



Human Services Quality Framework



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SECTION ONE – ABOUT THE HUMAN SERVICES QUALITY FRAMEWORK (HSQF)

1.1 Introduction

The Human Services Quality Framework (HSQF) is designed to:

- reduce red tape by allowing non-government organisations (NGOs) funded by the Department of Communities to conform with only one set of quality standards
- fulfil the Queensland Compact's commitment to actively reduce administrative duplication and compliance costs to the non-government community services sector.

The evaluation of the trial of the HSQF found that the framework will reduce the duplication of the existing suite of quality standards and allow funded NGOs to maintain a focus on quality, whilst having more time to spend on other important elements of their business.

The HSQF has been developed in collaboration with government and non-government representatives. Key components of the HSQF include: guiding principles; benefits; quality standards; methodology for implementation; and a glossary of terms.

The Human Services Quality Framework will replace the: Queensland Disability Sector Quality System; Queensland Disability Advocacy Standards; Community Services Standards; and the Child Safety Service Standards. Mutual recognition of the framework is currently being negotiated with the Department of Health and Ageing in relation to the Community Care Common Standards.

Organisations that are currently required to comply with the National Community Housing Standards will not initially be required to apply the Human Services Quality Framework. The level of inclusion of these organisations in the framework will be considered when the role of the National Housing Regulator is more defined in June 2013. Similarly, the level of inclusion for community mental health providers is also being delayed until the role of the Queensland Mental Health Commission is further defined.


1.2 Statement of intent

The intent of the Human Services Quality Framework is to create a streamlined and client focussed quality framework for human services that facilitates continuous quality improvement.

1.3 Guiding principles of the HSQF

The principles of the HSQF are to have a quality framework that:

- is focussed on improving services for clients
- is based upon continuous improvement
- is transparent to clients, service providers, government and the community
- places responsibility for meeting service standards with service providers
- is robust and enduring, incorporating an ongoing cycle of verification processes

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- is administratively efficient and cost-effective
 - clearly defines the role of service providers and government.

1.4 Expected benefits

The HSQF will deliver significant, measurable improvements for:

Consumers

- Access to better, more reliable services.
- Greater opportunities to influence and participate in the nature and direction of service improvement.
- Services recognising and responding to individual needs and the rights of individuals.
- Confidence that service quality is effectively assessed.

Service Providers

- A clear and consistent framework by which to plan, operate and improve services.
- Reduction in administrative burden and compliance costs.
- A holistic assessment of organisations.
- Positions funded organisations to deliver services in other areas of human services that are funded by the department.

Community benefits

- Services delivered to a consistent level of quality and run efficiently and effectively.
- Increased confidence in the nature and quality of service provision across the state.

Government benefits

- A streamlined, consistent quality process across funded organisations and a reduction in red tape and redirection of administrative effort to other service delivery priorities.
- Increased confidence in the department's investment in services.

1.5 Relationship of the HSQF to other documents and requirements

The Department of Communities has worked with the community services sector to streamline processes for funded organisations in a number of ways, including the quality requirements.

The HSQF is part of a suite of documents that organisations should refer to when considering their funding and service model and their general business operations. Other significant government documents include:

- departmental and state government strategic plans
- legislation
- legislative regulation
- funding agreements
- service agreements.



A funded organisation should also consider other internal documents that underpin their funding and service model and general business operations, including their:

- strategic, operational and business plans
- quality improvement registers
- governance structure
- human resource management
- information management
- financial records
- financial and non financial acquittals and reporting.



SECTION TWO – HUMAN SERVICES QUALITY STANDARDS

2.1 Overview

The Human Services Quality Framework (HSQF) demonstrates a commitment to quality and the use of this to drive efficient and effective business operations which result in quality outcomes for clients.

The framework contains the following six Human Services Quality Standards:

- governance and management
- service access
- responding to individual need
- safety, well-being and rights
- feedback, complaints and appeals
- human resources.

The standards have been developed to encapsulate the core components of the existing quality standards currently used in disability services, child safety services, housing and homelessness services, community services and Home and Community Care services.

