

Inspection 2009/10

Guidance for care service providers



HAPPY TO TRANSLATE

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From April 2008 the Care Commission introduced a new grading scheme. This means that we award grades based on the findings of our inspections about the quality of the care your service provides. The scheme is designed to better inform people about the quality of individual care services in Scotland. It was developed in consultation with stakeholders, and it was piloted and evaluated in 2007.

The Care Commission will continue to grade services and publish those grades as part of fulfilling its duty in terms of section 4(1) of the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 to provide information to the public about the quality of care services.

The six point grading scale


- 6** – excellent
- 5** – very good
- 4** – good
- 3** – adequate
- 2** – weak
- 1** – unsatisfactory

Before your inspection, we will ask you to complete an online self assessment of your service, and grade yourself against a framework of Quality Themes and Statements. These link to the National Care Standards. You must show that you have involved people who use your service in this assessment, and this will be reflected in your grades. You will not be able to achieve higher grades if people who use your service have not been actively involved.

Your Care Commission officer will inspect your service, consider your self assessment and other evidence gathered during the inspection process and award grades based on how your service is performing. Graded inspections began from April 2008. Your grades will be published in inspection reports and are added to the Care Services Register on our website.

Why we grade services

We have introduced grading to better inform people about the quality of individual care services. We consulted heavily on the scheme, and people who use care services, and their carers asked for it. Better information, more involvement with people who use care services, and clear grades help people make more informed choices about the care services they want to use. It also helps us, as the regulator, to be more proportionate in our inspections.



The inspection process encourages providers to address areas for improvement. It does this by increasing the influence that people who use their service have in assessing its quality. This will drive up the quality of care in Scotland.

What are Quality Themes and Statements?

Services complete their self assessment by grading themselves against a framework of Quality Themes. These divide service quality into the main areas that we know concern people who use services and carers. For each type of service there will typically be four Quality Themes.

These are:

- Quality of care and support
- Quality of environment or information
- Quality of staffing
- Quality of management and leadership.

Some non-accommodation services have three Quality Themes and independent health services have five.


Each Quality Theme is a heading for an area of performance which is inspected and graded. Each Quality Theme is made up of a number of specific Quality Statements (usually around six). So, for example, within the Quality Theme 'Quality of Care and Support' for care homes for older people, is a Quality Statement 'We enable service users to make individual choices and ensure that every service user can be supported to achieve their potential'.

As a provider you should assess yourself against all the Quality Statements in all the Quality Themes and provide evidence of your performance.

Your Care Commission officer will assess your performance against some of these Quality Statements within each Quality Theme. A grade for your performance on each Quality Theme is then calculated from grades awarded on these Quality Statements. The grading scale guidance is attached at the end of this document.

How do Quality Themes, National Care Standards and Inspection Focus areas all link together?

Quality Themes and Quality Statements are informed by the National Care Standards, but do not replace them. Quality Themes and Quality Statements are simply ways of grouping the standards and judging how your service is performing against them.



National Care Standards provide the core detailed standards against which we assess the performance of services, and still lie at the heart of the Care Commission's regulatory framework. When we make recommendations and requirements we still refer to National Care Standards and regulations.

The forms for the new inspection process show the relationship between the Quality Themes, the Quality Statements and the relevant National Care Standards. As well as using the framework of Quality Themes and Quality Statements, Care Commission officers will continue to use 'Inspection Focus Areas'.

Inspection Focus Areas help us examine detailed aspects of service performance, such as processes and procedures and how these are used in practice. The Inspection Focus Area material is designed to complement and contribute to the Quality Themes and Quality Statements framework.

How can I prepare for my graded inspection?

- Make yourself familiar with the Quality Themes and Quality Statements relevant to your service.
- Familiarise yourself with the grading scale and how grades for Quality Themes are calculated for Quality Statements.
- Make sure that you can provide evidence to support your self assessment.
- Develop a range of methods to involve people who use your service, and their carers.
- Be aware of how the grading system works and make sure that no aspect of your service is performing at a less than adequate level (below 3).

When does self assessment and grading take place?

Self assessment and grading takes place as part of the inspection process. Services that receive both an announced and unannounced inspection during the inspection year will need to finalise their self assessment before their announced inspection and will then be graded. We will review a selection of these grades at unannounced inspections.

So that the published grades reflect services' most recent performance, we may re-grade to account for developments in the service.

The circumstances when we will re-grade are:

- If the service has been graded at 1 (Unsatisfactory) or 2 (Weak) and you provide us with evidence that you have resolved the concerns which led to these grades being awarded.



This re-grading will frequently involve a further inspection.

