



David Finney simplifies the new rules on registration for treatment providers

Deal or No Deal?

THE WORLD OF REGISTRATION IS ABOUT TO CHANGE for many treatment providers in the coming months. If you are a provider here is a brief guide to what may be in your box, to help you work out if you are affected or not. The Health and Social Care Act 2008 set up the Care Quality Commission (CQC) which will register an increasing range of health and social care services. In their publicity CQC point out that 'it is a serious offence to carry out a regulated activity without being registered', so as this carries the force of law it has to be taken seriously.

The five big changes about to happen in the substance misuse sector are:

- All existing residential services will have to re-register. This will involve an application form, but no additional cost.
- Services that may be described as 'quasi residential', or combine accommodation with treatment will have to register for the first time.
- Community services which provide treatment and have a health or social work professional in their team have to register for the first time.
- Inpatient services in NHS hospitals will be registered as part of the registration of NHS Trusts.
- Prison drug rehabilitation services are included.

The overall aim of statutory registration is to provide protection for people who are vulnerable and to establish essential standards of quality and safety, across the board in health and social care settings.

Additionally many commissioners of services now insist on purchasing only services which are registered, and as the CQC reviews the performance of NHS trusts and local authorities it holds them accountable for the status and quality of the services they purchase.

So what does all this registration look like? And when is it all going to happen? Under section 20 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 there are:

- Registration regulations – which tell you how to register
- Regulated activities regulations – which define what activities should be registered
- 'Essential standards of quality and safety' – which tell you what standards are expected to provide safe services
- The 'Judgment Framework' which tells you how CQC will come to a decision about whether or not to accept an application for registration.

The timetable for implementation is – from April to October 2010 applications for registration can be submitted to CQC, with 1 October 2010 being the date on which registration will become effective. From the information on the CQC website it appears that this timetable applies to all eligible providers, whether they have an existing registration or are new to registration.

It may be useful to specifically highlight issues that impact on the substance misuse sector:

1. For residential and quasi-residential services there is a new regulated activity called 'accommodation and treatment together for people recovering from substance misuse'.

This means that if accommodation is on a separate site from the treatment but is contractually linked to the treatment provision then it should be registered. As I

understand the situation, services which are purely Tier 3 day services do not yet come into the scope of registration, although it is something which the Department of Health are actively considering for the future.

There is also a new 'service type' called a 'residential substance misuse treatment/rehabilitation service'.

Interestingly this can include treatment for withdrawal from drugs or detoxification from alcohol and can employ a broad range of health and social care professionals. This service type is distinct from care homes or care homes with nursing and, importantly, the same standards for room sizes and physical accommodation do not apply. This will allow more flexibility for services to configure themselves appropriately to meet the needs of their client group.

2. For community services the regulatory requirement takes a little more explaining:

- 'Treatment of disease, disorder or injury' must be under the supervision of a health care professional, or a multi-disciplinary team which includes a health care professional, or a social worker where treatment is for a mental disorder.
- 'Mental disorder' means 'any disorder or disability of the mind, including dependence on alcohol or drugs'.
- 'Treatment'. One aspect is defined as 'the ongoing assessment of a service user's mental or physical state'.

It seems to me that many community prescribing or drug and alcohol treatment services will come under this definition and be required to register for the first time. This could have major implications for up to 700 services throughout England over the coming months.

In essence the standards aim to focus on the individual needs of the service user. My view is that good treatment providers will be able to meet these standards albeit with some rewriting of policies or procedures to encompass the new emphasis. Help will be at hand through masterclasses helping people prepare for registration, through DDN workshops, directly through me or from other training providers. I hope you are able to establish whether, for you, registration is 'deal or no deal'!

A full description of the standards can be downloaded from the CQC website or hard copies can be ordered from their publications department (03000 616161).

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David's next DDN workshop, 'Masterclass: registration with care quality commission' is on 23 February in London. For more details of this and other workshops see page 17 and 18.