

**FACT SHEET**  
for healthcare  
services

# Implementing the National Safety and Quality Primary and Community Healthcare Standards

## What are the Standards?

The National Safety and Quality Primary and Community Healthcare Standards (the Standards) describe the processes and structures that are needed in healthcare services to help keep people safe and improve the quality of health care delivered.

Launched in October 2021, the Standards were developed by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (the Commission) in consultation with many other people including consumers, healthcare providers, government agencies and industry experts.

They comprise of three individual standards:



**Clinical Governance Standard**, which describes the resources, processes, policies and procedures needed for the delivery of safe, high-quality health care. Risk-management and continuous improvement are central, as well as ensuring the workforce has the right qualifications, knowledge and skills to provide health care.



**Partnering with Consumers Standard**, which describes what should be in place to support patients and consumers to be partners in their own care. This includes being given the information they need in a way they can understand, to make decision about their health care.



**Clinical Safety Standard**, which addresses safety and quality risks commonly encountered in primary and community healthcare services, such as preventing and controlling infections and communicating for safety.

## Why have the Standards been developed?

The Standards aim to minimise the risk of harm to the public and improve the quality of health care delivered. They do this by providing a foundation for healthcare services to develop and embed individualised clinical governance frameworks.

Broad uptake of the Standards will help ensure the community can access safe, high-quality health care, wherever health care is delivered.

## Why should I implement the Standards?

It will give your **patients** confidence that:

- You are committed to providing safe and high-quality health care
- You are committed to continuously improving what you do
- Everyone in your healthcare service is accountable for the delivery of safe, effective and high-quality health care.

It will give your **healthcare service**:

- Confidence you are meeting safety and quality expectations, in line with best practice and other healthcare services
- A framework to drive improvements and productivity
- Opportunities to enhance ways of working with other healthcare providers, in the best interests of your patients
- Opportunities to contribute to broader reforms to make the Australian health system more person-centred, integrated, efficient and equitable.

## Does my healthcare service need to implement the Standards?

If your healthcare service is directly involved in patient care, you are strongly encouraged to implement the Standards.

If you are implementing profession-specific standards, these should align with the Standards. This will ensure a nationally consistent approach to safety and quality improvements.

## How do I implement the Standards in my healthcare service?

The way in which the Standards are implemented will depend on the size of your healthcare service, as well as the risks and complexities associated with the services you deliver.

Implementation is self-paced, requires a whole-of-service approach and involves:

- **Getting to know the Standards** and how they will be applied, including identifying actions that do not need to be implemented in specific circumstances (refer to [Appendix 1](#) in the Standards for further details).
- **Working through individual actions** and considering how your current ways of working, policies, training and involvement of patients and consumers can demonstrate the implementation of specific actions in practice. A self-assessment may be useful to provide structure to identify gaps and changes that are needed to meet the requirements of the actions. Documentation from the quality improvement activities then becomes evidence of changes introduced
- **Continuous improvement activities**, once implemented, to ensure safety and quality systems remain current and to identify areas that would benefit from further quality improvement activities.

## What support will be available?

The Commission is developing guidance and resources to provide practical support as you implement the Standards. These will be made available on the [Commission's website](#).

Additional supports may also be available from your local Primary Health Network, consumer groups or professional organisations such as the Australian Dental Association.

## Does my healthcare service need to be accredited to the Standards?

Accreditation is a formal program where trained external reviewers assess your healthcare service's implementation of the Standards. Assessment involves assessors seeking evidence that actions have been implemented.

Accreditation to the Standards will commence from mid-2022. Accreditation to the Standards will be voluntary. However, in certain circumstances, you may be required to become accredited to the Standards to satisfy regulatory, contractual or funding obligations.

If you wish to become accredited to the Standards, you will need to select an accrediting agency approved by the Commission to conduct accreditation assessments. Upon the successful awarding of accreditation, you will be issued an accreditation certificate and accreditation badge that may be displayed in your healthcare service or on your website.

Transition arrangements will be available for certain healthcare services already accredited to the [National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards](#), including private dental practices.

Further details regarding accreditation will be released by the Commission at the appropriate time.

## Find out more

For more information, visit [safetyandquality.gov.au/pchs](https://safetyandquality.gov.au/pchs) or contact the **Safety and Quality Advice Centre**

Email: [AdviceCentre@safetyandquality.gov.au](mailto:AdviceCentre@safetyandquality.gov.au)

Telephone: 1800 304 056