

# Improve your standards by meeting ours

Introducing an evidence-based  
way to deliver safer patient care



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# 15%

of healthcare costs are attributable  
to unsafe care

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# 11,000

avoidable deaths each year

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In high income countries, WHO estimates

# 1 in 10

patients are harmed while receiving hospital care –  
50% of which is preventable

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Unsafe care is one of the

# top 10 causes

of death and disability worldwide

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# Why patient safety standards?

**Organisations are legally required to take 'all reasonable and practical steps' to improve safety; but 11,000 avoidable deaths and over 400,000 serious incidents of patient harm each year evidence a failure in this ambition.**

The CQC has assessed that, in 2020 (before the pandemic), the proportion of NHS Trusts' safety ratings were: 1% excellent; 63% good; 34% requiring improvement; and 2% inadequate.

One of the primary reasons for such shocking figures is that organisations don't have standards for patient safety in the way that they do for other safety issues. Those that they do have are insufficient and inconsistent.

Patient Safety Learning believes that all health and social care organisations must have access to comprehensive patient safety standards that they can adopt and implement to meet their legal and moral obligations.

**We believe that all health and social care organisations must have access to comprehensive patient safety standards**

Doing so would deliver the following benefits:

- safer, quality patient care, consistently delivered
- an assurance that patient safety sits at the organisation's core
- demonstration of leadership and organisational commitment not only to patient safety, but also the reduction of avoidable deaths, disabilities and harm
- improved governance via a strengthened risk management system and approach, with safety designed into the entire business process, not just via direct patient engagement with clinicians
- improved performance through the delivery of greater efficiencies and increased effectiveness, generating an enhanced reputation and reduction in the costs associated with unsafe care
- the ability for patients and families, funders and communities to identify and differentiate good safety providers so that they can make better informed choices, knowing with confidence the level and type of safety standards they should be receiving
- reassurance to regulators, including NHSI and CQC, of an evidence-based focus on patient safety strategies, plans, actions and outcomes.

# Our Standards; your need

**Since Patient Safety Learning was founded in 2018, we have been engaging with organisations looking to support improved patient safety.**

**A consistent theme fed back to us has been the need to have access to expert advice to help them become true learning organisations in a reliable safety system.**

More specifically, how they can:



Assess their strengths and weaknesses against organisational standards for safety



Create a vision and set of goals for safety development



Evaluate their performance and impact



Develop and deliver safety improvement and implementation plans

In response to this, Patient Safety Learning has designed a set of unique patient safety standards and support tools that can help organisations not only establish clearly defined safety aims and goals, but also demonstrate their achievement.

These Standards are based on 20 years of research, as well as learning from inquiries, policy and good practice from healthcare, both in the UK and internationally.

We have built on insight and learning from human factors and ergonomics, widely applied in other safety critical industries.

We have supplemented this with our own research, working in partnership with organisational patient safety specialists and practitioners to ensure that our Standards are quality assured, with 'real world' practicality.

Delivering enhanced, evidence-based safety outcomes and behaviours.



# What the Standards cover

**Based on our original research and policy document *A Blueprint for Action (2018)*, Patient Safety Learning has identified seven Foundations for patient safety:**

- Leadership and Governance
- Culture
- Shared Learning
- Professionalisation of Patient Safety
- Patient Engagement
- Data and Insight
- Delivery of Patient Safety Services.

Each of these Foundations is supported by specific patient safety Aims, totalling 26 across all seven.



Underpinning each Foundation / Aim, there are a series of clearly defined Standards that explain what an organisation must do to deliver against the specific requirements of each individual Foundation / Aim.

In turn, for each Standard, there are details of evidence-based outputs, outcomes and behaviours required to enable an organisation to demonstrate achievement against those Standards. In total, there are 144 identified Standards.

These represent the core for any organisational safety improvement strategy and delivery plan.

Importantly, this is not a 'tick-box' methodology, but one designed to support a practical action and outcomes-focused process.

Able to be adapted and tailored to the specific needs of any organisation, the Standards can form the basis of a comprehensive patient safety strategy.

They can not only identify current safety strengths and weaknesses, but also inform and guide senior leaders throughout their organisation's patient safety journey, building their understanding and commitment. The Standards can help set new aims and goals, develop improvement and resource plans, and evaluate future performance and impact.

The Standards lie at the heart of Patient Safety Learning's comprehensive manual of 'What good looks like' for patient safety.

They also play a central role in Patient Safety Learning's organisational transformation framework.

