

## What does accreditation mean?

If your local health service has been accredited by the Royal College of Psychiatrists' Centre for Quality Improvement (CCQI), it means that:

### **The service is meeting nationally agreed standards**

Accredited services are measured against a set of national quality standards to check that the right things are in place to encourage good quality care. The accreditation process looks for evidence that staff members are well trained, well supported and working within organised and safe systems. Accredited services also need to demonstrate that they provide the right type of care to patients, in a reasonable timeframe and that they have the appropriate equipment and facilities to do this. For more details on exactly which standards your service has been measured against and how these were measured, you can contact them directly or go to <http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/CCQI>

### **The service listens to the views of local patients and carers**

A service can be accredited only if local patients and carers are generally satisfied with the overall quality of the service. As part of the accreditation process, patients and carers are invited to complete anonymous questionnaires to rate the quality of the service. Patients need to be satisfied with the way that staff treated them, the information provided to them, and the level of involvement they had in making decisions about their care. If any of the questionnaire responses raise serious concerns about a service, that service needs to address these issues before they can become accredited.

### **The service has been visited by an independent team of trained reviewers**

As part of the accreditation process, a team of trained reviewers (healthcare staff, patients and carers) will visit the service. Reviewers spend the day meeting local staff, patients and carers to discuss the service and their evidence in more detail. The reviewers then write a report which is used to help a special committee decide if the service should be accredited. If a service is not ready to be accredited at this point, the CCQI will provide them with guidance and help to make the changes needed.

### **The service is striving to be the best it can be**

By joining an accreditation programme, a service has chosen to spend time and effort improving the care that it provides. It means that the staff members should be prepared to hear feedback – both good and bad – and are serious about providing a good quality service. This process is ongoing; in order to maintain accreditation, the service needs to demonstrate consistently high standards over time by being reviewed at regular periods.

## What does accreditation not mean?

Being accredited means that the service generally performs well, has good systems in place and that the people who use and work in the service are satisfied with it overall. Whilst problems may be less likely to occur in an accredited service, accreditation does not guarantee that problems will not occur from time to time.

If you have a complaint or concern about your local service you should contact your local service manager or the local Patient Advice and Liaison Service in the first instance. To send feedback on your local service to the CCQI, you should contact [fgibbons@rcpsych.ac.uk](mailto:fgibbons@rcpsych.ac.uk). Please also see the guidance 'What to do if I have a complaint about my health service' for more information.