

CONSULTATION REPORT

LEARNING DISABILITY AND MENTAL HEALTH QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED LIVING SERVICES IN THE NEATH PORT TALBOT UNITARY AUTHORITY AREA

1.0 Background

- 1.1 On the 1st April 2021 the Social Care, Health and Well-being Cabinet Board authorised officers to consult members of the public and other stakeholders for 90 days on the Learning Disability and Mental Health Quality Assurance Framework (QAF).
- 1.2 For some time the Social Services Health and Housing Directorate has been modernising its commissioned service models and how social care works on a practical level. This modernisation agenda includes how well commissioned services work in practice and how it meets the needs of those having support.
- 1.2 To strengthen a revised supported living service model, a Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) was developed that could help inform providers and others on how well modern service support meets the founding principles of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care Wales Act (RISCA). The QAF serves to agree what is important in supported living and will be used by stakeholders as a way of benchmarking how well commissioned service providers deliver support in accordance what is considered best practice in Wales.
- 1.3 The aim of the QAF is to:
 - Benchmark services so that commissioners, service providers and other stakeholders can identify how well services meet the personal outcomes of those having support.
 - Encourage continuous improvement and alignment to best practice in supported living services
 - Help identify changes that would make it easier for providers to enable service users to achieve their personal outcomes
 - Encourage more collaborative working with providers, service users, their family and others so a multi-faceted view of 'quality' and what is important to those that require services may be obtained

- To have a clear sense of what ‘quality’ means in practical terms in operational services

1.4 The QAF went out for public 90 day consultation from the 27th of July 2021 and closed the 19th of September 2021

2.0 Introduction

2.1 A range of engagement and consultation activities have taken place to help inform the QAF, including -

- Online consultation via the Council’s public consultation page
- Direct engagement with service users, family members and service providers and their staff
- Formal written contact with stakeholders

3.0 Consultation Objectives

- To provide a mechanism for people to contribute their views
- To find out if people agree or disagree with the draft QAF and the reasons for this
- To provide a mechanism for people to make comments and suggested changes to the Framework
- To ensure that the consultation was available to as many stakeholders as possible
- To ensure that the consultation was available in a format so people could understand

4.0 Overarching public consultation – Methodology

4.1 To help ensure that the consultation was circulated as widely as possible, respondents could submit their views by four mechanisms:

- **Online** - a self-completion questionnaire was published on the Council’s website. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they were a service user, family member or staff member of a provider of a supported living scheme. The questionnaire went live from the 27th of July 2021.

- **Paper copies of Questionnaires on contact** - consultation packs were made available that could be posted on request. The questionnaire packs contained a hard copy of the online version and responses were entered into 'SNAP' (our online consultation software package) for analysis. The available packs contained the following documents –
 - a) Introductory letter in Welsh and English that introduces the QAF, what it does and how to offer feedback – three versions, one for Service Users, the second for family members and the third for service providers.
 - b) Welsh and English versions of the Draft consultation document including an 'easy read' version in both languages.
 - c) Welsh and English versions of the questionnaire itself so that respondents could complete and return

- **Electronic copies of Questionnaires on contact** - The email address ccu@npt.gov.uk was promoted for people who wanted to request electronic versions of the documents above and to respond via this mechanism.

- **Live engagement sessions** arranged via Microsoft Teams at set times so that those participating could engage directly with Council officers involved in drawing up the QAF, where discussion was encouraged and feedback was obtained. Three separate sessions were arranged, one for family members on the 27th of July 2021 at 11am, one for service users on the 27th of July 2021 at 2pm and one for staff of service providers on the 29th of July 2021 at 11am.

4.2 The consultation was promoted via –

- The Council website homepage – via the Council's public consultation page – Snap Surveys <https://wh.snapsurveys.com/s.asp?k=161961461251>
- The Council's newsletter - 'NPT News'
- Letters and emails directly to service providers and to family members whose details were kept with the appropriate social worker teams

- Letters and emails passed to service providers asking them to pass to service users and to help support them to give feedback.
- Tabled as an item at the relevant Provider Forums to encourage Providers to provide feedback and support service users to provide feedback

5.0 Overarching Public Consultation – Responses

A total of one completed questionnaire was received through the online portal (from a staff member of a service provider), no hard copy returns were received and two family members were engaged with as part of the live consultations. The live consultations were minuted. Also officers received one written letter of response from a member of the public.

