

Palliative Care Self Assessment

A users guide to navigating and completing the individual self-assessment packs

The National Palliative Care Standards (5.1 ed. 2024) articulate and promote a vision for compassionate and appropriate palliative care. The Palliative Care Self-Assessment (PaCSA) provides a set of nine individual checklists for services to self-assess against the nine National Palliative Care Standards.

Conducting these self-assessments against each Standards enables services and teams to prioritise, and create an action plan for, continuous quality improvement.

Services are supported in this process with online resources, including short video's, evidence prompts, and optional audit tools.

Health service organisations that are working towards meeting the actions in these Standards may also be contributing to the National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards (2nd ed.) While not always equivalent, each checklist is mapped to the relevant NSQHS Standards, to support evidence collection for mandatory accreditation. These are outlined below each Element on the PaCSA checklists.

Who are the self-assessment packs for?

All specialist and generalist palliative care services who provide care to people living with a life-limiting condition, their families and carers. Services may include, but are not limited to, hospices, specialist palliative care services tending residential and community aged care services, specialist palliative care hospital wards and community palliative care services.

How to use the self-assessment packs

Each PaCSA pack is designed to be worked through at a pace that suits each individual service or team.

1 Select the standards your service plans to review

The packs do not need to be completed in any particular order.

2 Download the checklists packs

palliativecare.org.au/national-palliative-care-standards

The nine PaCSA checklists are designed to be self-paced.

3 Establish a working group of relevant team members

It is recommended that services gather team members who are specifically relevant to each standard either in person or virtually to work through and build evidence to support each element within the selected Standard.

4 Watch the relevant PaCSA video embedded into each PaCSA pack

Videos are 2-3 minutes and included ideas for addressing the standard and its associated elements. The videos include useful prompts for gathering evidence.

5 Work through the Standard and elements. Set a timeframe for completion.

The following questions may be useful:

- What are we trying to accomplish?
- What changes could be made that might lead to an improvement?
- How will we measure our improvements?

6 Complete the standard and use the evidence gathered to demonstrate improvement

Upon completion of each PaCSA pack, services will have gathered evidence and information mapped against the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards (2nd ed.) to support their accreditation and create an action plan for quality improvement moving forward.

How services are using the Standards to improve the quality-of-service delivery, the workforce, and patient outcomes:

The Standards are used by palliative care services and teams for quality improvement in several ways, including:

- Service design
- Inform clinical practice
- To teach
- Team and resource planning
- Develop Position descriptions
- Help to prioritise CPD for skill gaps
- Linking to organisation policy and practice
- Advocacy within their institution, and/or to government
- Quality assurance (bench marking and evidence capture for mandatory accreditation)

When to measure your service against the standards?

It is recommended that the self-assessment packs are completed by all specialist palliative care services for continuous improvement in their delivery of high-quality palliative care. Triggers for completing or reviewing standards include:

- Mid accreditation cycle
- Change or worsening of patient outcomes as indicated by audits, surveys or PCOC reports
- Change in workforce
- Change in the service management structure
- Change in the service delivery model
- If it has been more than two years since the last self-assessment against that particular Standard.

What resources are provided to assist in the completion of each pack?

- At the bottom of each PaCSA pack, there are suggested resources to assist in the completion of that Standard.
- 'Service stories' can be accessed via the PaCSA home page under 'resources' from those services who have previously completed the standard and have reflected on how they have met specific elements within that standard.
- 'Examples of evidence' are included within each PaCSA PDF to help support services in selecting the most appropriate evidence gathering tool for each element within the standard.
- A separate 'Audit Tools' document can be accessed via the PaCSA home page under 'resources' to assist those services who choose to undertake a more rigorous assessment of evidence.

