



Quality Neurology – in detail

Quality Neurology is an audit and evaluation tool designed by the MS Society, Parkinson's UK, MND Association and Ataxia UK.

It measures how an area's health and social care services meet the [National Service Framework for long-term neurological conditions](#) (NSF).

How does it work?

Stage 1 – Professionals

Over one day, or two or three half days, local health and social care professionals will get together with an NCS facilitator and go through the tool one requirement at a time, agreeing how far current health and social care services in their local area meet, or do not meet, national guidelines.

Each 'quality requirement' from the NSF is broken down into a series of statements which the commissioners and clinicians will agree are either 'Met', 'Part met' or 'Not met'.

A notes section is included next to each statement, so if disagreements arise, they can be noted; often service user opinion will be used to settle individual points.

Stage 2 – Service users and carers

The second part of the audit is made up of service user and carer views. Focus groups, interviews, questionnaires or other methods can be used to obtain as many views as possible on the services available.

These views are gathered by a trained facilitator, who will ask questions to prompt service users and carers, and then allow them to articulate their personal experiences.

Questions include:

- How do you get information on your condition and the services you can use?
- Do you have a care plan / carer's plan?
- Do you know what a 'care co-ordinator' is?
- Do you feel that non-specialist staff understand your condition?
- What is the one thing you would want to see to improve services for the better?



Stage 3 – Agreeing changes

After both the professionals and service users have inputted their views, and these have been gathered into the tool, the facilitator will summarise how far the quality requirements are being met overall using the results from the audit tool and focus groups, and will suggest a number of recommendations for improvement.

These recommendations can be used to create an action plan for service development or to inform commissioning strategies.

Actions are taken on by various professionals, working in small clusters to take things forward.

In many cases these groups include service users and carers, to ensure that the changes they implement are going to improve services on the ground for the better.

What happens next?

The tool is not designed to be a one-off audit, but an ongoing record of neurology services in a given area. It can be used annually to give insight into how services are developing and how patients are using them.

In conjunction with an action plan, it can record how specific teams within health and social care are progressing particular areas of work, and aid decisions in commissioning and decommissioning.

Quality Neurology can also allow a given area to benchmark its health and social care services against other health and social care populations of a similar size that have also used the tool, providing they are willing to share this information.

This option can include peer review processes and shared best practice, and produces better communication across areas.

Where has this been used already?

NCS has most recently used the tool in local projects in Cornwall, Surrey and West Berkshire. See the Portfolio and Projects areas of our website for more detail.

A Department of Health pilot in 2009 saw nine sites using the tool. Download the pilot report and appendices from the [Our Toolkit](#) page on our website (locations are anonymised to fit in with privacy guidelines). NCS also carried out pilot audits in Wandsworth, Gloucestershire and Derby.