements.

We are moving to seven strengthened Standards, 33 outcomes and 146 actions. It’s important to remember that most requirements of the strengthened Standards are current expectations.

Among the main changes in the strengthened Standards is a 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. There are now dedicated Standards to both nutrition and clinical care.

Each Standard is now structured with an older person’s statement, staff statement, intent of the Standard, expectation statement for older people, and each Standard contains several outcomes with a number of actions.

The new aged care legislation sets the outcomes as the enforceable element of the strengthened Standards, therefore auditors will determine findings of conformance at the outcome level with the actions outlining how providers may meet the outcome.

There are a variety of resources to help you with what you want to know. Resources are regularly updated in response to any changes and modifications. To compare the current and strengthened Standards you can review the framework analysis document. To get an idea of practices to achieve and evidence to demonstrate the strengthened Standards you can review the draft guidance material and digital guidance tool on the Commission’s website.

The draft guidance material is intended to support providers to get ready for the strengthened Standards and promotes best practice and service provision. The Commission sought public consultation on the draft provider guidance from February 2024 to May 2024 and we’ve had a lot of engagement with these resources.

The Standards Guidance outlines actions, key topics and associated activities that you can implement to achieve the outcomes of the strengthened Standards. It is not a prescriptive guide. Aged care services vary in size and structure and have different ways of meeting the Standards. The actions you take to deliver high quality safe care will depend on the circumstances of your service and the needs of the people in your care.

The draft Audit Methodology describes the processes that providers can expect the Commission to follow when preparing for and conducting audits. Examples of the different types of evidence and questions that our audit team will be looking for when assessing performance are outlined in the draft evidence mapping framework. The intention is that providers can look at the evidence mapping framework together with the guidance material to help understand how you can demonstrate conformance with the strengthened Standards. Remember though these are not an exhaustive list that auditors must identify and you are encouraged to provide other forms of evidence where appropriate.

The draft Standards Guidance and evidence mapping framework have been combined into an online digital tool. The digital tool helps to filter relevant information according to your category and role. The audit methodology will be published as a separate document.

Further resources to assist you to prepare include guidance to support frontline workers, fact sheets, videos and tools which give insight into assessment and monitoring of performance against the strengthened Standards. The Aged Care Quality Standards pilot project final report outlines key insights, findings and lessons learned from the pilot audits and the National Aged Care Provider Conference recordings and slide presentations include separate presentations for residential and home care sectors.

The Commission is continuing to develop and release educational resources to support providers, workers and older people understand what the strengthened Standards mean for them. We’re taking on board the feedback from the public consultation on the draft guidance resources. Providers have asked us for simplified, summarised content and we’re working on it. We’ll continue to improve and fine tune the draft guidance digital tool available on our website to better meet providers’ needs. Providers have suggested that we combine our pre-audit preparation tool and the request for information template into one to reduce duplication. So that’s something we’re having a look at.

We’ve considered all the learnings from the pilot program and made some adjustments to our audit methodology and we’re trialling it again to ensure it supports efficient, accurate and consistent outcomes. We’re preparing our people, processes and systems to meet our regulatory responsibilities under the new Aged Care Act and we’re committed to continuing our transparent and collaborative approach to supporting providers to get ready across the other reforms.

For providers keep reviewing the guidance resources and thinking about how you apply the actions and practice now. Start thinking about which policies, procedures and training may be affected by the changes in the strengthened Standards. Remember there is a lot you’re already doing. It might just be reframing processes. Take the opportunity to review the capability of your current policies, procedures and training in attaining high quality care and services and consider whether any opportunities for improvement exist. Consider how you will communicate and partner with staff, older people and stakeholders in the lead up to and when legislation is passed.

Some providers are considering how they will demonstrate conformance with the strengthened Standards. They have started looking at the new expectations and considering what pieces of evidence they will need to verify those expectations as well as what evidence they need to adjust to ensure it aligns with the clarified requirements.

You can stay up to date on the release of new information, training and resources by subscribing to the Quality Bulletin, accessing online interactive learning modules through Alis and checking out the Commission’s and Department’s websites.

Remember to complete the survey prior to the workshop and submit any questions. We’re looking forward to meeting you in the workshop and listening to your experience, ideas and insights into implementing the strengthened Standards in practice. Thanks for watching.

§(Music Playing)§

[*Visual of slide with text saying ‘Stronger Standards’, ‘Better Aged Care’, ‘Register for workshops and other online learning:’, ‘https://learning.agedcarequality.gov.au/user\_login’, ‘Australian Government with Crest (logo)’, ‘Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission’, ‘Engage’, ‘Empower’, ‘Safeguard’*]

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