





In April 2018 Birmingham City Council (the Council) implemented a new flexible contracting arrangement for home support and supported living services that it commissions. Quality assurance is integral to the framework and as part of the contracting arrangements the Council introduced a revised system of quality ratings, which is used for both the Home Support 2019 contract and the Supported Living 2023 contracts

This guidance document aims to provide a detailed explanation of the following:

- The quality assurance framework and its component parts.
- The methodology and mechanism used to produce the rating.
- The rating process, including, responsibilities, timescales and deadlines.
- How the Council will use the quality rating.

This guidance is aimed at managers of home support and supported living providers as well as any other individuals who are responsible for the quality of care and support services delivered by their respective organisations. The guide aims to enable understanding of the quality framework and ensure that providers are able to comply with its requirements.

The Care Act 2014 set out a range of measures and duties upon local authorities, in order that citizens can choose from a diverse range of high quality care and support services; to drive up the overall quality of care in the market; and put citizen needs and outcomes centre stage.

The quality assurance framework and the quality ratings system therefore aims to deliver or facilitate the following:

- Transparency through the publication of quality ratings and information about local care provision.
- Assist citizens and commissioners to make informed decisions when purchasing care and therefore provide 'peace of mind'.
- Drive up quality across the market.
- Support market shaping activity through the acquisition of improved market information.



The Quality Assurance Framework aims to capture a range of views on the quality of services and use them to produce a single quality rating that can be used to inform care commissioning processes and facilitate service users and citizens to make informed choices. The rating system will therefore draw upon a balanced range of data sources:

The view of the regulator: the CQC inspection rating

The view of the Commissioner: Birmingham City Council Quality Assurance rating

The view of the citizen or service user: Citizen feedback captured via the social work review process, Healthwatch, and the providers customer engagement mechanisms

The view of the provider: Provider Quality Assurance Statement (PQAS)





The rating applied shall be based upon the evidence seen on by the officer carrying out the quality assurance visit. The evidence considered shall be comprised of documentation, observation and feedback from discussions with services users and employees. Examples of the types of evidenced needed to demonstrate achievement against the criteria can be found in











The Council will approve the IAP when it is satisfied that the actions and timescales identified by the provider will be sufficient to deliver the requisite improvement.

The Provider will then implement the actions within the approved timescales. When the Provider is satisfied it has completed the actions and sustained the necessary improvements it will submit a request to the Council for a further monitoring visit of its services.

The Council will then carry out a further visit to validate that the IAP actions have been implemented and associated improvements have been sustained.



score range within the same domain combinations in the above columns.

To allow the Council to differentiate between care providers in the home support market and to ensure that customer feedback on service quality and outcomes is incorporated into our commissioning processes, customer feedback ratings shall be calculated as follows:

Using data gathered through social work reviews the Council shall for each home support provider combine the percentage of outcomes reported as delivered by service users, and the percentage of positive recommendations of the service in response to the Friends and Family test question. A feedback adjustment shall be applied to the quality score depending on whether the provider's feedback rating is above, at, or below the market average feedback rating. This will be done by applying a +2, +1, 0, -1 or -2 adjustment to the overall quality score. The gaps between scores for different domain combinations in the above table are to allow for the application of a feedback adjustments depending on whether the provider is well above or just above the market average, at the market average, just below or well below the market average.

Feedback ratings shall be calculated each month using data from the previous twelve months' reviews.

This means that allocation of individual packages of care for home support, will use these adjusted scores (taking into account customer feedback) and will allow the Council to differentiate between multiple bidders for the same care package with the package of care being awarded to the provider with the best customer feedback rating. If the feedback rating fails to separate two or more bids, the first of those bids to be received shall be chosen.