

## 1. Institutional setting

Good decision-making about health priorities requires an understanding of an organisation's role and obligations in the wider healthcare context. Public organisations such as clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) in England have a number of legal duties such as:

- Being open or transparent about how money is spent.
- Being explicit about how non-discrimination laws are complied with.
- Consulting patients, the public and organisations which may be affected when big decisions are made.

Ask the following three questions to help make your decision or judge how well the organisation is doing. The questions are linked: read them all before answering each one.

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1.1 Is information about the organisation's legal responsibilities and duties in commissioning (buying) healthcare services publicly available and easy to find?

1

Never

2

Sometimes

3

4

5

Always

?

Don't know

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1.2 Does the organisation demonstrate how it meets its legal responsibilities and duties when commissioning (buying) healthcare services?

1

Never

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Sometimes

3

4

5

Always

?

Don't know

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1.3 Is the organisation clear about its relationships and collaborations with other organisations when making decisions about which health services it commissions?

1

Never

2

Sometimes

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4

5

Always

?

Don't know

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## 2. Transparency

Being open and transparent is about showing a willingness to demonstrate and explain what has been done and why, and ensuring that people know when, where and how they can get involved or find out about decisions which are important to them. It can help organisations assure themselves and others that the ways they make decisions are fair and unbiased.

Ask the following four questions to help make your decision or judge how well the organisation is doing. The questions are linked: read them all before answering each one.

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2.1 Is information about the organisation publicly available and easy to find?

1

Never

2

3

Sometimes

4

5

Always

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Don't know

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2.2 Is information about the organisation's structure, its decision-making criteria and important dates and events understandable?

1

Never

2

3

Sometimes

4

5

Always

?

Don't know

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2.3 Does the organisation provide reasons for its decisions about which health services to fund?

1

Never

2

3

Sometimes

4

5

Always

?

Don't know

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2.4 Does the organisation offer legitimate reasons for its decisions?

1

Never

2

3

Sometimes

4

5

Always

?

Don't know

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### 3. Accountability

Accountability requires an ability to give reasons for and justify one's decisions. Accountability can take different forms, and healthcare commissioners are accountable to a great number of people and organisations and in different ways, locally and nationally. Sometimes accountability is formal – legal or financial accountability, for example. Sometimes it is less formal – accountability to colleagues, for example.

This domain is closely related to Domain 2 – Transparency, as one way of being accountable is to be open about the basis for decisions. Ask the following two questions to help make your decision or judge how well the organisation is doing.

The questions are linked: read them all before answering each one.

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3.1 Does the organisation state clearly to whom it is accountable?

1

Never

2

Sometimes

3

4

5

Always

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Don't know

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3.2 Does the organisation demonstrate that it fulfils its duties with regard to accountability?

1

Never

2

Sometimes

3

4

5

Always

?

Don't know

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## 4. Participation and consultation

In addition to providing accountability (see Domain 3 – Accountability), the views of patients, health professionals, community organisations, elected representatives and the public are important because they provide additional and diverse perspectives on decisions about which health services to fund. Enabling different groups to contribute also helps ensure that distinct and special needs are understood. In England, health commissioners have a statutory duty to consult stakeholders when making certain funding decisions.

Ask the following five questions to help make your decision or judge how well the organisation is doing.

The questions are linked: read them all before answering each one.

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4.1 Does the organisation consult all necessary groups (as is legally required)?

1

Never

2

3

Sometimes

4

5

Always

?

Don't know

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4.2 Is information on the ways in which patients, members of the public, health professionals and others can get involved publicly available and explained?

1

Never

2

3

Sometimes

4

5

Always

?

Don't know

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4.3 Does the organisation use a wide range of techniques to consult and engage with stakeholders and the public?

1

Never

2

3

Sometimes

4

5

Always

?

Don't know

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4.4 Is the organisation transparent about how the views of patients, the public, health professionals and other stakeholders influence the ultimate decisions?

1

Never

2

3

Sometimes

4

5

Always

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Don't know

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4.5 Does the organisation have a good strategy for ensuring a wide range of views can be heard from patients, members of the public, health professionals and other stakeholders?

