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# Quality and Safety Executive Council Terms of Reference

## 1. Context

Safer Care Victoria (SCV) is the state's healthcare quality and safety improvement agency. SCV works with consumers, families and carers, clinicians and health services to monitor and improve the quality and safety of care delivered across our health system.

SCV has developed an external advisory structure ([Appendix 1](#)) that aims to provide meaningful opportunities for our partners to join in decision making and planning, to make sure that the work that we do is focused on what matters most and will support our vision for Outstanding healthcare for Victorians. Always.

## 2. Purpose

The Quality & Safety Executive Council (QSEC) provides expert advice directly to the CEO of SCV on matters relating to the purpose of the organisation.

Through the SCV CEO, QSEC's advice supports the agendas of the Department of Health (the department) and ultimately the Minister for Health.

## 3. Council responsibilities

### 3.1. Advisory functions

The advisory functions of the QSEC include:

- To provide independent contribution, challenge and guidance to the development and/or implementation of SCV's strategy
- To seek a broad range of perspectives as to the status of the quality and safety of Victoria, including by convening an advisory group twice a year on topics of importance.

### 3.2. Core operating principles

Leadership and advice provided by the QSEC should be guided by the following key principles:

- act in the best interests of consumers and the wider Victorian community
- work with SCV and the department to agree on strategic objectives and priorities
- work with clinicians, consumers, working groups, peak bodies, health sector professionals and academics, focusing on promoting participation and effective communication
- provide advice to SCV on relevant quality and safety issues
- champion innovation and health reform.

### 3.3. Reporting

The council reports to the CEO SCV.

Reporting will be further defined with the QSEC members during the establishment phase.

### 3.4. Quality and Safety Executive Council Advisory Group

A key function of QSEC is the convening of the QSEC Advisory Group to consider topics important to at least two of: the Minister for Health, SCV, the department, the Clinical Advisory Group or the Safety Signals Group. This will ensure that the work completed through the advisory group will directly contribute to the agenda of the health system.

A QSEC Advisory Group meeting will be held twice a year. Meeting length will vary depending upon topic and whether virtual or in person.

Members for each advisory group meeting would be invited based on the knowledge, skills and representation required to inform the topic at hand. They will be drawn from the SCV Village. Consumers will make up no less than 20% of every advisory group convened.

QSEC members are also attendees of Advisory Group meetings.

The group is not limited by size and will be formed to enable topics arising to be adequately addressed with an outcome reached.

A Charter for QSEC Advisory Group governance and operations and will be developed and approved by QSEC and the SCV CEO.

## 4. Membership

### 4.1. Members

The council is comprised of 11-12 members, with one member appointed as the chair.

The following skills and knowledge are required across the member group:

- Ex-officio appointment, CEO SCV
- Ex-officio appointment, Chair of the Health Issues Centre, Victoria's peak consumer body
- Executive leadership of a health service in Victoria in the last 5 years
- Executive leadership in primary or community health in the last 5 years
- Delivery of direct patient care in the last 5 years in acute, sub-acute, aged care, primary health or community care
- Responsibility for quality and safety in a health service
- International leadership in health quality and safety
- Experience representing and advocating for a broad range of consumer perspectives in healthcare at a senior level in the last 5 years within Victoria
- Relevant alternative industry experience
- Academic leadership in quality and safety
- Leadership in improvement and innovation at scale

## 4.2. Tenure

Members are appointed for a term of up to 3 years, with extension dependent upon evaluation of the council, and for no longer than two terms.

## 4.3. Membership responsibilities

Members are expected to attend all meetings in a given year, as is reasonably practical. Members are also expected to attend Advisory Group meetings, as is reasonably practical.

Members must familiarise themselves with the issues to be covered for each agenda item, participate constructively in all debates and work together in providing pragmatic advice.

### Code of conduct

Members are expected to discharge their duties with care and diligence and in accordance with the [Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees](#). Members must strive in the course of their work to uphold the operating principles of the QSEC, and adhere to the following:

- Members should approach deliberations in an impartial manner and should not reflect any organisational, sectional or vested interests.
- All papers produced by the QSEC are for the exclusive use of its membership and SCV.
- Members should not inappropriately use information that is discussed at the QSEC.
- Members should not disclose publicly any information that is identified as confidential.
- All information that is to be made publicly available relating to QSEC matters must be approved by the chair.
- Members should disclose any real or perceived conflicts of interest before each meeting.
- Members should not seek to gain any advantage through their membership of the QSEC.

## 5. Meetings

### 5.1. Meeting frequency

The QSEC will meet twice a year with the CEO SCV during the second and fourth quarter of the financial year. Meetings are expected to last minimum of two hours in duration. Additional meetings may be convened as required.

The dates and format for meetings will be determined in the final quarter of each financial year.

### 5.2. Proxies and invitees

Members are not able to nominate a proxy should they be unable to attend a meeting unless otherwise agreed by the Chair.

