

## BRIEFING NOTE FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES – ONLINE QUALITY PROFILES ON NHS CHOICES

### What are Online Quality Profiles?

The profiles provide the public and professionals (GPs, social workers, councils etc) with a comprehensive and trusted source of comparative information about registered care providers anywhere in England.

Every CQC registered adult social care provider (care homes, home care, supported living and shared lives schemes) has an [online quality profile on NHS Choices](#). The site also includes similar profiles for hospitals, GPs, dentists, pharmacists and opticians.

Care providers (including a Local Authority where it is the registered provider) should be editing their own profiles for free and adding information to demonstrate the quality and safety of their service and the support they have on offer.

As a minimum, regardless of whether a care provider is actively updating its profile, they contain basic details about the providers' location, services it is registered to provide and compliance with CQC Essential Standards. They also contain any reviews/ratings from the public posted onto NHS Choices or pooled from a growing number of partner review sites. Once new CQC quality ratings, are available they will also appear on every online profile.

Once a provider has obtained editing access (which is free) they can add a range of additional information such as performance against [Transparency & Quality Compact Measures](#), photos, videos, news items, surveys, details about their staff and the support they have on offer. Here are some examples of completed online quality profiles: [St Cecilia's Care Home Scarborough](#), [Good Care Group London](#), [Oxfordshire Shared Lives Scheme](#).

Lots of websites for choosing care currently exist but most only include additional information about the larger providers who can afford to pay a subscription fee. NHS Choices enables all providers to compete on a level playing field as there is no charge to add additional information, enabling people to make informed choice from a wider range of registered care providers.

We aim to have over 10,000 of the total 25,000 profiles including additional information from providers before the end of the year.

### Five reasons why Local Authorities should act now

1. The plethora of websites available that provide information about care services can be confusing. The public and professionals will benefit from one source of reputable and reliable information about the care available to them. NHS Choices already has the reputation with the public and has approximately a million visits per day. Visits to social care profiles have steadily increased since their launch in April to 70,000 in July. The profiles will form a key part of new Health & Social Care Digital Service.
2. At a local level, you have responsibilities around information provision. Once a majority of registered care providers in your area have started editing their profiles you can confidently

signpost local people (including self-funders) to them to choose registered care in your area – leaving you to concentrate your efforts on making sure they have wider information about their care and support needs and information about unregistered care in the area.

3. The public, you as commissioners and CQC want to see greater transparency and openness around the quality of care. You can set the bar locally for other local providers to follow by ensuring all your directly provided services have completed profiles as soon as possible. Take advantage of the support NHS Choices are able to provide over the next few weeks to get your local authorities profiles up and running.
4. It is vital that people looking for care are aware of the options available to them, including registered and unregistered care. Most of you already have comprehensive information about the local options available. You can redirect service users to the information you have put in place locally by providing NHS Choices with up to three links/telephone numbers which will appear on every profile in your area – see this example from a profile in [Leeds City Council](#).
5. Service users are already leaving feedback on care providers' profiles in the form of comments and star ratings. The site also allows feedback and reviews to be pooled in from other resources including review partner websites. If you are considering how you (or your local Healthwatch) might collect and publish users' views about registered care services in your area – you can simply direct local people to NHS Choices instead to gather those comments/reviews/ratings on your behalf for free. If you have already started collecting service user feedback, this too can be published on the profiles of providers in your area.

#### **SUGGESTED ACTIONS – SHORT TERM:**

- Start editing your profiles now by adding pictures, descriptions, staff details etc. For support editing your profile and to obtain web editing rights contact Anieakan Assangha, 020 7003 3178, [anieakan.assangha@nhs.net](mailto:anieakan.assangha@nhs.net)
- Use your influence locally to get local providers to start editing their profiles if they are not already doing so to make the profiles a comprehensive source of information about registered care in your area.
- Consider working with NHS Choices to add links from your local care and support information pages to the NHS Choices profiles where people can find local services and if they wish leave comments about care in your area.
- If your local authority has useful weblinks/telephone numbers for people considering their care and support needs and you want these added to NHS Choices profiles in your area please email [anieakan.assangha@nhs.net](mailto:anieakan.assangha@nhs.net)