### Leadership and governance

1. Patient safety is a core purpose
2. Patient safety is embedded in governance
3. Organisation has a patient safety plan
4. New services are designed for safety
5. System leadership
6. Organisational leadership for patient safety

### Culture

7. Patient safety culture tackles blame and fear
8. Promotes patient safety improvement
9. Role of HR

### Shared learning

10. Learning goals for improving patient safety
11. Learning from near misses
12. Learning from investigations
13. Learning from feedback and complaints
14. Learning from others
15. Shares learning with others

### Professionalisation of patient safety

16. All staff are suitably qualified and experienced
17. Specialist skills in patient safety and human factors

### Patient engagement

18. Commitment to patient engagement
19. Organisational systems for engaging with patients
20. Patient engagement in their own care
21. Patient engagement if things go wrong
22. Patient engagement for safer care

### Data and insight

23. Metrics and data to measure and manage patient safety

### Delivery of patient safety services

24. Services are delivered safely
25. Workforce planning
26. Workforce deployment

Leadership and governance	Aim 1: Patient safety is a core purpose of the organisation. (Patient safety is central to priorities for service delivery, investment, reporting and support.)		
Standard	You should have... (Outputs and evidence)	You will want to see... (Outcomes and behaviours)	Accreditation level
<b>Standard 1.1 Commitment</b> There is an explicit commitment to patient safety in the organisation's mission statement, which is made available to the public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document(s) containing the mission statement</li> <li>Reference to the mission statement in patient information</li> <li>Availability of the mission statement on the organisation's website</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Board, Executive and staff members able to articulate the organisation's commitment to patient safety and give examples of what this means to them</li> </ul>	Essential
<b>Standard 1.2 Policy</b> There is a formal up-to-date patient safety policy which has been approved by the Board and is made available to the public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documented patient safety policy, subject to regular review and available on the website</li> <li>Approval of the policy recorded in Board meeting minutes</li> <li>Reference to the policy in patient information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Patient safety is a core purpose for the organisation with regularly reviewed and updated policies and plans</li> </ul>	Essential

Above: Example page from the 'What good looks like' manual



# Making the Standards work for you

Patient Safety Learning's Standards are available in both printed and digital formats

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## **'What good looks like' manual, plus summary reference booklet**

At their simplest, the Standards come in two printed forms: a manual defining 'What good looks like' for patient safety, plus supporting summary reference booklet.

The manual details every aspect of Patient Safety Learning's safety Foundations, Aims and constituent Standards and explains what an organisation must do to deliver against the requirements of each. In particular, it covers the necessary, supportive outputs and evidence, as well as desired outcomes and behaviours that an organisation will wish to see as a result.

Each of the Standards is identified against Patient Safety Learning's three-level Accreditation Framework ranking of: Essential; Enhanced; Exemplary.

An example from the manual is shown on the previous page.

The summary booklet that accompanies the manual can be used as a quick reference guide, high-level practical evaluation aid, or training support component.

## **Online self-assessment toolkit**

The centrepiece of our Standards is our unique, easy-to-use online self-assessment toolkit.

Pre-populated with our patient safety Foundations, Aims and Standards, the toolkit includes all necessary and supportive evidence-based outputs, plus desired outcomes and behaviours.

It has been designed to capture self-assessment scores, as well as record the basis of assessments, identify goals for improvement and enable relevant documentation to be uploaded.

A specific feature is its ability to act as an actions-planning tool, supporting the development of improvement plans, as well as outcome and measurement frameworks.



## The Standards can be used in different ways

### A stand-alone resource

The main objective behind the development of our Standards is to provide a patient safety resource that an organisation can use independently of any external support.

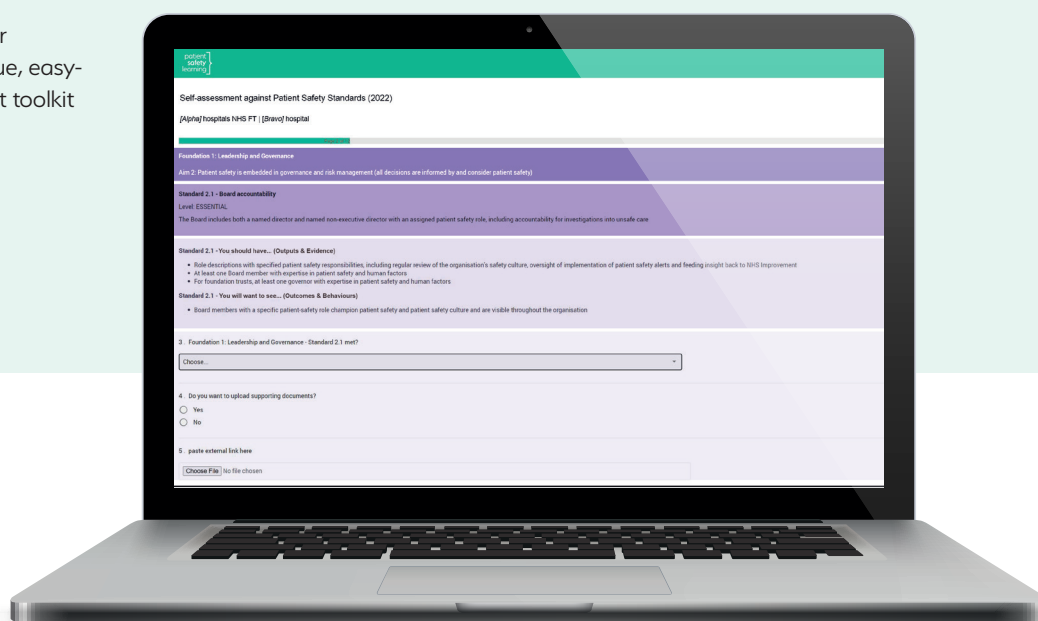
The Standards can form the basis for a comprehensive patient safety strategy, enabling organisations to assess their current patient safety performance, as well as develop evidence-based improvement programmes.