6.0 How the respondents feel about the proposals

6.1 Family members – Live session arranged for the 27th of July 2011, 11am (two people attended, one person from two different families of service users)

Family members were very complimentary of the QAF, what it aims to do and felt the Framework was overwhelmingly a positive thing. As far as improvements, it was felt that advocacy should be expanded on in the document as everyone recognised that advocacy is crucial to people who may experience challenges communicating and/or may be complex. The other areas which it was felt could be expanded on was whistleblowing and property maintenance, where again it was acknowledged that getting these right will make a huge difference to people's lives.

6.2 The Staff Member – staff member had scheduled to attend the live event but given pressures couldn't make it on the day, so they gave online written feedback instead, below (point 6.3).

6.3 Online feedback stated that the staff member felt the QAF was good, understood the reason for having it and also felt it would, when used, help positively to raise quality in services. They were very complimentary of the work. The only feedback that was given was an observation that the QAF didn't always align with CIW statutory regulations.

Note – given the feedback we felt it important to engage directly with the staff member so a meeting was arranged. During the meeting

the staff member was again very complimentary but stated there were a few places where the QAF didn't align to Statutory Regulations. Officers fed back to the staff member that the QAF aligns to our Contract and not with Statutory Regulations so there may be occasions where the Council may want something over and above the Statutory Regulations in our service models. The staff member noted the distinction and understood the difference. The Council thanked the staff member for their feedback.

- 6.4 Written Feedback - One written feedback posted directly to the team that raised a number of valuable observations on the QAF and how it could potentially be improved. The feedback and Council response is highlighted in Section 7.3 of this report.

7.0 Council's response to the consultation

7.1 Online feedback – 1 respondent

Comments or questions raised on SNAP Survey and formal responses		
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the draft QAF?		
Number	Comment:	Council response:
1	Strongly agree (100%)	No response required
Does the draft QAF cover the areas that are most important to service users and their families?		
2	Strongly agree (100%)	No response required
Are there any areas that the draft QAF does not cover that you think needs to be included?		
3	No (100%)	No response required
Are there any areas in the draft QAF that you feel should not be included? Please tick one box only		
4	No (100%)	No response required

Do you think that the draft QAF would have a positive or negative impact on service users?		
5	Positive (100%)	No response required
What impact do you think the draft QAF will have on providers of services?		
6	Positive (100%)	No response required
Do you think the draft QAF will help commissioners and providers understand the impact of services on service users?		
7	Yes (100%)	No response required
Do you think that the draft QAF will help us identify changes that would make it easier for providers to enable service users to achieve their personal outcomes?		
8	Yes (100%)	No response required
Do you think the draft QAF will help improve the quality of services?		
9	Yes (100%)	No response required
Do you think that the draft QAF will encourage more collaborative working with		

commissioners, providers, service users and families?		
10	Yes (100%)	No response required
What impact do you think the draft QAF will have on the Council's socio economic duty?		
11	Don't know (100%)	No response required
What changes to the draft QAF do you think can be made to further improve the Council's socio economic duty?		
12	Some of the items included are different to that of the RISCA Regulations we work in line with under CIW registration so i feel it would be good for all items to link in, as an example team meetings for staff being held monthly, RISCA regs state Bi-monthly.	The QAF is embedded in our Contract with our service providers and not RISCA, though it's recognised that RISCA features heavily in the Contract. For various reasons there will be occasions when our authority would wish to have in place standards that may be above the requirements of RISCA.
What impact do you think the draft QAF may have on people's ability to use the Welsh language?		
13	Don't know (100%)	No response required.
What impact do you think the draft QAF might have on people because of their protected characteristics of: *age *disability *gender reassignment *marriage and civil partnership *pregnancy and maternity *race *religion or belief *sex *sexual orientation		

14	Don't know (100%)	No response required
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Please note that equalities information was gathered but due to the low submission rate, it has not been included in this report as the respondents could be identifiable. Information from this has informed the updated Impact Assessment.