Ex-officio members that are unable to meet the attendance requirements are able to nominate a permanent proxy to take their position on the council.

Other invited guests will be at the discretion of the chair and the CEO of SCV.

### 5.3. Quorum

The quorum at meetings is attendance by half of members plus one member. In the event a quorum is not achieved, a decision to continue with the meeting will be made by the Chair. In the event a quorum is not achieved, the meeting may proceed with any voting held over until a quorum is achieved.

Any decisions undertaken should be supported by informed debate drawing on the best available evidence and noting that, where possible, a consensus approach will be adopted in decision-making. Where this is not possible, a majority vote will determine decisions.

## **5.4. Agenda items**

The agenda will be developed by the council chair and the CEO SCV. The agenda and associated papers should be circulated one week in advance, where possible.

## **5.5. Chair**

The Chair will be nominated by the members of QSEC and endorsed by the SCV CEO. The inaugural chair will be nominated by the SCV CEO. The Chair will:

- set the agenda for the meeting
- lead the meeting
- maintain order at the meeting
- ensure the conventions of the meeting are being followed
- ensure fairness and equality at the meeting
- keep the meeting to time
- approve the formal actions of the meeting
- hold members accountable to the values and behaviours of the Code of Conduct for Victorian Sector Employees
- represent the expert group (this responsibility may be delegated).

## **5.6. Secretariat support**

SCV's Operations and Engagement Branch will provide secretariat function for QSEC meetings and QSEC Advisory Group meetings. The role of the secretariat is to:

- support the operations of the group by developing the agenda, coordinating appropriate engagement with SCV, the department and the wider sector, preparing and distributing background papers, and recording and preparing minutes of committee meetings
- update, manage or log any potential conflicts of interest
- ensure group decisions, advice or recommendations are accurately documented

## **5.7. Out of session resolutions**

When an issue arises that, in the opinion of the chair, requires resolution before the next scheduled meeting, the chair may seek an out-of-session resolution. An out-of-session resolution shall be achieved and may be acted upon if:

- written information about the issue, together with a proposed resolution, is distributed to all members of the council.
- sufficient members of the group to constitute a quorum respond and a consensus or simple majority agree with the proposed resolution, or an amended form of the resolution, within a timeframe agreed upon by the Chair.

## **5.8. Confidentiality**

All members are required to sign a confidentiality agreement on commencement of their term of appointment.

Members are not to reveal any confidential or proprietary information entrusted in the course of their duties.

Unless stated, all papers are confidential. Papers are exclusive for QSEC members and are not to be distributed or made available to non-members.

## 5.9. Conflict of interest

A conflict of interest will arise if a person's personal interests (actual or perceived) conflict with their duties as a QSEC member such that the person may not be independent, objective and impartial in relation to their duties. All declarations of conflict of interest will be declared as part of the membership documentation, and where appropriate for additional circumstances in any given meeting.

Where a potential conflict of interest has been declared the member will remove themselves from voting on matters concerning the declared conflict and be guided by the Chair on how to best to proceed and advise the meeting accordingly. A formal declaration will be completed and signed along with documented action taken by the Chair.

## 6. Management

### 6.1. Appointment process

QSEC members will be appointed based on merit and with consideration of the knowledge, experience and expertise required for an effective QSEC.

With the exception of the inaugural chair, QSEC members will be appointed via an expression of interest (EOI) process. The selection criteria will be published with the EOI documentation.

The EOI process will be overseen by a selection panel comprising at least the chair and the CEO of SCV.

Should the EOI process be unsuccessful in filling all required knowledge and skill expertise, the SCV CEO may nominate suitable experts to approach.

Council members who will be attending meetings or participating in other network activities during their usual working hours at a health care organisation will need to provide evidence of support from their employing organisation as part of the appointment process.

### 6.2. Vacancies / termination of membership

Membership positions become vacant if a member:

- resigns in writing
- is absent from both council meetings in a given year, except for leave granted
- fails to observe without reasonable reason, the Code of Conduct.

The chair, in consultation with the CEO of SCV, may appoint an appropriate temporary replacement member if a vacancy arises until a permanent member can be appointed.

### 6.3. Remuneration and expenses

Remuneration will be in alignment with the annual *Appointment and remuneration guidelines*, Department of Premier and Cabinet.

All members, whether remunerated or unremunerated, are eligible to be reimbursed for reasonable out-of-pocket expenses such as travelling, accommodation, meals and other incidental expenses associated with attendance at meetings, overnight absence from home or absence from the normal work location in the course of field duties.

## 7. Review and evaluation

The effectiveness of council will be reviewed by the Chair and the SCV CEO on an annual basis. The review will consider how the council has performed against its guiding principles.

The outcome of the review may lead to possible modifications to the Terms of Reference, governance and the membership of the council to ensure ongoing effectiveness subject to approval by the Chair and SCV CEO (or delegate).

## 8. Appendix 1

### SCV: External advisory structure

Figure 1: Organisational context of QSEC within the SCV external advisory structure (as of March 2023)

