

Healthwatch

Quality

Framework

Guidance on using the framework

Introduction

During the consultation for Healthwatch England's strategy, local Healthwatch asked Healthwatch England to explore how we can best support Healthwatch to demonstrate your effectiveness.

In response, we set out to develop a Quality Framework, to provide a shared understanding between Healthwatch providers, local authority commissioners and Healthwatch England of the ingredients of an effective Healthwatch. We seconded Nichola Esmond, then Chief Officer with Healthwatch Wakefield, to support this work.

Purpose

The Framework has several purposes:

- **Healthwatch providers** can use it to analyse your effectiveness and what's working well, where you have challenges, what you can do to improve and what may be outside your control. The focus is on learning to make your Healthwatch as effective as it can be.
- **Local authorities** can use the framework to inform the commissioning of an effective Healthwatch. They can also use it with Healthwatch providers as part of their contract monitoring arrangements.
- **Healthwatch England** will use the framework for assurance of an individual Healthwatch's effectiveness and how we can best support it as well as use the collective analysis of all the frameworks to inform how we target our resources to best support all Healthwatch.

What is the Quality Framework?

The framework is set out in an Excel spreadsheet and consists of Context and six domains split between enablers, approach, core and purpose.

Context

This has been designed to describe some key factors affecting your operating environment. It gives Healthwatch England important information and does not replace more detailed analysis such as PESTLE (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Environmental).

Enablers

Leadership and Governance acknowledges the importance of having clear goals and a rationale for our work priorities, which is vital given our wide remit and challenging resources. Strong leadership and governance help us navigate a complex environment whilst maintaining our independence and accountability.

The **People** domain recognises the key resource of Healthwatch: its Board/Advisory Group members, staff and volunteers who need the right knowledge, skills and support to deliver an effective, consistent Healthwatch service.

Sustainability and Resilience focuses on a business model that enables Healthwatch to plan and operate effectively, as well as adapt to the changing needs of the people we serve.

Approach

The **Collaboration** domain recognises the value of working collaboratively and in partnership, and of learning from other Healthwatch.

Core

Engagement, Involvement and Reach focuses on the main statutory activities: how we go about reaching out to all sections of our community, gathering people's views, providing advice and information and involving people in our work.

Purpose

Influence and Impact focuses on the difference we make by ensuring those in charge of health and care services hear people's voices and that their views shape the support they need.

Role of Healthwatch England

Healthwatch England's overall purpose is to help your Healthwatch to be as effective as it can be. We therefore want Healthwatch to share their completed frameworks with Healthwatch England and arrange a meeting with your regional Manager to discuss the contents. The Regional Manager will:

- Use the framework to understand your Healthwatch so Healthwatch England can best support you
- Provide constructive challenge, drawing on learning from across the Healthwatch network and from local authorities and other stakeholders
- Identify and share best practice and work with you on identifying your action plans which will form the basis of the next review of your Quality Framework in 12 months.

Confidentiality

Healthwatch need to be able to be open and honest when completing the Quality Framework to achieve maximum benefit and learning. This also helps Healthwatch England have a full understanding of your support requirements. This may involve a local Healthwatch sharing sensitive information with Healthwatch England, including that of a commercial nature.

Healthwatch England recognises the importance of maintaining trust in the confidentiality and security of the information you share with Healthwatch England. We will not share the contents of your completed Quality Framework and any accompanying documents with any third party. Healthwatch England will be particularly mindful of our dual role of providing advice and support to local Healthwatch and providing general advice to local authorities to ensure we do not breach your confidentiality. The only exceptions are where we are legally obliged to act (eg a safeguarding issue or criminal matter) or where we assess there has been a breach of the trademark licence, such as non-compliance with the Healthwatch legislation or acting in such a way that is likely to damage the reputation of the Healthwatch scheme.

We will also comply with Data Protection legislation and treat and store your completed Quality Framework in accordance with our Information Security and Governance Policy.

Healthwatch England will store your completed Quality Framework in line with our policies on our secure system.

Using the Quality Framework

The framework has been designed to be used on a self-assessment basis. The testing phase identified the importance of involving Board/Advisory Group, staff and volunteers in its completion. Running a workshop, for example, ensures people across the organisation bring different perspectives, achieves shared understanding and provides a platform to celebrate success and collectively identify areas for improvement.

