



THE QUALITY STANDARDS

FOR SOCIAL WORK AND REHABILITATION IN SENSORY SUPPORT SERVICES

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IN SENSORY SUPPORT SERVICES**

SSI January 2007

FOREWORD

For many years a core objective of the Department has been the continuous improvement of service standards for the people of Northern Ireland. *Best Practice - Best Care* (DHSSPS 2001) was a key document in establishing the framework for developing quality standards and improving monitoring and regulation in health and personal social services. The latest step in pursuing this important core theme has been the publication of the *Quality Standards for Health and Social Care* (DHSSPS 2006). At the heart of the Quality Standards are the key values: of dignity, respect, independence, rights, choice and safety for service users and carers. The standards have five quality themes:

- Corporate leadership and accountability of organisations;
- Safe and effective care;
- Accessible, flexible and responsive services;
- Promoting, protecting and improving health and social well-being; and
- Effective communication and information.

The Quality Standards for Social Work and Rehabilitation in Sensory Support Services will complement the Quality Standards for Health and Social Care in this important area of practice.

The standards have been developed in the context of a wide range of relevant research, legislation, policy and best practice. The development process has included consultation with staff and service users and the involvement of a representative reference group.

The Standards have been checked against current best practice and rigorously revised and now represent a robust set of agreed quality standards against which sensory support services can be benchmarked. They will provide a structure for developing quality services and they will help to improve and regulate practice ensuring that service users and their carers remain at the centre of service provision.

I wish to acknowledge the valuable contributions of the Inspection Reference Group and the inspection workshop participants in the development and revision of these standards.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Martin', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

PAUL MARTIN

Chief Inspector

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Development of the Standards

These standards were developed as part of the inspection of social work and rehabilitation services for adults with sensory support needs that reported in May 2005¹.

The standards were originally produced in draft form following a comprehensive consultation process with staff and service users that took place prior to the inspection.

The standards remained in draft form at that stage to allow for their ongoing development during the inspection. They have now been finalised drawing on the findings and recommendations of the inspection and include feedback from a workshop which sought staff comments on the draft standards.

1.2 How the standards will be used

The Standards will have a broad application as all commissioners and providers of sensory services will be expected to fully comply with them. They will be used by:

- HPSS organisations - eg the Strategic Health and Social Care Authority (when it becomes operational in April 2008), HSS Boards and Trusts, local commissioning bodies and family practitioner services - for the planning, commissioning, provision and auditing of services;
- service users, carers and staff in the voluntary sector to inform them of the quality of social work and rehabilitation services that should be expected;

¹Challenge and Change: An Inspection of Social Work and Related Services for Adults with Sensory Loss, Overview Report, Social Services Inspectorate, May 2005.

- the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) in its clinical and social care governance reviews of HPSS services;
- the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC) and training providers to ensure that both qualifying and post-qualifying social work and rehabilitation training fully prepares and equips staff to operate effectively in sensory support services.

1.3 The format of the standards

There are eight **standard statements** covering the main areas of sensory support services. These are set out in the document under the following headings:

1. Human Rights And Equality.
2. Involvement Of Adults With Sensory Support Needs.
3. Information For Service Users.
4. Planning, Commissioning And Delivery Of Social Work And Rehabilitation Services.
5. Workforce Planning, Training, Supervision And Support.
6. Person Centred Planning And Review.
7. The Range Of Social Work And Rehabilitation Service Provision.
8. Aids and Equipment Which Assist Daily Living And Communication For Service Users.

Under each of these headings, there is a **standard statement** which explains the level of performance to be achieved. The standard statement is then expanded into a series of **criteria** which will provide further detail for areas of consideration by the HPSS and by RQIA.

1.4 The values and rights underpinning the standards

The standards were developed in the context of the five core values that are central to social work practice:

- Respect for Human Dignity and Worth;
- Pursuit of Social Justice;
- Service to Humanity;
- Integrity; and
- Competence.

A full statement of these values and the associated principles are contained in the BASW Code of Ethics.

For the purposes of the development of the standards these values have been extended to rehabilitation and technical staff working in sensory support services as there is currently no separate professional body and consequently no over-arching statement of values for these professions.