- Where we have upheld or partially upheld a complaint and think that the findings reflect on the service's performance and that this should be reflected in your current grades.
- If you fail to submit an appropriate action plan by the required date after an inspection we will re-grade your Quality of Leadership and Management Theme down to 1 (Unsatisfactory) until you submit an appropriate action plan.
- Where there is enforcement action.
- If a service fails to make itself available for inspection, grades of 1 (Unsatisfactory) will be awarded automatically for all Quality Themes.

For services that achieve grades of Adequate (3) or better, then we will re-grade at the next scheduled announced inspection unless one of the above circumstances applies.

How does self assessment work?

The self assessment forms and guidance material are available as online e-forms.

You can update and save your online self assessment so that you can develop it over a period of time. We will advise you to finalise and submit your self assessment when we write to you about your next inspection. Do not finalise and submit your online self assessment until we write to you. We will give you at least four weeks notice to finalise your self assessment.

We urge all providers to submit their self assessments using the online e-Form system. This makes the system more efficient. It will also save you time as it will allow you to use your previous self assessment submission as the starting point for your next one.

If you have any difficulties with the online e-Form system you can call the Care Commission help desk on **0845 603 0890**. There is also an e-form training demo on our website at www.carecommission.com

If you cannot submit your self assessment online, then paper versions are available. You should advise your Care Commission officer if you intend to submit your self assessment as a paper version.

When you complete your self assessment online, the system will automatically inform your Care Commission officer when you finalise and submit your self assessment. If you are completing the paper version, you should return your self assessment forms to your Care Commission officer by the date given. We advise that you use recorded delivery to prove that you have submitted the form. You should also keep a copy for your records.

How do I complete my self assessment?

In your self assessment, you are asked to provide evidence and assess the quality of your service and your capacity to improve your service.

You should complete the self assessment document for **all** Quality Statements in each Quality Theme. You need to provide evidence that shows how well you are meeting the Quality Statements and assess your performance against these. In the self assessment form you will identify areas where your service could improve and set out how and when you will make these improvements.

You should try to give evidence that you involve people who use services and carers not only in their own care arrangements but also in assessing and improving all aspects of the service. This is very important if you want to achieve the best grades.

To grade your service you should consider how well you meet each Quality Statement. Refer to the grading scale guidance in this document. It is also available on our website. You should record the point on the grading scale that you believe best represents the performance of your service against each Quality Statement. The grading scale guidance explains how grades for Quality Themes are calculated from grades for Quality Statements.

Grading your service is the final step of self assessment and allows you to make specific judgments about how your service is performing.

Although grading your service yourself should be helpful, and is something you will discuss when your Care Commission officer grades you, the grades that you award have no other formal status and will not be published.

The electronic and paper self assessment forms set out the Quality Themes and Statements for your service. The form also shows the relationship between the Quality Themes and Statements and National Care Standards and gives example sources of evidence for the Quality Statements.

How do inspections work?

Your Care Commission officer will look at evidence from a range of sources and assess appropriate grades for the Quality Statements that they inspect. They will not inspect your performance on all Quality Statements in each Quality Theme but sample and grade at least two in each Quality Theme.



Care Commission officers will always inspect:

1. The first Quality Statement in each Quality Theme.
2. Those Quality Statements linked to Inspection Focus Areas.

They will use their professional judgement to choose additional Quality Statements based on where they judge the service has most room for improvement.

Your Care Commission officer will:

- Carry out other inspection activity, as normal.
- Look at evidence on how your service is performing against each Quality Theme. They will do this by sampling a number of Quality Statements in each Quality Theme. The level of sampling will be determined by the Regulatory Self Assessment (RSA). This is how we determine how intensely and frequently we need to inspect your service. We consider such things as the size of the service, history of complaints and enforcement actions, and decide if you are 'low', 'medium' or 'high'. Services that are assessed 'medium' or 'high' will have more inspection time because we think your service needs more support from us, to improve.
- Gather evidence on your performance against any agreed annual inspection focus areas.
- Award grades for the Quality Statements that they have inspected.

The Care Commission officer will then calculate your grade for each Quality Theme.

Your Care Commission officer will always assess your performance against Quality Statements that relate to involving the people who use the service. Because of this it is vital that you can prove that you have involved them in planning and delivering their care, and in assessing and improving the overall quality of the service.

Your Care Commission officer may wish to be involved in any events you organise for people using the service and carers. It will help your inspection assessment if you can tell the officer of anything that you are organising.

Care Commission officers will look for evidence that people have had opportunities to have their say about the quality of their care and how this results in the service improving. It will not be sufficient to just ask people to grade your care service. You will not be able to get better grades without such evidence.