7.2 Live event – Family Members – 2 respondents

Does the draft Quality Framework cover the areas that are most important to service users and family members?		
1	The Framework looks detailed on paper but needs to be more detailed, and one of those most important areas is Advocacy	The following additional elements will feature in the final version of the Framework – A5 (c) to (e)
2	Whistleblowing needs to be encouraged and noted it was missing in the document.	The following additional elements will feature in the final version of the Framework - E4(e) to (i)
3	More around property maintenance should be included in the Framework	The following additional elements will feature in the final version of the Framework – E1(d), (e), E3 (e)
Is there anything not covered?		
4	The areas mentioned previously.	Council's response – as above.

Is there anything that you feel should not be included?		
5	Nothing, aside from the above the Framework looks comprehensive	Council's response – the Council welcomes the feedback
Do you think the Framework will have a positive or negative impact?		
6	It will be positive if the contents are followed through, often there is a lack of communication between some Organisations and the people on the ground. Some Organisations will have their own set of rules. I don't want another report that just sits on the shelf	Council's response – reports are used by the Council to work collaboratively to change services, and any recommendations from reports are always taken forward with the service provider.
Do you think that applying the Framework would help improve the quality of services?		
7	The response was 'yes' but noted they have been involved with the NPT Council for many years, they know who to go to but not everyone does and channels need to be open.	Council response – although not specific to this QAF and is a more general observation, officers will look at how to further strengthen co-production and communication. The directorate now has an engagement team
8	People who are nonverbal or have complex needs must not be forgotten.	Council's response – we are constantly reviewing how to improve consultation and communication with those that use services and may have barriers to engagement. The directorate now has an engagement team to support with engagement activities and strategies. Within the context of this exercise, Providers were asked to support service users and easy read versions were provided.
9	Emphasised no parent wants their child to be looked after, they want them to be healthy, wise and living in the community but unfortunately in these circumstances	Council's response – the purpose of this QAF is to strengthen monitoring arrangements to ensure we commission the best quality services

	they have to depend on the Council and other services to care for them but someone needs to take responsibility for ensuring they are receiving the right care	
Any other comments, suggestions or questions?		
10	None	No response required

7.3 Written response direct to Council officers – 1 respondent.

Feedback via letter – one respondent		
	Respondents Comment	Council's Response
1	<p>“merely having access to the full range of healthcare services..” it is not sufficient; for severely impaired service users, it may be necessary to ensure regular health checks are being undertaken with responsibility for initiating such important action clearly stipulated (Sub-domain 2a and 2b).</p> <p>Similarly records relating to professional consultations are kept (including, where possible, any resulting actions) and, where available, relevant correspondence maintained to provide a clear record for the individual. It</p>	<p>Thank you for feedback, the Council recognises an:</p> <p>Adjusted measure B2(a) New Measure D1(f)</p>

	is less than clear whether these important aspects are fully covered by Sub-Domain 2c	
2	Sub-Domain 3(b) does not really address the situation, referred to in general section 1.2 above, for those who are unable to prepare.....their own meals, or even snacks (as defined).	Thank you for feedback, the Council recognises a: New measure B3(b)
3	The express emphasis placed on “maximising independence” and actions that would help support “greater or optimum independence” Sub-Domain 3b whilst compatible with part of the Act’s requirement – seems to reflect little regard for other important elements of the Act’s fundamental duty to promote, and definition of, wellbeing – as briefly referred to in General section 1.1 of this note or the reality of the situation for some severely impaired service users.	Thank you for feedback, the Council recognises an: Domain D3 title changed D3(b) new measure
4		Thank you for feedback, the Council recognises that