These core social work values sit easily within the human rights and equality legislation that applies to Northern Ireland. In developing the standards the inspection team also consulted closely with the Human Rights Commission and the Equality Commission with regard to the key issues that must be taken into account in considering the impact of human rights and equality legislation with regard to sensory support services. This resulted in the following statement that was agreed by the two Commissions for the guidance of the inspection.

Social work services should recognise that people with sensory support needs, like everyone else, have rights under the Human Rights Act 1998 and under other legislation protecting people against different forms of discrimination. In particular, people with sensory support needs have rights under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. They are service users for the purposes of Part III of that Act, while Health and Social Services (HSS) Trusts are service providers.

Under section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, public authorities in Northern Ireland owe duty to people with a disability to promote their equality of opportunity with people without a disability.

The most important value underlying the law's requirements concerning human rights, discrimination and equality of opportunity is that of the dignity of the individual. When interpreting the law's requirements and when identifying best practice, courts and other adjudicators will base their decisions on how the dignity of the individual is best protected. That should be particularly borne in mind when what is in question is a person's right to be treated in a manner that is not degrading, his or her right to respect for private and family life or his or her right to freedom of expression.

1. HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUALITY

Standard The HPSS organisation is fulfilling its statutory duties in respect of the requirements of human rights and equality legislation. Human rights and equality principles are integrated into practice within all aspects of social work and rehabilitation services for people with sensory support needs.

Criteria

1. The dignity of the individual service user is respected and valued in accordance with social work values and the requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998.
2. The individual service user's right to confidentiality is respected in keeping with the BASW Code of Ethics statement on privacy, confidentiality and records.
3. There is understanding and respect for the cultural or community identity of individual service users. This includes the service user's linguistic preference, religious belief, political opinion, racial identity, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender and whether or not they have dependants.
4. All HPSS policies have been subject to appropriate consultation in accordance with section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.
5. The HPSS makes appropriate provision for the specific requirements of people with sensory support needs. This is in line with the Disability

Discrimination Act 1995 in regard to the duty of employers and service providers to make adjustments.

6. People with sensory support needs are not treated less favourably by service providers than others who do not have a disability unless there is justification for this - (section 24(1) of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995).
7. Awareness training on human rights and equality is provided for all staff in Sensory Support Services.
8. Front line/reception staff in social work facilities are given sufficient training and support to ensure that they are competent to respond to sensory support needs of the service users that they meet.
9. Sensory awareness training is provided for all HPSS staff.
10. There are systems in place to monitor the delivery of awareness training.
11. Social work and rehabilitation services and premises are accessible to people with sensory support needs.

2. INVOLVEMENT OF ADULTS WITH SENSORY SUPPORT NEEDS

Standard HPSS Managers ensure that adults with sensory support needs and their representatives have the means to influence decisions about the planning, operation and review of services. This draws on the guidance already produced by SSI in 1999².

Criteria

1. HPSS managers have a strategy that actively promotes the involvement of adults with sensory support needs in all key processes in relation to the planning, delivery and review of services.
2. The strategy ensures the involvement of service users who represent the diversity of experience of people with sensory support needs.
3. Resources are made available to support active service user involvement.
4. Adults with sensory support needs receive appropriate support and information to assist their involvement. This includes:
 - awareness and capacity building training if required;
 - information in their choice of format and in a timely manner; and
 - the communication support that is required.
5. Public consultation is promoted and publicised as widely as possible to ensure the effective participation of adults with sensory support needs.

²Quality Standards on Consumer Involvement, SSI, April 1999.

6. The input of adults with sensory support needs is acknowledged in any relevant documents that are produced.
7. Service users who have been involved are given appropriate feedback on how their input was used.
8. Meetings involving service users are held in accessible venues and at accessible times.
9. Expenses are paid and transport provided as required for service users who are involved in the planning, delivery and review of services.

3. INFORMATION FOR SERVICE USERS

Standard The HPSS organisation makes information accessible to service users to meet their individual needs and according to their choice of format.

Criteria

1. The HPSS organisation provides comprehensive, up-to-date information on the social work and rehabilitation services that it provides for people with sensory support needs.
2. Key HPSS documents are produced simultaneously in a range of formats to ensure that service users who have a sensory support needs are given equality of access.
3. Disability Discrimination Act requirements with regard to making information available are adhered to and information is provided in a range of formats.
4. Service users with sensory support needs have information in their choice of format about how to access the personal information that is held on their file.
5. The information that is produced by the HPSS is based on needs identified with service users, carers and advocates in the local area.
6. Information about services and information delivery methods are regularly reviewed and updated to take account of current best practice and new methods of communication.

