

The Quality Framework

August 2022

Contents

Contents.....	1
Introduction.....	2
The purpose of the framework.....	2
What is the Quality Framework?.....	3
The Role of Healthwatch England.....	4
Using the Quality Framework.....	5
Common questions.....	7

Introduction

The Framework was previously set out in an Excel spreadsheet and consisted of context and six domains split between *Enablers, Approach, Core* and *Purpose*.

We have retained and refreshed the domains, so they are now updated with more detail on equality, diversity and inclusion, along with more information on how we work with Integrated Care Systems.

We have made completing it more accessible by using Smart Survey and ensuring that the domains follow a pattern for completion.

We have removed the context section to avoid duplication as we have this information from other sources.

However, you will want to reflect on your operating environment when answering the various questions within the domain surveys. For example, we appreciate that there will be variations between local Healthwatch, depending on if your Healthwatch is hosted or stand-alone. There will also be differences in capacity dependent on various factors such as income, the nature of local partnerships and the specifics of your locality.

This tool will assist you in the continuous development of your organisation. You are not expected to tick all boxes, and this is in no way a sign of failure.

Whilst we have done away with the ratings, the new approach allows you to assess what you have in place and have internal discussions about what you want to prioritise.

Your Regional Manager can assist you with these conversations and decisions at your review meeting.

Our new approach will also enable us to collate and analyse the data more quickly and better understand the overall needs of Healthwatch.

We are conscious that many of you who adopted the Framework early on will consider rerunning the assessment as part of your 3-year cycle.

The purpose of the framework

The Framework has several purposes:

- **Healthwatch providers** can use it to analyse effectiveness, 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 possible.

- **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.
- **We** will use the Framework to assure an individual Healthwatch's effectiveness and how we can best support you. We will use the pooled analysis of all the frameworks to inform how we target our resources to best support local Healthwatch.

What is the Quality Framework?

Below is an explanation of each domain and the rationale behind each one.

Enablers

Leadership and Decision-making acknowledges the importance of having clear goals and a rationale for your work priorities, which is vital given your broad remit and challenging resources. Strong leadership and governance will help you navigate a complex environment while maintaining your independence and accountability.

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

Sustainability and Resilience focus on a business model that enables you to plan and operate effectively and adapt to the changing needs of the people we serve.

Approach

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

Core

Engagement, Involvement and Reach focuses on the main statutory activities: how you go about reaching out to all sections of your community, gathering

people's views, providing advice and information and involving people in your work.

Purpose

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

The Role of Healthwatch England

Our overall purpose is to help you be as effective as possible. We, therefore, want you to share your completed frameworks with us and arrange a meeting with your Regional Manager to discuss the contents.

Your Regional Manager will:

- Use the Framework to understand your Healthwatch and how we 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 practices and work with you on identifying your action plans which will form the basis of the following review of your Quality Framework in 12 months.

Confidentiality

It would be best if you were open and honest when completing the Quality Framework to achieve maximum benefit and learning.

It helps us have a complete understanding of your support requirements. This may involve you sharing sensitive information with us, including that of a commercial nature.

We recognise the importance of maintaining trust in the confidentiality and security of the information you share with us. We will not share the contents of your completed Quality Framework and any accompanying documents with any third party.

We will be particularly mindful of our dual role of providing advice and support to you 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 (e.g., a safeguarding issue or criminal matter) or where there has been a breach of the trademark licence. This includes non-compliance with

Healthwatch legislation or working in a way that is likely to damage the reputation of Healthwatch.

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

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

Using the Quality Framework

The Framework is a self-assessment tool.

It is helpful to involve Board/Advisory Group, staff and volunteers in its completion. Running a workshop, for example, ensures people across your organisation bring different perspectives, achieves shared understanding and provides a platform to celebrate success and collectively identify areas for improvement.

You will need to gather this data before completing each domain through the Smart Survey platform.

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?

The 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 one domain with a specific audience at a time. If you are working with volunteers, staff, and Board members inclusively, it is estimated that a workshop, depending on numbers, could take a morning or afternoon per domain.

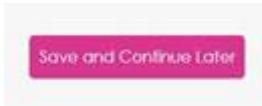
Completing the Quality Framework

The Quality Framework is completed via questionnaire surveys for each domain. You can complete the surveys in any order you wish.

