

Federation for Healthcare Science

Response to DH Consultation on Standards for Better Health

The Federation for Healthcare Science is an overarching body representing the interests of more than 40 professional organisations working in health care. It provides a collective voice for over 40,000 scientists working in health care to the Government, other professions and members of the public. It works closely with individual professions, the Chief Scientific Officer and other groups to ensure Healthcare Scientists help take forward national policy, workforce and professional issues.

QUESTIONS.

1. Do the standards cover all key areas of health provision?

YES - The patient focus of the standards is welcome and they generally cover the scope of health provision.

2. Is there sufficient distinction between the core and developmental standards?

NO - not in all areas.

The use of best practice is picked up in the core standards, but its development is not adequately reflected in the developmental standards. The continued improvement of best practice is an integral part of healthcare and should be reflected in the developmental standards (eg D2).

3. Are there any standards in this consultation document which you feel should be removed? If so, which ones? Please give reasons.

No

4. How challenging is it to expect that the NHS will meet the core standards?

Extremely challenging. The core standards require a consistently high level of organisational and clinical governance that will need resourcing and investment, particularly in the development of staff and techniques.

5. We would welcome your comments on the proposal to converge the National Minimum Standards for Independent Healthcare with these standards for the NHS.

This is to be welcomed. Consistent standards should be applied across the whole of healthcare.

6. Please give any further comments about the standards.

Please indicate whether you are happy with the current wording of each individual standard.

Standard (please refer to main text)	Yes	No	Comments
	please tick		
C1	✓		
C2	✓		
C3	✓		
C4	✓		The achievement of this safety-related standard is linked to conformity with some of the Controls Assurance Standards and requires considerable input from Healthcare Scientists. Organisations will require considerable development to meet these requirements.
C5	✓		
C6		✓	Best practice is not only set at national level. New techniques and their applications emerge from both local and international academic discovery and clinical development. Multi-professional understanding, analysis and judgement is vital in setting best practice and in ensuring that technology is successfully exploited to benefit patients. Time and resources need to be protected for this. Suggest adding: '...and systems to identify and implement best practice', to the end of this Standard.
C7	✓		Healthcare Scientists provide clinical and clinical technical services across a broad range of healthcare areas. They play a vital clinical role, and need to be involved and developed in order to provide appropriate clinical supervision and leadership.
C8		✓	Standard (c): Compliance with the Controls Assurance Standards is demanding, and organisations are adopting risk-based approaches to prioritising and implementing them. Suggest adding: '...working to achieve...' between 'including' and 'compliance'. In addition, the wording of Controls Assurance Standards needs to be consulted on more widely with those professionals who are responsible for implementing them.
C9	✓		
C10	✓		Healthcare Scientists undertake Research and Development, including technology

			transfer. The application of research needs to be adequately supported and the interface between research governance and clinical governance adequately bridged. The research governance framework needs to be evaluated for its effect on the clinical application of research and development.
C11	✓		
C12	✓		Standards C12, C13 and C14 apply to Healthcare Scientists in addition to other clinical staff. Significant numbers of Healthcare Scientists work in small specialised groups with particular needs for updating. Professional input is vital in determining how best these groups can be developed.
C13	✓		
C14	✓		Healthcare Scientists are included amongst clinical staff and already participate in clinical audit. Those Healthcare Science groups which are regulated by the Health Professions Council will have the topic of continuous professional development addressed later this year; however, both these groups and those not yet registered will need support, to ensure that appropriate updating can be provided. This is particularly relevant where small groups are involved.
C15	✓		
C16	✓		
C17	✓		
C18	✓		
C19	✓		
C20	✓		
C21	✓		
C22	✓		
C23	✓		
C24	✓		Healthcare Scientists provide vital support to a wide range of potential and actual healthcare emergencies, including major incidents, public health and terrorism. Planning, training and co-ordination needs to consider and involve these groups, which include the blood transfusion service, microbiology and radiation safety.

Standard (please refer to main text)	Yes	No	Comments
	Please tick		
D1	✓		The practice of Healthcare Science is intimately linked with the application of a structured approach to quality and safety, with many areas undertaking safety-critical processes. Because of their structured training and scientific understanding, Healthcare Scientists are able to make a significant contribution to identifying and applying improvements in healthcare, and are usefully involved in developing systems and processes.
D2		✓	Part (a) of this Standard does not go far enough, as it does not identifying how 'best practice' will be determined in the absence of national agreement. Input from Healthcare Scientists in addition to others is vital in providing an evidence base for developing best practice.
D3	✓		
D4	✓		Cyclic improvement is integral to the application of Healthcare Science. Effective leadership is needed to develop this, and the whole Healthcare Science workforce must be developed to enable working practices to be effective and responsive.
D5	✓		
D6	✓		
D7	✓		
D8	✓		
D9		✓	The identification of well-designed and appropriate environments is welcome. This Standard should include the need for the environment to support staff, as well as patients, in the delivery of healthcare.
D10	✓		