1

Never

2

3

Sometimes

4

5

Always

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Don't know

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## 5. Clinical Effectiveness

Clinical effectiveness means a treatment, treatment 'pathway' or service works well and does what it intends to do. Resources should not be allocated to care that does no good, or worse, that does harm. However, knowing what is effective is not easy. Interpreting research results can be hard and there are still well-established forms of care for which there is no or limited evidence, for example because they have never been tested in clinical trials.

Public health and social care services are often based on different kinds of evidence and not clinical trials. However, the principle that resources should only be allocated to care which is known to be effective still applies and we recommend that you think about these services in a similar way.

Ask the following three questions to help make your decision or judge how well the organisation is doing.

The questions are linked: read them all before answering each one.

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5.1 Does the organisation have a system in place to identify relevant national guidance or standards?

1

Never

2

3

Sometimes

4

5

Always

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Don't know

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5.2 Does the organisation have a system in place to manage uncertainties about, or unavailability of, evidence on clinical effectiveness?

1

Never

2

3

Sometimes

4

5

Always

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Don't know

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5.3 Does the organisation have a system in place to stop funding clinically ineffective services or treatments?

1

Never

2

3

Sometimes

4

5

Always

?

Don't know

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## 6. Cost Effectiveness

Cost effectiveness examines the costs of a service or treatment in relation to its benefits in order to assess whether the costs of funding a service can be justified in light of the expected benefits. Cost effective judgements centred on 'value for money' can be controversial. For some, it means that there is a risk that financial considerations could be put before patients' needs. For others, it means that the needs of all patients, rather than a few, are considered and the best possible care for the largest number of patients is secured. Even when sound health economics methods are used to assess cost effectiveness, a decision has to be made on how much benefit is 'enough' benefit to justify costs.

Ask the following three questions to help make your decision or judge how well the organisation is doing.

The questions are linked: read them all before answering each one.

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6.1 Does the organisation have a system in place to collect and evaluate evidence in order to ensure that what is commissioned is cost effective?

1

Never

2

3

Sometimes

4

5

Always

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Don't know

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6.2 Does the organisation have a system in place to manage uncertainties about, or unavailability of, evidence on cost effectiveness?

1

Never

2

3

Sometimes

4

5

Always

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Don't know

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6.3 Does the organisation explain how it considers the financial implication of each decision?

1

Never

2

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Sometimes

4

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Always

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Don't know

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## 7. Quality of care

There are different definitions of quality of health care, but patient safety, clinical effectiveness and patient experience are usually at the heart. A health care service is thought to be of high quality when the highest standards are met in each of these areas. However, it is important to recognise that individual patients, professionals or commissioners may have differing opinions on the standards that a service needs to meet in order to be considered a high quality service. For example, some argue that timely access to, or availability of, services when patients need them should also be considered a measure of quality. Regardless of different understandings of the term, it almost always includes a focus on the experience and the safety of care for individual patients.

Ask the following three questions to help make your decision or judge how well the organisation is doing.

The questions are linked: read them all before answering each one.

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7.1 Is information on the organisation's understanding of what makes good quality of care publicly available and easy to find?

1

Never

2

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Sometimes

4

5

Always

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Don't know

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7.2 Is information on the quality performance of the services that the organisation commissions publicly available and easy to find?

1

Never

2

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Sometimes

4

5

Always

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Don't know

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7.3 Does the organisation have systems in place to identify and follow national quality of care initiatives?

1

Never

2

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Sometimes

4

5

Always

?

Don't know

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## 8. Fairness

Fairness means different things to different people. Some people talk about 'equity', others about 'justice' or 'rights'. In healthcare prioritisation, fairness can mean:

- Treating everyone with equal concern and respect.
- Positive action to reduce inequalities, for example by providing services for a previously overlooked group.
- Fulfilling the legal duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of age, gender, ethnicity, religious background, sexual orientation or other characteristics.

The challenge of how to be fair to all is at the heart of any healthcare organisation's decision-making about what services or treatments to prioritise when resources are constrained.

Ask the following two questions to help make your decision or judge how well the organisation is doing.

The questions are linked: read them all before answering each one.

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**8.1** Does the organisation demonstrate that it has policies in place to identify equality and diversity concerns that may arise from its decisions and strategies?

1

Never

2

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Sometimes

4

5

Always

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Don't know

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**8.2** When services are prioritised for special patient or population groups (children or older people, for example), the organisation explains the reasons for this.

1

Never

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3

Sometimes

4

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Always

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Don't know

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