# Introduction to the Quality Profile

The Quality Profile is a tool that compares your service as it is now to your service in the past. It looks at trends over time to drive and demonstrate quality improvement.

The Quality Profile should be reviewed monthly and is owned by your service. The service makes decisions on what specific measures will be included in the Quality Profile. It will contain local information that reflects what is important to you.

## What is a Quality Profile?

The Quality Profile is timely, comprehensive, reliable information that describes the quality of care provided in a way that drives and demonstrates improvement.

• It is a balanced picture of the quality of care, including at a minimum safety, patient and staff experience, effectiveness and efficiency of care. It may include other domains such as health and wellbeing, access and equity. It should include a view across the different services provided.

• It is a tool that primarily compares your service as it is now to your service in the past. It looks at trends over time to drive and demonstrate quality improvement.

• It is timely. The Quality Profile will be reviewed monthly to provide up to date information that assists users in correctly identifying where initiatives and interventions have resulted in improvements in the quality of care.

• It is owned by the service. The service makes decisions on what specific measures will be included in the Quality Profile. It will contain local information that reflects what is important to you. It may therefore not always be possible to compare the quality of care in your service to that of other similar services.

• It is an honest appraisal of the quality of care provided. This may mean that some of the information may not be appropriate for sharing. Nevertheless, services will be encouraged to ensure that the information contained in the Quality Profile is accessible to service users and their families.

• It is a tool that contains both Quantitative and Qualitative information.

• It is a tool that helps users to identify interventions that work, and that facilitates services to share their learning and to learn from other services that have undertaken relevant quality improvement projects.

## What are the principles that are considered when creating a Quality Profile?

 A Quality Profile is a timely, comprehensive tool that describes the quality of care provided by a service. It is an honest appraisal that highlights areas where good quality of care is delivered to service users and their families as well as identifying areas for improvement. The most important aspect of the development and implementation of the Quality Profile is that it becomes a tool that is used routinely as a means of driving and demonstrating improvement. For example, this would include embedding the Quality Profile in the governance arrangements for the service and using the Quality Profile as part of the interaction between the service and the regulator. In both instances, the Quality Profile provides a basis for asking and answering relevant questions about the quality of care provided by the service. In asking and answering these questions, we propose that the following principles apply:

## Resource 1: Principles of the Quality Profile

* **We will be inquisitive.** We will seek to understand the quality of care we provide. We will ask the right questions.
* **We will use methods to make our measurement useful for monitoring and improving care.** We will not rely on one source of information, but rather we will **use information from many sources**, and based on the input of patients, families, clinical staff and managers in order to ensure that the information is robust. We recognise the need to examine **both national/external metrics and locally agreed/internal metrics** to learn and to improve our services. We will examine our **care over time** i.e. month by month where possible; to identify improvement or disimprovement as it occurs. We recognise that we need both hard/ quantitative measures and also qualitative and ‘softer’ measures in order to triangulate and get a balanced view of care.
* **We will be reflective**. We will consider if the information we collect now is adding value to our understanding of our care, and if not, we will change it. We will use information that may not be perfect, but will recognise the limitations of this information and will put in place plans to improve it.
* **We will be flexible**. The Quality Profile should be responsive to the needs of the service provider, and it is recognised that Quality Profiles will differ between service providers (e.g. a mental health Quality Profile will be different to a primary care Quality Profile) and at different levels of each organisation (e.g. an obstetric department Quality Profile will be different to a hospital group board Quality Profile).
* **We will be open.** We acknowledge that every health system has good practice and areas where improvement is needed. We will seek to measure both and share this information where appropriate.
* The Quality Profile will provide a timely, comprehensive and accurate description of healthcare provided, but we recognise that it will take time to develop this comprehensive picture. We also recognise that no system will provide total assurance that healthcare is safe and of high quality but what is important is that we undertake intelligent inquiry in our services on an ongoing basis. **We will be realistic**, stating honestly which questions on the quality of our services we can answer now and what plans we will put in place to collect the additional information we need.
* Above all, **we will use the information** that we collect in our Quality Profile. We will commit time for discussion of the Quality Profile at all levels of the organisation, in order to allow learning and action to take place based on the information contained within.

## What are the benefits of using a Quality Profile?

The Quality Profile will provide the CEO/senior most accountable manager/Board with the evidence that is most relevant to them on the quality of care provided by their service.

One benefit of the Quality Profile is that the service itself chooses the measures that are most relevant in understanding the quality of their services.

Another benefit is that this evidence will be presented in a way that drives and demonstrates Quality Improvement. Rather than looking at how a service compares to other services, the emphasis will be on looking at trends over time using tools that support greater understanding of performance over time. These tools will help the senior most accountable manager/Board to identify where improvement is needed and to demonstrate the success of Quality Improvement initiatives.

The use of a Quality Profile will help you align with the Patient Safety Strategy and demonstrate improvements.

What is the vision for how Quality Profiles will be used?

The CEO/senior most accountable manager/Board of the health service is the owner of the Quality Profile.

The key use of the Quality Profile is to provide a tool for the CEO/senior most accountable manager/Board to help answer whether high quality patient care is being provided, and if not, to identify areas for Quality Improvement activities.

## What a Quality Profile is not:

• It is not nationally mandated set of measures, including the Patient Safety Statement, Performance Assurance Report, etc. though it may include measures used in these reports where you consider them key priorities for your service

• It is not a guarantee of quality or safety, however, it supports you in understanding the quality of your service and thereby is a driver of quality and safety

• It is not static – the key aspect is change and learning over time

• It is not only for management – it should be shared with all staff for learning and improvement

• It is not a financial report – while financial measures are important they are not included in a Quality Profile