Here are some of the ways that Healthwatch providers could use the Framework:

- Preparation for business planning
- Informing annual reports
- Completion of contract monitoring reports
- Informing funding bids and project and partnership proposals

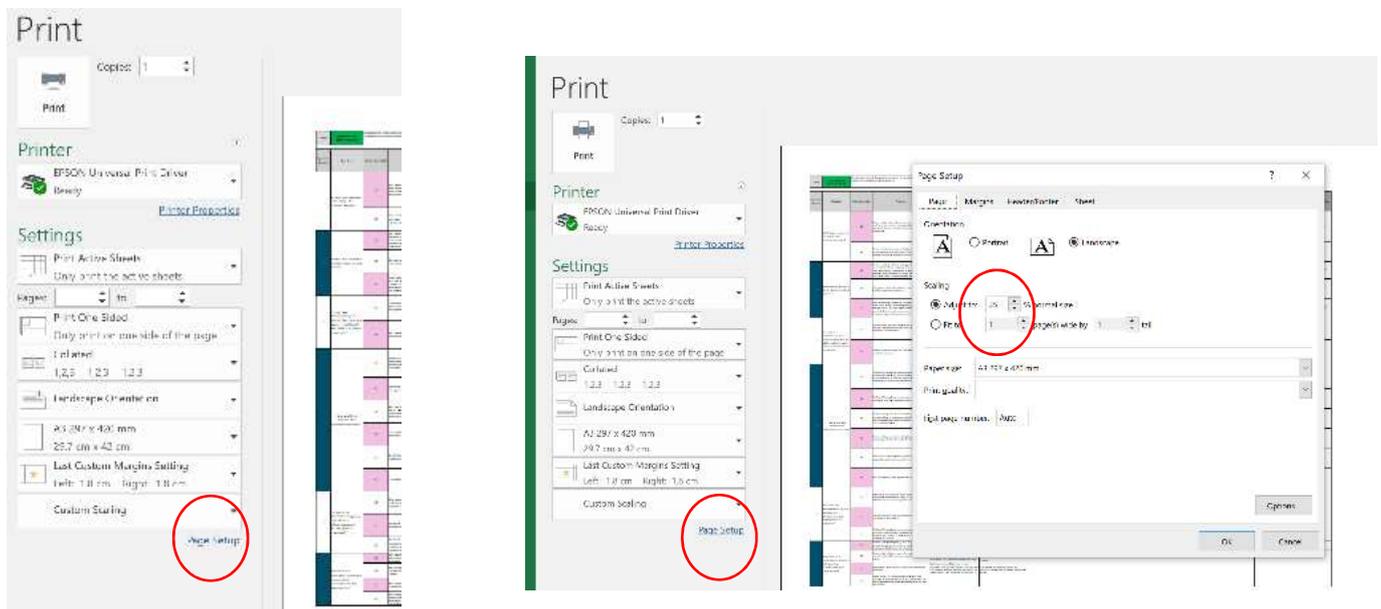
How long does it take to complete?

Time required to complete the framework will vary depending on whether you have undertaken a similar exercise before and how easily you can identify and collate the necessary evidence. This also depends on who you involve and how.

You may wish to focus on a one domain at a time with a specific audience. If you are working with volunteers and staff and Board members in an inclusive way, then it is estimated that a workshop, depending on numbers etc could take a morning or afternoon per domain.

Healthwatch England has worked with the early adopters of the framework to understand this in more detail. We have produced the domains and questions in PDF format which you can use alongside The Quality Framework on a page to aid its accessibility. We have also created power point slides to aid discussion during workshops and they can be adapted to suit your approach to the self-assessment process. The Excel Spread sheet does need to be completed but in practice this can be completed after the discussions and by one person.

Printing the framework



Completing the framework

When completing you should think about when best to do this, plan internally when you have capacity to reflect, gather evidence and complete in preparation for business planning and strategy development.

Questions, Prompts and Rationale (Columns A- E)

The Excel spread sheet begins with brief questions about the 'Context and Environment' which your Healthwatch operates in. It is to give pen picture of your area and organisation and identify in broad terms some of the factors that may be taken into consideration about your effectiveness. There is no need to use the RAG rating in the section that asks you for factual details about 'Your Organisation'.