Care Commission officers will consider evidence from various sources when judging your service's performance since it was last graded, such as:

- Upheld complaints – and whether identified issues have been resolved
- Incidents and how your service deals with them

- Feedback from people who use the service and carers
- Evidence that previous action plans have been implemented
- Information in your annual return.

The inspection process concludes with a formal feedback session.

What if I disagree with the grades the Care Commission awards my service?

At your feedback session your Care Commission officer will explain what evidence they have considered and talk to you about the grades that they are proposing to award. They will want to hear how you self assessed and graded your service.

If the officer thinks that they have under or over graded you they will advise you, and if appropriate, reconsider the grades at that stage.

The proposed grades will be confirmed in the draft inspection report. If you believe that there has been a mistake in awarding your grades you will be able to make your comments at the draft report stage. We call this the error response process.

The Care Commission officer will consider any comments you have made before issuing a final report, with the awarded grades. This will be published on our website.

Gradings set out in the inspection report will be final at the time of publication of the final version of the inspection report. The provider may comment on the draft report within the period allowed for comments in terms of s27(6) of the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001, using the provider error response form referred to above. Providers should note that a service's gradings cannot be challenged using the Care Commission's Complaints Procedure.

Grades are based on what has actually been observed and inspected. They therefore do not represent the overall quality of everything a service does. They only represent the quality of what has been considered at that inspection. It is for the Care Commission officers to decide what evidence they sample during an inspection and they will base their grade assessment on this.

The error response process can not be used to introduce evidence which was not actually inspected.

As a provider you will want to make sure that all aspects of your performance are as good as possible and that you have the evidence to support this. This will ensure that whatever evidence the officer samples will reflect your consistent performance.



How do I use the grading scale?

The grading scale guidance is attached at the end of this document.

To grade a Quality Statement consider the general criteria in the guidance and establish which point on the scale best represents your performance. Grade 3 (Adequate) represents the level which is a tolerable level of performance for the purpose of regulation. Grades of 1 or 2 represent levels of performance which are not tolerable to the Care Commission and will result in us making improvement requirements.

When grading the Quality Statements which relate to involving people, you should also refer to the grading scale guidance on service user and carer participation. This will help inform you about the appropriate grade for these statements.

Grades for Quality Themes are calculated from the grades which have been given to the Quality Statements that they contain.

To calculate a grade for a Quality Theme apply the following two rules:

- 1) If any Quality Statement has been graded 1 or 2 then the whole Theme will be given the lower of these grades.
- 2) If the Quality Statements in a Quality Theme have all been graded as 3 or better than average the grades for the Quality Statements and round this figure down to the nearest whole grade point. This method is used to band the grades back onto the six point scale.

Appendix: The quality grading scale and its application

Grade	Descriptor	General criteria	Service user/carer engagement criteria
6	Excellent	All aspects of the Quality Theme/Statement are met or exceeded. The service is exemplary. The service's performance is a model of its type. The outcomes experienced by service users are of very high quality. The outstanding performance is likely to be worth disseminating beyond the service. This grade implies these very high levels of performance are sustainable and maintained. Services graded 'Excellent' are rigorous in identifying their areas for improvement and implementing action plans to address them. There will be strong evidence that the service consults service users and carers regularly and appropriately about service quality and performance, and acts upon their views.	There is robust, comprehensive evidence of regular user/carer involvement using a range of methods. Users and carers have opportunities (supported where necessary) to give views and influence service development. The service is proactive in developing user/carer participation. The service has separate service user and carer groups with independent facilitation, questionnaires, representation on committees, advocacy support, and so on. Users and carers are encouraged and supported to attend, for example using key/case working. Communication and practical support is provided, for example papers in alternative formats. There is evidence that action is taken regularly to improve service in response to user/carer views with feedback to users/carers about changes.
5	Very good	All aspects of the Quality Theme/Statement are met. The 'Very good' grade applies to performance characterised by major strengths. Identified areas for improvement represent improvements to be made on already very good performance and not on weak performance. This grade represents a high standard of performance which should be achievable by all services. It implies that performance does not require significant adjustment. However, there is an expectation that the service will take opportunities to improve and strive to raise performance to excellent.	Users and carers are routinely involved in service development and evaluation, with a variety of methods used to facilitate their involvement. There is evidence that the provider has responded positively to service user and carer views and this has resulted in an improvement to the quality of care. Ways of involving service users and carers are likely to include those mentioned in the 'Excellent' box above, with efforts to include both service users and carers. However, there will be less evidence of making practical support available to help people participate.