7. The review and quality assurance processes for the provision of information includes service user representation.
8. A named sensory support staff member is responsible for ensuring that information is accessible to service users with sensory support needs. This includes:
 - developing a database of service users in their area;
 - developing a profile of their choice of formats
 - ensuring that information is produced in these preferred formats; and
 - distributing information to appropriate outlets.
9. HPSS staff have access to the Internet to assist them to obtain the most up-to-date information and to signpost service users to appropriate sources of information.
10. A range of additional information is made available to meet the needs of individual service users. This is provided in their preferred format and in a timely manner, including the provision of information at the point of diagnosis of a sensory loss or sensory disability.
11. Service users are given the level of support required to access information according to their individual support needs.

4. THE PLANNING, COMMISSIONING AND DELIVERY OF SOCIAL WORK AND REHABILITATION SERVICES

Standard The HPSS plans, commissions and delivers social work and rehabilitation services for adults with sensory support needs in line with identified need, statutory requirements and current best practice.

Criteria

1. The HPSS produces a regional framework for collecting, collating, developing and using health and social care information to assess the current and future needs of people with sensory support needs. This includes information and good practice guidance produced by national bodies such as the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE).
2. The HPSS produces a regional strategy for the commissioning and delivery of a full range of sensory support services based on identified needs. The strategy:
 - promotes inclusion, equality and a person-centred approach to the planning and commissioning of sensory support services;
 - is influenced by the views and aspirations of adults with sensory support needs and their carers and families; and
 - includes a clear statement about the range of social work and rehabilitation services that is to be provided for people with sensory support needs based on statutory functions and responsibilities (see Standard 7).

3. The HPSS commissioning arrangements for the delivery of sensory support services must be outcome based and establish relevant targets to meet identified needs and promote the reduction of inequality in service delivery. These arrangements include
 - adequate resourcing for commissioned services and provision of aids and equipment to daily living and communication; and
 - monitoring and review mechanisms to ensure that quality standards are adhered to and anticipated targets and outcomes are achieved.
4. The HPSS works in partnership with other key departments and with the voluntary and community sector to meet the needs of people with sensory support needs, actively promoting the sub-contracting of sensory support services from the voluntary and community sector that demonstrate best value and best practice.
5. Services commissioned by the HPSS must be accessible, flexible co-ordinated and include out-of hours provision.
6. Governance systems are in place to ensure safe and effective practice and the delivery of high quality care in all aspects of social work and rehabilitation provision in the sensory support services that are commissioned. This draws on the guidance already contained in the Quality Standards for Health and Social Care³.
7. At Trust level managers responsible for the delivery of sensory support services produce a service delivery plan in collaboration with service users and key partners in the statutory, voluntary and community sectors. The plan includes:

³The Quality Standards for Health and Social Care DHSSPS, March 2006.

- a statement of the values and principles that underpin the plan;
 - the Trusts priorities and objectives for the operational period of the plan;
 - financial planning and management;
 - information about local need and demography in relation to people with sensory support needs and other relevant local information including local resources;
 - the range of services to be provided and the resources required to provide these on an equitable basis across the Trust's area;
 - written eligibility criteria for the range of service provision that targets those in greatest need;
 - the period covered by the plan and the review date; and
 - methods of monitoring and audit.
8. Social work managers in the Trust make optimum use of resources, both internal and external, to achieve the objectives identified in the service plan. Appropriate bids are made for additional resources to deliver the plan.
9. There are clear service agreements in place with all service providers to assist with monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of services.
10. Trust managers responsible for delivery of sensory support services ensure that effective liaison arrangements are in place between the sensory support service and other programmes of care and departments to ensure that the needs of people with sensory support needs are met. This includes:

- arrangements to identify people with undetected sensory loss, especially if the service user is an older person or has another disability;
 - clear guidance for referral and co-working between services for adults with sensory impairment and other programmes of care; and
 - effective liaison and discharge arrangements in place between hospital (including day surgery units) and community social work departments.
11. These liaison arrangements are regularly reviewed to ensure that the screening and referral mechanisms that are in place are effective.