### Optional external support

In addition, Patient Safety Learning's expert consultants and advisers are available to provide virtual, or in-person assistance and implementation guidance tailored to meet an organisation's specific needs.

Such support can be particularly valuable where the Standards form an integrated element within a broader organisational change framework.

The centrepiece of our Standards is our unique, easy-to-use self-assessment toolkit



# Extending the Standards into Accreditation

## **As a natural follow-on to our Standards, Patient Safety Learning has also developed an Accreditation Framework.**

Accreditation enables organisations to have their patient safety performance and delivery formally evaluated against our Standards. Structured around a three-level ranking of Essential, Enhanced and Exemplary, it is a specific element of the 'Professionalisation of patient safety' Foundation.

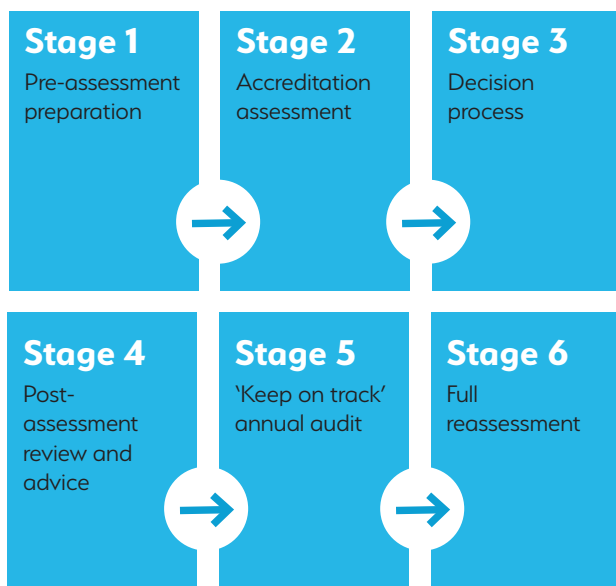
Accreditation is based upon a multi-stage assessment and evaluation process, supported by Patient Safety Learning's external and independent specialist consultants and assessors.

Positive performance against the Standards represents the cornerstone of success.

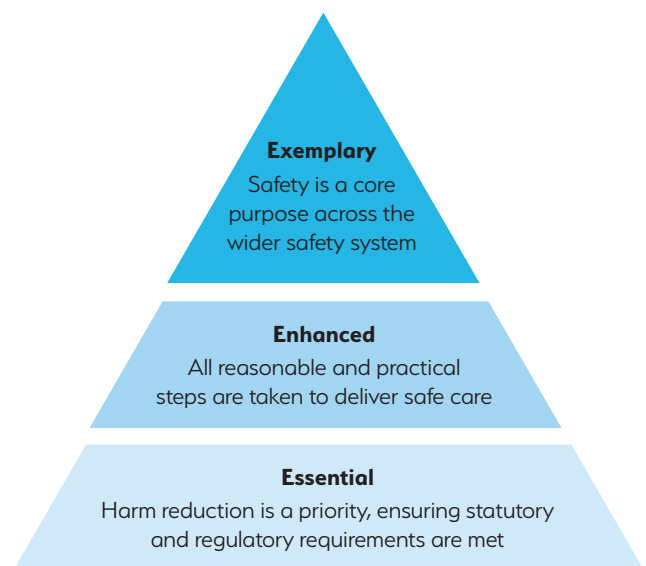
Accreditation can be undertaken as a 'one-off' event to achieve a base-line score, or approached as part of an on-going process of learning and improvement, assessed over a number of years.

This can provide a core element of an organisation's quality assurance process and inform regulatory assessment by CQC and others.

### **Accreditation Framework outline**



### **Three-level Accreditation ranking**



# Who are Patient Safety Learning?

**Launched in 2018, Patient Safety Learning is a charity and independent voice for system-wide change in how health and social care organisations think and act in regard to patient safety.**

Our vision is to help create a world where patients are free from avoidable harm.

Our mission, to transform safety in health and social care.

We believe that we urgently need to design for safety as a core purpose; to mitigate the risk of harm, so that healthcare is safe for patients and for the staff who work within it.

However, when clinical and organisational leaders commit to improvements, they don't always have access to the tools to deliver change.

In order to help meet these challenges, Patient Safety Learning is focused on two main areas of activity:

- policy, influencing and campaigning
- developing and promoting 'how to' resources, products and services.

Our work on developing organisational patient safety standards, alongside our self-assessment portal and three-tier accreditation framework are testament to our commitment to creating actionable resources that can directly impact safety outcomes and behaviours.

Patient Safety Learning is focused on two main areas of activity





If you would like to know more about the services and support available to you from Patient Safety Learning, please contact us at [hello@patientsafetylearning.org](mailto:hello@patientsafetylearning.org)