Each domain consists of a series of questions with prompts to help you answer the bigger question. Some prompts have a corresponding rationale to explain its importance. It should not be a tick box exercise - you should consider how best to set out and evidence your approach to achieve the overall objective of demonstrating your effectiveness.

Examples of evidence and our approach (Columns F and G)

At each prompt, you are asked to comment and provide evidence to demonstrate your effectiveness (Column G). You should add hyperlinks to any published documents on your website. You should collate other evidence ready to be able to share with Healthwatch England if required.

You may want to comment or provide evidence on your approach that is not covered by a prompt but speaks to the bigger question. Within your team agree who, will review each piece of evidence to identify whether it's fit for purpose or whether it needs reviewing.

You may also want to highlight whether action to address an area of relative weakness is within the control of your Healthwatch. For example, your level of funding will be outside your control and may impact on the capacity of your team which in turn affects the number of volunteers you can support and certain activities you can undertake.

Some examples of evidence are provided (Column F). It is important you attach or include links to evidence where possible.

Red Amber Green (Columns H,I,J)

The framework includes RAG selection to help your Healthwatch understand which areas require action and/or impact on your effectiveness. Score yourself in the RAG column by clicking the arrow on the colour and description you think best fits where you are currently with the prompt and the cell will turn the appropriate colour. You can use the results to help put together your overall action plan.

Selection of green, amber and red is down to your judgement.

Red signifies significant impact on your ability to be effective and indicates that considerable work needs to be done in this area. This should feature within your action plan.

Amber indicates that whilst there are some missing elements related to the prompts and that this could impact to some extent on your ability to be effective. This should also be addressed within your action plan although to a lesser extent than if you had assessed yourself as Red.

Green signifies you are effective and currently there is no further work to be done in this area.

The RAG selection will also give Healthwatch England an overview of where Healthwatch are reporting strengths and weaknesses to inform how we best support Healthwatch.

Action, Responsible, Deadline (Columns K, L, M, N)

Once you have collated your evidence, you can then review it against the questions, checking back with your initial RAG rating. You can then complete the action cell (Column K) based on your answers and the RAG ratings. You can also allocate who is the person with lead responsibility for the action (Column L) and set a deadline for action (Column M) to have taken place.

Tools and good practice (Column O)

Links to sections of toolkits. The Making a Difference Toolkit is the first toolkit to be developed to accompany the Quality Framework and specifically for the Influence and Impact and elements of the Leadership and Decision-Making domains. We expect to add examples of policies/good practice from Healthwatch as Frameworks are completed.

Comments on the framework (Column P)

Column P has also been added to share your comments on the Quality Framework. This will help us to improve the Framework as well as capture what does not need to change.

Non-insertion of columns and rows

The worksheets are protected to prevent addition of columns and rows. Healthwatch England require this to enable us to analyse the completed Frameworks. You can change the column width or row height.

Meeting to discuss your assessment

As well as hearing about your experience of completing the Quality Framework, Healthwatch England will act as a critical friend whereby you discuss your assessment and review your action plan. Healthwatch England's Network Development Team's purpose is to help Healthwatch to be as effective as it can be. We therefore want Healthwatch to share their completed Frameworks with Healthwatch England and arrange a meeting with their regional Manager to discuss the contents.

Please notify your regional manager of when you intend to conduct the self-assessment. Once you have completed the Framework please email a copy to your Regional Manager at Healthwatch England. The Regional Manager will then contact you to book a time ideally within approximately two weeks after completion to discuss its contents.

We suggest setting aside two hours for a face to face meeting with your regional manager.

The role of the Regional Manager is to:

- Use the framework to understand your Healthwatch so Healthwatch England can best support you
- Provide constructive challenge, drawing on learning from across the Healthwatch network and from local authorities and other stakeholders
- Identify and share best practice and work with you on identifying your action plans which will form the basis of the next review of your Quality Framework in 12 months.

The regional manager will take notes and both parties will agree an action plan and sign a record sheet. During the meeting your Regional Manager will explain the storage and sharing of data and information.

