Background to the Quality Management Framework

1. How was it developed?

The Community Nursing (CN) and Veterans’ Home Care (VHC) Quality Management Frameworks were developed by the Department of Veterans’ Affairs following a review by Ernst and Young of the previous quality management processes employed by the Department for the CN and VHC programs. Significant consultation with the Department’s CN and VHC contractors was undertaken during the review. The review recommended that each program introduce a Quality Management Framework based on a three-stage process involving:

- an annual self-assessment by contractors;
- a risk assessment by the Department based upon the contractor self-assessment, reporting, and data analysis, resulting in an overall risk rating; and
- a compliance review if sufficient risk is identified in the previous stage or the contractor is identified through a random sample or on an ad-hoc basis for specific risks.

The emphasis of the framework is on measuring a contractor’s compliance with the contractual arrangement with the Department and identifying practices that may pose risks to the Department and impact upon the expectations of veterans, the community and the Government.

2. How does it work?

The CN Quality Management Framework requires contractors to report on their organisation’s operations for delivering CN services. It involves the following steps:

- The contractor fills out a Contractor Assessment Questionnaire responding to questions regarding their organisation.
- The contractor returns the completed questionnaire to the Department for review.
- Departmental staff conduct a risk assessment of the contractor based upon input from the questionnaire, data analysis and other relevant information.
  - depending on the level of risk identified, Department staff may conduct a compliance review - known as a ‘Contractor Performance Review’. The Contractor Performance Review
  - may result in a subsequent ‘Clinical Performance Review’.
Interaction between other Accreditation processes and the Quality Management Framework

3. If my organisation is already accredited by a recognised Australian accreditation agency (eg ACHS), why does it need to undergo Quality Management with the Department of Veterans’ Affairs?

Accreditation is a similar process to DVA’s Quality Management Framework, however it does not specifically focus on the Department’s contractual requirements.

4. I also receive HACC funding – how does the Quality Management Framework fit with the reporting we do for HACC?

The Home and Community Care (HACC) program is administrated by the Department of Social Services and operates on a different contractual and financial model from the Department’s CN program. DVA’s Quality Management Framework ensures a contractor’s compliance with their ‘Deed of Standing Offer’ with DVA and the CN ‘Procedure Manual’.

Contractor Assessment Questionnaire completion

5. Can my organisation nominate a time during the year to complete the Quality Management Framework questionnaire?

No. Contractors will be supplied with the Contractor Assessment Questionnaire on a date determined by the Department and notified of the submission deadline. If there are exceptional circumstances that may affect the timing of the process, contractors can discuss these with the Department at that time.

6. Do I have to participate in the Quality Management Framework and complete the Contractor Assessment Questionnaire?

Yes. The Quality Management Framework is a contractual obligation under your contract with the Department.

7. How does completing the Contractor Assessment Questionnaire minimise reporting requirements?

The Quality Management Framework is aimed at ensuring that the Department’s quality management requirements are achieved without imposing unreasonable, additional and complex reporting processes on contractors. Each CN contractor will be required to complete the questionnaire annually. This is the only regular contract management reporting process that the contractor will have to undertake, although ad hoc reporting requirements may occur from time to time.

8. Can my organisation complete the Contractor Assessment Questionnaire electronically?

Yes. The Contractor Assessment Questionnaire will be sent to your organisation by email and should be completed in the electronic format provided. If your organisation is unable to complete the Contractor Assessment Questionnaire electronically, you should contact the Department and a hardcopy version will be sent to you.
9. If I receive a CN Contractor Assessment Questionnaire, a VHC assessment agency and/or a VHC service provider Contractor Assessment Questionnaire, does my organisation have to complete and submit all three?

Yes. The information requested on each of the questionnaires is specific to either the CN or VHC programs. Whilst there is some commonality, different information is required on each questionnaire as the contract requirements for each are different. It is also expected that, in organisations contracted for more than one function, there would be some differences in the management processes and personnel involved.

10. If my organisation sub-contracts some or all of its services to another organisation/s, who is responsible for completing the Contractor Assessment Questionnaire?

The legal entity that has entered into the contractual arrangement with the Department is responsible for completing the questionnaire in a manner which takes into account any sub-contractor activities.

11. Will the information provided in the Contractor Assessment Questionnaire be treated as commercial-in-confidence?

The Department will treat all information provided under the Quality Management Framework as commercial-in-confidence, and will store the information securely in compliance with Government requirements.

12. If my organisation has multiple sites do I need to complete multiple Contractor Assessment Questionnaires?

Organisations with multiple sites within the one State or Territory will be required to complete one Contractor Assessment Questionnaire for each site, however these will be staggered over the life of the contract. For those organisations with a few sites the DVA State location manager may decide that one Contractor Assessment Questionnaire could be completed for all sites. If you have sites located in more than one State or Territory you will receive a Contractor Assessment Questionnaire for each State or Territory, however not at the same time. The Department may review these requirements in the future.

Outcomes of the Quality Management Assessment Process

13. What information is given to the veteran about the Quality Management Framework?

The Department will not be providing any specific information to veterans. However, as part of continuous quality improvement, your organisation may choose to provide this information to veterans.

14. How will the Department guarantee consistency in handling the process across the States and Territories?

The Quality Management Framework is a national process and includes standardised assessment tools and manual. All Department staff, regardless of location, have been trained in the use of the tools and manual.
15. Will the Department look at any trends arising nationally from the Quality Management Framework?

Yes. The Department is likely to look at trends on a State and at National level and feed this information back to the industry in an aggregated form, as appropriate. Information identifying individual contractors will not be made public.

16. Can the Department terminate a contract based on the Contractor Assessment Questionnaire?

If the outcome of the Quality Management process identifies serious concerns, the organisation would undergo an urgent Contractor Performance Review. The organisation would have the opportunity to rectify any non-compliance identified in the Contractor Assessment Questionnaire and the Contractor Performance Review before the Department undertook any termination process.

17. Is there a review planned for the Quality Management Framework?

The Department plans to evaluate the Quality Management Framework as a part of its own continuous improvement process. This may result in changes to some aspects of the framework.

18. What support can the Department provide if my organisation needs help with the Contractor Assessment Questionnaire?

Contractors will be provided contact details of Department staff to access assistance with completing the Questionnaire. Further information is available about the CN program on the Department's Internet site at www.dva.gov.au