

# Primary Care Outcomes Questionnaire (PCOQ) User Guide Annex 2

The purpose of this Annex is to provide a detailed explanation of the PCOQ construct to help potential users of the PCOQ decide if it is an appropriate tool for their purposes. This document contains:

1. A brief description of each of the four domains measured by the PCOQ (below)
2. A more detailed tabular description of each of the items measured, including why they should be amenable to intervention in primary care.

The PCOQ measures four domains as follows:

**Health Status (items 1 – 8):** This measures symptoms, the effect of symptoms on life and health concerns. It is a subjective construct, which is not associated with age. High scores reflect people’s satisfaction with this domain in comparison to their peers and in accordance with their expectation.

**Confidence in Health Provision (items 9 – 14):** This factor measure patients’ confidence in their usual doctors and nurses, including their ability to access appropriate healthcare when they need it.

**Health Knowledge & Self Care (items 15 – 18):** This measures the extent to which patients understand their health problems, know how to manage them and stay healthy. It measures patient capability to increase understanding to their desired level. High scores represent people who are satisfied with their level of understanding.

**Confidence in Health Plan (items 19 - 24):** This includes the concepts of patients trusting and following their health plan, and having the necessary support in life to enable them to do this.

An item level description of the construct is provided in the following table

Item Stem	Item number & item		How Primary Care can influence
How much are you currently affected by:	1	Pain or discomfort	Through direct interventions in a treatment or consultation room, through influencing any of the outcomes in the health empowerment domain, or by referring to other organisations who can provide further support in this.
	2	Other physical symptoms	
	3	Feeling low in mood or depressed	
	4	Feeling anxious or stressed	
How much does your physical or mental health currently prevent you from:	5	Enjoying life	By helping patients to reduce their symptoms (in the ways described above); or, where symptoms cannot be reduced, by trying to understand the effect symptoms are having on the patients' lives, and working with them to develop strategies to overcome difficulties. 'Normal' activities is a subjective construct. It may include paid employment, leisure activities, housework/DIY, shopping or anything involving acceptable levels of physical and mental function.
	6	Doing your normal activities	
How worried or concerned are you	7	About your current state of health	By listening to the patients and recognising when they may be harbouring concerns about serious illness or persisting symptoms. By taking these concerns seriously, examining the patient, ordering further tests if necessary and if not clearly explaining the rationale for any decisions and diagnoses.
	8	That your symptoms might indicate an undetected serious illness	
Thinking about the doctors and nurses you usually see, how confidence are you that:	9	They will listen when you need them to	By listening to, and believing patients, without pre-judging based on assumption or prior knowledge. By taking patient problems seriously, and continuing to try new approaches for persisting problems. By taking responsibility for patients under their care and being willing to take decision and action on the patient's behalf.
	10	They will do their best to help you when you need it	

Item Stem	Item number & item		How Primary Care can influence
	11	They have good medical knowledge	By always examining patients, taking every patient problem seriously and being thorough in any examination.
	12	They would spot it if you were seriously ill	
	13	You can trust them	See 11 and 12 above. This also incorporates the concept of confidentiality.
	14	You can get good healthcare when you need it	By ensuring patients can access primary healthcare services: i.e. easily contact the practice by telephone, and by developing systems to manage patient urgent health needs with limited capacity. By facilitating patient access to other services, including secondary care when needed.
Thinking about your level of knowledge, how much do you:	15	Know how to prevent future problems with your health	Through communicating information about what lifestyle actions patients need to take in order to improve or maintain health. By doing this in a way that is individualised to each patient's needs and ability to process and act on the information.
	16	Know how best to look after yourself and stay healthy	
Thinking about your level of understanding: how much do you:	17	Understand your current illness or health problems	By giving an accurate diagnosis, clear explanations, arranging diagnostic tests or specialist support as necessary and providing written information or signposting where to find such information.
	18	Understand how to manage symptoms of your illness	By giving clear explanations on how to manage symptoms, so that patients are confident they can self-manage in future where appropriate. By prescribing medication and making it easy for patients to access repeat medication if required.

Item Stem	Item number & item		How Primary Care can influence
Thinking about the support you have in life, from both your health centre and elsewhere, how much support do you have to help you:	19	Manage in your daily life?	Through listening to patients to understand the nature of their problems, advising them and referring them to the support agencies available.
	20	Deal with any anxieties or worries?	
How confident are you that you are:	21	Dealing with the cause of your health problems	By taking time with patients to establish the root causes of their problems, rather than offer 'quick fixes' of medication where this is not appropriate. Through clear explanations.
	22	On the right path to dealing with your health problems	By ensuring that a clear plan of action is set for addressing problems. By listening to patients and ensuring that this path is one they feel willing and able to follow.
For a variety of reasons, people don't always follow medical advice. How much of your doctor or nurses advice are you following on:	23	Your medication or treatment	By ensuring that they attempt to address the problems that patients present with through agreeing a plan of action which the patient understands, agrees with and has contributed to as much as he or she would like. By ensuring that the plan agreed with the patient is one that the patient has confidence in, has the ability to follow, and has clearly understood.
	24	Leading a healthy lifestyle	