Checklist of key activities

Activity	Who	Time allocated
Think about when best to do this, plan internally when there is capacity to reflect, gather evidence and complete in preparation. Consider where you need to look for certain evidence in advance and have it to hand for consideration where possible.	Lead Officer and Host lead if applicable	Completion: requires 2-3 days minimum dedicated time...small HW: big ask...but it only is done once every 2/3 years
Complete the framework with Board members, staff and volunteers. You may wish to involve stakeholders such as your commissioners and partner organisations as well as your host organisation if this is applicable.	local Healthwatch team	This is dependent on who is involved in the assessments and practicalities. You may wish to prepare to do workshops with Board, staff and volunteers separately on different domains.
Review evidence, agree RAG rating, write action plan		2 hours
Meeting with Regional Manager from Healthwatch England	local Healthwatch team plus Regional Manager	2 hours

Common questions

Does every Healthwatch need to complete the framework?

As well as helping us inform how we can best support Healthwatch, the Quality Framework gives Healthwatch England assurance of a Healthwatch's effectiveness. As this is one of Healthwatch England's statutory roles, we require all Healthwatch to use the Quality Framework in accordance with Healthwatch's statutory activity of "providing Healthwatch England with the intelligence and insight it needs to enable it to perform effectively". By March 2021 Healthwatch England aims to have a commitment from all Healthwatch that they will complete the framework by March 2022. Support is available for those who have expressed the desire to complete it during this financial year.

How often do we need to complete the framework?

Currently we envisage Healthwatch providing evidence against the Quality Framework in the first year and then focusing on the areas where they have identified the need for improvement in the second and third years. A Healthwatch may decide to complete the framework at any point - for example, as part of your annual review and business planning process; at the start of a new contract to think about what you need to put in place to be effective.

How the Framework fits with other approaches to quality assurance?

We recognise that some Healthwatch may already be using their own quality assurance system, including sector specific systems such as Trusted Charity. We want to avoid duplication, yet at the same time ensure Healthwatch England has a comprehensive view of effectiveness across all Healthwatch. Healthwatch England want to understand how this can best work in practice during the first phase of implementation of the Quality Framework.

How does the Framework fit with our local authority contract and monitoring arrangements?

The Quality Framework has been developed to provide a shared understanding of an effective Healthwatch between local authorities, Healthwatch providers and Healthwatch England. Healthwatch England consulted with local authority commissioners on the framework's development.

During September 2019 over sixty local authority commissioners attended regional workshops to look at how they could use the Quality Framework. There was overwhelming support for the Framework and commitment to use it as part of commissioning and monitoring of contracts. They particularly liked how it assisted with providing an understanding of factors which impact on effectiveness and how Healthwatch could be best supported.

Healthwatch England has developed a resource pack for commissioners which includes how they can use the Framework. We already have some local authorities which are using the framework. These include:

- The tender specification/contract includes a requirement for the provider to use the framework
- Contract outcomes have been developed which directly refer to framework questions and prompts
- Commissioners are using the framework as part of their monitoring arrangements

Core versus commissioned: What work should we consider when completing the Framework?

Many Healthwatch undertake work that meets the definition of statutory activities but is funded outside of their local authority core contract. You should include any of your work which is carried out under the Healthwatch brand and consider referencing how it is funded if appropriate. This will give a full picture of your effectiveness.

Should the parent or host organisation be involved?

There are different delivery models for Healthwatch. Some Healthwatch only deliver Healthwatch in their local authority area. Other Healthwatch are part of a parent organisation which delivers other services. Such services may include delivery of Healthwatch in other local authority areas. There are elements of the Quality Framework (such as strategy and business planning) which may require the involvement of the parent/host organisation.

What if my local Healthwatch is jointly commissioned?

Legally, every local authority area must have a separately identifiable Healthwatch. However, two or more local authorities may jointly commission a provider organisation to provide Healthwatch services across the entire footprint. When completing the Quality Framework, it is important for such Healthwatch providers to demonstrate effectiveness in each of the local authority areas and identify variation when considering the questions and prompts. Examples of variation include the context, strength of local relationships and the extent to which stakeholders in each area view Healthwatch as a system leader.

How does the Quality Framework fit with the Quality Statements?

Healthwatch England worked with local Healthwatch to produce a set of Quality Statements in 2015. These primarily focused on the statutory activities of Healthwatch. The Quality Framework takes a broader approach on effectiveness and has incorporated the Statements which are no longer being promoted by Healthwatch England.

What if I need further help?

Your Regional Manager can answer any questions.