Your regional manager will not review your self-assessment until all six domain surveys are completed and submitted.

For saving and returning to a survey

Each survey (when set to) will have a "Save and Continue Later" button.



If selected, this will take you to a save and continue page where you can fill in your name and an email address. The system will then email a link to that email address:



When you complete the whole Quality Framework self-assessment, it will be sent to your regional manager, who will contact you to arrange a review meeting.

You can print out your survey and use it as the basis for your action plan. You can access the Quality Framework via the [Healthwatch England Network site](#).

Meeting to discuss your assessment

As well as hearing about your experience completing the Quality Framework, we will act as a critical friend whereby you discuss your assessment and review your action plan.

Our Network Development Team's purpose is to help you be as effective as possible.

Please notify your Regional Manager when you intend to conduct the self-assessment. Once you have completed the Framework, please email a copy to your Regional Manager. The Regional Manager will then contact you to book a

time, ideally within approximately two weeks after completion, to discuss its contents.

The role of the Regional Manager is to:

- Use the Framework to understand your Healthwatch so we 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 practices and work on your action plans which will form the basis of the annual check-in following your initial self-assessment in 12 months.

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

Common questions

Does every Healthwatch need to complete the Framework?

As well as helping us inform how we can best support you, the Quality Framework assures us of your effectiveness.

As this is one of Healthwatch England's statutory roles, we need you to use the Quality Framework per Healthwatch's statutory activity of "providing Healthwatch England with the intelligence and insight it needs to enable it to perform effectively".

Completing the Quality Framework is one of the expectations in the revised trademark licence issued in 2022.

How often do we need to complete the Framework?

The Quality Framework operates on a three-yearly cycle.

In year one, you complete the entire Quality Framework with an accompanying action plan.

You are expected to revisit and amend your action plan in years two and three. You can complete the entire Quality Framework in years two and three.

When should a Healthwatch complete the Framework?

You may decide to complete the Framework at any point – for example, as part of your annual review and business planning process or at the start of a new contract to think about what you need to be effective.

Local Healthwatch across the country have been providing evidence against the Quality Framework and then focusing on the areas where they have identified the need for improvement in the second and third years.

We expect all Healthwatch to complete their first assessment by December 2022.

It is expected that you complete the Quality Framework self-assessment every three years and when a new provider takes over the contract.

How the Framework fits with other approaches to quality assurance?

We recognise that some Healthwatch may already be using their quality assurance system, including sector-specific systems such as Trusted Charity.

We want to avoid duplication, yet at the same time, ensure we have a comprehensive view of effectiveness across all Healthwatch. The expectation is that you will still complete this self-assessment. Please contact your regional manager if you feel that there is some crossover and duplication.

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 us. We consulted with local authority commissioners on the Framework's development.

In September 2019, over 60 local authority commissioners attended regional workshops to examine how they could use the Quality Framework. There was overwhelming support for the Framework and commitment to using it as part of the commissioning and monitoring of contracts.

They particularly liked how it assisted with understanding factors that impact the effectiveness and how you could be best supported.

New local Healthwatch contracts are routinely building in need for providers to complete the Quality Framework.

We have developed a refreshed resource pack for commissioners, which includes how they can use the Framework. Increasingly local authorities are using the Framework in different ways. 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 the Framework
- Commissioners using the Framework as part of their monitoring arrangements

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

Many of you undertake work that meets the definition of statutory activities but is funded outside your local authorities' core contract.

You should include any of your work under the local Healthwatch brand and consider referencing how it is funded if appropriate. This will give a complete picture of your effectiveness.

Should the parent or host organisation be involved?

There are different delivery models for Healthwatch. Some Healthwatch are stand-alone organisations whereas some are part of a host organisation. 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.

When completing the Quality Framework, Healthwatch providers must demonstrate effectiveness in each local authority area and identify variation when considering the questions.

Examples of variation include the strength of local relationships and the extent to which stakeholders in each area view Healthwatch as a system leader.

Examples of similarities for multiple providers include policies, procedures and some governance arrangements.

If you are a multiple provider and would like to discuss this further, please get in touch with our Quality Assurance Manager Delana Lawson , - 07385084897
delana.lawson@healthwatch.co.uk

What if I need further help?

Your Regional Manager can answer any questions.



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