Grade	Descriptor	General criteria	Service user/carer engagement criteria
4	Good	<p>All aspects of the Quality Theme/Statement are met. Areas for improvement are identified but performance is basically good. The 'Good' grade applies to performance characterised by important strengths which have a significant positive impact. Identified areas for improvement will not call into question this positive impact. This grade implies that the service should try to improve further the areas of important strength and take action to address the areas for improvement.</p>	<p>Users and carers have opportunities to become involved in evaluating and developing service provision. There is some evidence to show that the service is likely to respond to views expressed by service users and carers.</p> <p>Ways used to involve service users and carers are more limited than those used by services graded 'Very good', for example facilitation is not independent. However, it is likely that service users and carers will be asked for their views separately as staff will recognise that they will have differing views (as is the case with services graded 'Very good').</p>
3	Adequate	<p>Most aspects of the Quality Theme/Statement are met. Aspects which are not met may be subject to recommendations but don't cause concern. The 'Adequate' grade applies to performance at a basic but adequate level. This grade represents a standard where the strengths have a positive impact on the experiences of users. However, while weaknesses will not be important enough to have a substantially adverse impact, they are constraining performance. This grade implies the service should address areas of weakness while building on strengths. This is likely to be reflected in recommendations for improvement in respect of relevant National Standards.</p>	<p>There is some evidence of service user and/or carer involvement. Opportunities to participate are likely to be more limited (for example only to those who are more able, or participation activities don't happen often). There may not be opportunities for service users and carers to participate separately.</p> <p>Please note the service user/carer engagement criteria for this grade: A service will meet the 'Adequate' level of performance on the service user and carer engagement Quality Statements if it involves service users and carers in the planning, delivery and review of their day to day care in ways which are appropriate for that service type.</p>

Grade	Descriptor	General criteria	Service user/carer engagement criteria
2	Weak	<p>Aspects of the Quality Theme/Statement are not met and this gives cause for concern. You should evaluate a Quality Theme or Statement as 'Weak' where, though there may be some strengths, there are important weaknesses which cause concern. The weaknesses will, either individually or collectively, cause concern about the performance when measured against the Quality Statement or Theme. This grade implies the need for structured and planned action by the service. Services graded as 'Weak' will be likely to have recommendations or requirements made that reflect the concern about performance on that Quality Statement or Theme.</p>	<p>Note: A 'Weak' grade is awarded if the service is failing to meet the service user/carer engagement criteria for the 'Adequate' grade above and concerns are at a level described in the general criteria for this grade.</p> <p>Staff members gauge the views of service users and/or their carers during their work but this is not evidenced and the service delivery appears to occur without being directly influenced by the views of service users and/or carers.</p>
1	Unsatisfactory	<p>Aspects of the Quality Theme/Statement are unmet in a way which gives cause for significant concern. The 'Unsatisfactory' grade applies when there are major and widespread weaknesses requiring immediate remedial action. There is likely to be significant concern about the experience of service users. Services graded 'Unsatisfactory' will be likely to have requirements made against them and there will be a possibility of formal enforcement action.</p>	<p>Note: An 'Unsatisfactory' grade is awarded if the service is failing to meet the service user/carer engagement criteria for the 'Adequate' grade above and concerns are at a level described in the general criteria for this grade.</p> <p>There is no service user and/or carer involvement and staff members are unaware of the views of service users and their carers. Service users and carers may feel as though their views and input are not valued or welcomed. Service users and carers may not be aware of their right to comment on their service.</p>

How to use the scale to grade Quality Statements and Quality Themes

1. Grade the Quality Statements using the 6 point grading scale

Consider the strengths and areas for improvement identified for that statement. How significant and widespread is the evidence for strengths in the performance? Have areas for improvement been identified? If not, is this evidence that the service is failing to properly assess its own performance? Are the areas for improvement simply improvements on a performance which is already good (or better than good) or do they amount to weaknesses which will result in recommendations or possibly requirements?

2. Grade each Quality Theme.

When grading a Quality Theme consider the grades which have been awarded for each Quality Statement within that Theme; Where any Quality Statement has been graded as either 'Weak' or 'Unsatisfactory' then the overall grade should be based on the lowest of these grades. Services cannot compensate for 'Weak' or 'Unsatisfactory' performance on a Quality Statement with better gradings on other Statements within a Theme.

Where there are no 'Weak' or 'Unsatisfactory' grades on any Quality Statements within a Theme an average of the grades should be taken. The average is then matched to the grade it is closest to, rounding down to the nearest whole number.

Example: If there are five statements in a Theme and they are graded 6,6,5,3 and 2 then the grade awarded for the Theme would be 2 - Weak. If the five statements were graded 6,6,5,3 and 3 then the grade awarded for the Theme would be the total of the grades (23) divided by the number of grades (5) giving 4.6 which gives a grade of 4 or Good.

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