5. WORKFORCE PLANNING, TRAINING, SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT

Standard The HPSS organisation has a strategy in place to recruit, retain, support and develop sufficient numbers of appropriately qualified and competent staff with the knowledge and expertise to deliver high quality accessible care and support services for adults with sensory support needs and their carers and families.

Criteria

1. There is a workforce strategy in place for sensory support services to ensure:
 - a clear organisational structure and clarity of role and function of staff at all levels, including agreed job descriptions and pay structures;
 - a sufficient number of staff are employed to meet current and future service needs including sufficient administration staff to provide adequate back-up;
 - an overarching training and development plan to provide the accredited training needed and ensure that the workforce is competent to delivery high quality, effective services;
 - a defined career structure and opportunity for continued professional development; and
 - the employment of people with sensory support needs is actively promoted within sensory support services.

2. The workforce strategy complies with NISCC and other relevant professional codes of practice for employers and social care workers.
3. HPSS Managers monitor the implementation of the Workforce Strategy and ensure that relevant information such as staffing levels and workloads is passed to Service Directors and Commissioners.
4. The HPSS organisation has arrangements in place within sensory support services for:
 - recruitment and retention of staff;
 - staff induction;
 - staff appraisal;
 - consultation with staff;
 - individual development plans;
 - access to development opportunities;
 - access of newly qualified workers to PQ1;
 - release of staff to attend relevant training; and
 - opportunities to experience work of other agencies.
5. The HPSS promotes the ongoing development and provision of a range of accredited training that is accessible to staff across the region to support the delivery of the full range of services to people with sensory support needs. This includes:

- social work training;
 - rehabilitation training;
 - communication skills training (BSL Level 2 and ISL);
 - counselling skills;
 - hearing therapy;
 - training in communication tactics; and
 - deaf/blind communication.
6. The HPSS organisation has arrangements in place to ensure that service users are invited to contribute their experience of the service to help train staff.
7. The HPSS works closely with colleges to ensure that:
- social work training is fully accessible to students with sensory support needs; and
 - that there are sufficient supervised social work and rehabilitation placements available in sensory support services.

6. PERSON CENTRED PLANNING AND REVIEW

Standard Sensory support staff work in partnership with the service user, their carer and other relevant agencies and professionals to assess individual need and determine eligibility for care, support and rehabilitation in order to agree service provision.

Criteria

1. Sufficient information is gathered during the referral process to determine the appropriate level and urgency of assessment and to enable the monitoring of response times in line with set targets.
2. The social worker or rehabilitation worker responsible for the assessment and planning process with each service user is clearly identified.
3. The rights and views of the service user are primary and must always be central to the assessment process and to plans that are developed with them for the provision of care, support or rehabilitation.
4. The planning process for the delivery of care, support or rehabilitation to individual service users must:
 - take into account the service user's choices, preferences and person centred goals;
 - record all views that are expressed by service users and carers.
 - advise service users and carers about eligibility criteria and rights to service provision;

- recognise the service user's right to take risks and assist them identify and manage potential risks to themselves and others.
 - recognise the carer's right to a separate assessment;
 - ensure that the service user agrees to the contribution of other agencies and the participation by professionals to the process; and
 - ensures that Independent advocacy services are provided when needed.
5. Independence and choice are promoted through innovative and imaginative use of resources that are available including the Independent Living Fund, Direct Payments and alternative service development and provision.
 6. If the service user is a young adult the social worker collaborates with the local education authority and other agencies to ensure that transitional arrangements are in place in accordance with Sections 5 and 6 of the Disabled Persons Act 1989.
 7. The plan clearly identifies outcomes and targets and is implemented with responsibilities agreed and clearly assigned and review dates identified.
 8. The service user is given a copy of the agreed plan in their preferred choice of format. Any change in the plan is the subject of a formal review that involves the service user.
 9. There are clear record management systems in place and written guidance with regard to case records in order to ensure that they are relevant, accessible and regularly audited.
 10. Recording systems are streamlined wherever possible to reduce duplication and unnecessary administration and bureaucracy requirements.

7. THE RANGE OF SOCIAL WORK AND REHABILITATION SERVICE PROVISION

Standard Social Work and Rehabilitation staff work in partnership with service users, carers and relevant agencies to provide a responsive and accessible service which meets the needs of people with sensory support needs.

