

BMA response to consultation on the Quality and Outcomes Framework

Proposed changes to the Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF) could lead to it being inappropriately influenced by political imperatives and to patients getting postcode healthcare in primary care, the BMA said today (Tuesday 13 January 2009) in its formal response to the government's consultation on the QOF.

The Department of Health consultation, [Developing the QOF: Proposals for a new, independent process](#), says that the QOF should be brought under the remit of the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) and that Primary Care Trusts should be able to select some indicators based on local need.

In its response the GPC say localising the QOF "will be seriously detrimental to the already reduced gap in health inequalities" which its introduction achieved and may threaten consistency of care. It stresses the importance of a UK-wide, evidence-based QOF to maintain its status as a world leader in primary care quality standards.

The response says "we do not believe that NICE is a body completely independent of government influence and do not feel that it would do a better job than the current independent expert group." It warns "this would affect the profession's and patients' confidence in the QOF as well as risk undermining the professional relationship of GPs with their patients."

It says the proposed pace of change is unrealistic and would threaten both delivery and quality and expresses concern that the decision regarding the involvement of NICE already appears to have been made. It suggests a moratorium on change is needed to allow adequate time for the negotiation of alterations to indicators.

Dr Laurence Buckman, Chairman of the BMA's GP Committee, said:

"It is vital all LMCs respond to this consultation. Even though this is an English consultation the proposed changes will have an impact on QOF across the UK. As it stands the changes proposed in this consultation will create rather than get rid of health inequalities."

Ends

Note to editors:

To see the guidance in full please go to:

http://www.bma.org.uk/employmentandcontracts/independent_contractors/quality_outcomes_framework/index.jsp

For more information on the QOF and the improvements in the health outcomes for patients since the changes to the GP contract, including a case study on how the QOF works in a practice, please go to: http://www.bma.org.uk/employmentandcontracts/independent_contractors/QOFbrief0908.jsp

Contact:

Rebecca Spargo 020 7383 6174
Public Affairs Division After 6:00 pm and weekends:
British Medical Association 07900 493877; 07765 273812;
BMA House, Tavistock Square 07500 974020; 07855 145274;
London, WC1H 9JP 07747 394450; 07943 821060

BMA web site: www.bma.org.uk

Email: pressoffice@bma.org.uk