	<p>Sub-Domain 1&2 attempt to address aspects of property environment such as cleanliness and visible risks/hazards. However these provisions do not appear to be as comprehensive as those contained in, for example, Regulation 44 of the Regulated Services (Service Providers and Responsible Individuals (Wales) Regulations 2017, as amended). An extract is attached for ease of reference. It is regrettable that these Sub-Domains do not, among other things, 1) ensure that premises is adequately lit, heated and ventilated, 2) look at issues of size and nature and suitability of room available for the service users use 3) consider security arrangements.</p>	<p>although the full requirement of Regulation 44 and similar regulations around 'cleanliness' and 'risks/hazards' would fall under Care Inspectorate Wales monitoring, the Council has considered the comment on its merit and has included further measures in a new measure E1(e) in the final document.</p>
5	<p>Learning disability service users, especially those with severe/profound intellectual impairments are among the most vulnerable in society. The qualitative standard adopted, in this context should, surely, be accorded no less a level of importance, and equate with that stipulated by Regulation 44 in its entirety.</p>	<p>Thank you for feedback, although the Council understands the view taken, we would wish to advise that Care Inspectorate Wales may review the provider against the full requirement of Regulation 44 and our Council is only one of a number of organisations that would have a view of standards delivered in supported living. The Council and CIW work extensively together to have a more rounded view of quality in schemes. The QAF is not intended to replace or duplicate the CIW</p>

		inspection of providers against the Regulations, including Regulation 44.
6	Sub-Domain 2c refers to provider compliance with Statutory Guidance. Is this intended to cover, among other things, Regulation 57 of the Regulated Services (Service Providers and Responsible Individuals) (Wales) Regulations 2017 as amended? If so, the quality measures within this sub-domain might usefully be expanded with specific standards on “required safe water temperatures, safe storage and preparation of food, fitting window restrictors” – given their importance	The Council values the feedback and acknowledges that some of the more significant areas of this regulation has now featured in a new measure in E1(e). We note however that some elements of the feedback would reasonably fall under the Council’s Environmental Health and would not consequently form a part of this Framework, though it’s right to say does form a part of the contract. The commissioning department have close links with the Environmental Health team in order to obtain a holistic view of quality.
7	It is noted that Sub-Domain 3a requires signed copy of the ‘tenancy agreement’ to be on file; but is silent about whether such document does/not reflect the reality of circumstances surrounding the severely impaired service user’s actual occupation.	Thank you for feedback, the Council recognises the feedback and we refer you to revised measure E3(a)
8	With regard to Sub-Domain 3c – I would respectfully refer to my comments in general section 1.2 above.	Thank you for feedback, the Council recognises the feedback and we refer you to a revised measure E3(c)
9	It is presently unclear whether the term ‘complex needs’ is intended to cover within the QAF’s cross cutting	The decision on whether a person could be regarded as ‘complex’ would be agreed on a case by case basis

	<p>theme (QAF pages 4,9 and 29) entitled 'Complex Disability'. It is noted that pages 4 & 9 contain a brief reference to strengthening the service for these with "complex needs" – but does not say how or what is covered by this term. Page 29 does refer to the development of a Positive Behaviour Support Plans and guidance on complex behaviours – if those are the parameters intended by the term.</p>	<p>with Care Management as the Council recognises that there is no hard and fast rule for defining 'complex'</p>
10	<p>It is not clear what, if any, is the minimum frequency with which NPT Contract Monitoring will visit supported living schemes – to review/ensure compliance with the final QAF adopted for this area of care and support provision. Without clarification of the matter, it is difficult to see how reliance can be placed on a future QAF being properly implemented and followed.</p>	<p>The Council's Contract Monitoring team aims to visit all supported living schemes at least yearly, or more often if able to do so. The team will also respond to issues and concerns as they arise and may include an additional visit(s) if warranted. The Council is mindful that it is one of a number of organisations or teams that visits schemes and monitors services and it should note that the team works closely with its own social worker teams, CIW, Health and others who visit schemes and would respond to issues raised as appropriate.</p>
11	<p>...it is curious there is no express provision in Section 5 for the feedback of any contract monitoring report to those service users/families directly interested in the contract monitoring review of a supported living scheme.</p> <p>This situation appears contrary to the 'spirit if not letter' of the Council's stated wish for more "collaborative</p>	<p>The Council recognises the important contribution service users and family members play in giving a view on standards of care and support in schemes, however this recognition does not diminish the reality that there are issues discussed in the work of monitoring schemes which would be considered commercially sensitive and may also be person identifiable to the</p>

	working” and should be properly addressed in the final QAF.	collective family members of those service users in a scheme. CIW reports are available for public view, which will help public understand a provider’s compliance with the Regulations.
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