Criteria

1. A range of methods based on current best practice is used by social work and rehabilitation staff in the delivery of sensory support services. This includes individual support, groupwork and community development approaches.
2. Skilled counselling, emotional support and advocacy is available for adults with sensory support needs and their families and carers.
3. People with sensory support needs have access to specialist rehabilitation and environmental support services.
4. The rehabilitation programme for people with visual impairment includes training in orientation and mobility, independent living, communication skills and low vision enhancement.
5. The rehabilitation programme for people who are deaf or hard of hearing includes maximum use of residual hearing, communication tactics, assistive technology and coping strategies.

6. The rehabilitation programme takes place in a range of settings that are appropriate to the service user's needs to enable them to develop their potential to manage confidently at home, at work and within the community.
7. The necessary aids and equipment to daily living needed to implement the rehabilitation programme are provided (Standard 8).
8. Carers and other significant people in the service user's life are involved in enabling the service user to achieve their goals if the service user so wishes.
9. The service user is contacted within an agreed period on completion of their rehabilitation programme to confirm that it has met their needs. If it has not, then further assessment is undertaken with a view to providing further training.
10. Adequate communication resources are available to support staff and service users, for example independent interpreting and speedtext.
11. Arrangements are in place to offer early intervention at the point of diagnosis as required by individual service users.
12. A register of people who wish to be registered as blind or partially sighted is maintained by the HPSS organisation within its overall information systems.
13. Staff in all programmes of care are fully informed about the services that are available for people with sensory support needs.

14. Arrangements are in place to ensure that people with sensory support needs have full and equal access to provision from other programmes of care when required.
15. Social Work and Rehabilitation staff collaborate closely with each other and with staff from other programmes of care and other agencies that are involved to ensure that the service that is delivered to the service user is integrated and as seamless as possible.

8. AIDS AND EQUIPMENT WHICH ASSIST DAILY LIVING AND COMMUNICATION FOR SERVICE USERS

Standard A range of specialised aids and equipment which assist daily living and communication are provided in response to assessed need

Criteria

1. There is a regional policy for the provision of aids and equipment in order to reduce inequality and provide improved value for money.
2. The regional policy will outline the rationale for aids and equipment to be provided and any associated legal responsibilities.
3. A regional commissioning group will monitor and review expenditure in response to identified need within the context of a regional budget.
4. A regional aids and equipment group is established consisting of service users and staff to:
 - test and review the range and performance of aids and equipment supplied every 2 years;
 - access up-to-date information regarding the availability of most recent aids and equipment.
5. The range of aids and equipment is based on needs assessment and user choice.

6. Aids and equipment are provided by appropriately trained staff.
7. Aids and equipment are reviewed regularly to meet changing individual needs, and they include the option of self assessment by the user.
8. Service users are given the necessary instructions for using the equipment and the terms and conditions for its supply in their preferred format.
9. The conditions and arrangements for the return and replacement of equipment are clearly outlined.
10. The service user is given the name of the person to contact regarding any changes in needs.
11. There is agreement between departments and other agencies regarding responsibilities for the provision, installation, maintenance and replacement of aids and equipment.
12. Advice is offered to service users when they are purchasing aids and equipment to daily living and communication by means of a Direct Payment or from private funds.

Appendix 1: Membership of the Inspection Team and Reference Group

Inspection Team

Mrs Maire McMahon, Assistant Chief Inspector, Social Services Inspectorate;
Mr Charles Bamford, Lead Inspector, Social Services Inspectorate;
Mrs Evelyn Gilliland, Sessional Inspector;
Mr Ronnie Carser, Lay Assessor; and
Mr Andrew Murdock, Rehabilitation Worker, Guidedogs for the Blind Association.

Reference Group

Mr Brian Symington, Director, RNID
Ms Fionnuala McAndrew, Director of Social Services, SHSSB
Mr Kieran Downey, Community Services Manager, Sperrin Lakeland HSS Trust
Ms G Cunningham, Programme Manager Physical Disability, Ulster Community and Hospitals Trust
Mr Barry McAuley, RNIB
Ms Helen McVicker, Social Work Department, University of Ulster
Mr Bill Halliday, Equality Commission
Ms Colette Gray, Acting Director, SENSE NI
Mrs Mary Wilmont, Director of Social Work, NHSSB
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