The quality standards contained in the HSQF have been developed based on the following principles:

- **Respecting human rights** - services are planned and delivered in a manner that respect and has regard for the individual's human rights, in keeping with the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that states 'recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world'.
- **Social Inclusion** - services are planned and delivered to promote opportunities for inclusion in the communities that a person using services identifies with.
- **Participation** - people using services are included in decision-making about the service they receive and the organisation delivering the service.
- **Choice** - people using services are provided with the opportunity for choice regarding the service they receive and where and how they receive it, within available resources.

2.2 Quality standards

Standard 1: Governance and management

Title	Governance and management
Expected outcome	Sound governance and management systems that maximise outcomes for stakeholders.
Context	The organisation maintains accountability to stakeholders through the implementation and maintenance of sound governance and management systems. These systems should reflect the size and structure of the organisation and contribute to maximising outcomes for people using services.
Indicators	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The organisation has accountable and transparent governance arrangements that ensure compliance with relevant legislation, regulations and contractual arrangements. 2. The organisation ensures that members of the governing body possess and maintain the knowledge, skills and experience required to fulfil their roles. 3. The organisation develops and implements a vision, purpose statement, values, objectives and strategies for service delivery that reflect contemporary practice. 4. The organisation's management systems are clearly defined, documented and monitored and (where appropriate) communicated including finance, assets and risk. 5. Mechanisms for continuous improvement are demonstrated in organisational management and service delivery processes. 6. The organisation encourages and promotes processes for participation by people using services and other relevant stakeholders in governance and management processes. 7. The organisation has effective information management systems that maintain appropriate controls of privacy and confidentiality for stakeholders.



Standard 2: Service access

Title	Service access
Expected outcome	Sound eligibility, entry and exit processes facilitate access to services on the basis of relative need and available resources.
Context	The organisation makes their services available to their target group in fair, transparent and non-discriminatory ways and people seeking access to services are prioritised and responded to.
Indicators	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Where the organisation has responsibility for eligibility, entry and exit processes, these are consistently applied based on relative need, available resources and the purpose of the service.2. The organisation has processes to communicate, interact effectively and respond to the individual's decision to access and/or exit services.3. Where an organisation is unable to provide services to a person, due to ineligibility or lack of capacity, there are processes in place to refer the person to an appropriate alternative service.

Standard 3: Responding to individual need

Title	Responding to individual need
Expected outcome	The assessed needs of the individual are being appropriately addressed and responded to within resource capability.
Context	The organisation provides appropriate services that are identified/assessed, planned, monitored, reviewed and delivered in collaboration with the person using the service, their representative and/or relevant stakeholders. The organisation uses referral pathways and partnerships to promote integrated service provision.
Indicators	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The organisation uses flexible and inclusive methods to identify the individual strengths, needs, goals and aspirations of people using services. 2. The organisation formulates service delivery that respects and values the individual (e.g. identity, gender, sexuality, culture, age and religious beliefs). 3. The organisation ensures that services to the individual/s are delivered, monitored, reviewed and reassessed in a timely manner. 4. The organisation has partnerships and collaborates to enable it to effectively work with community support networks, other organisations and government agencies as relevant and appropriate. 5. The organisation has a range of strategies to ensure communication and decision-making by the individual is respected and reflected in goals set by the person using services and in plans to achieve service delivery outcomes.

Standard 4: Safety, well being and rights

Title	Safety, well being and rights
Expected outcome	The safety, well being and human and legal rights of people using services are protected and promoted.
Context	The organisation upholds the legal and human rights of people using services. This includes people's right to receive services that protect and promote their safety and well being, participation and choice.
Indicators	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The organisation provides services in a manner that upholds people's human and legal rights. 2. The organisation proactively prevents, identifies and responds to risks to the safety and well being of people using services. 3. The organisation has processes for reporting and responding to potential or actual harm, abuse and/or neglect that may occur for people using services. 4. People using services are enabled to access appropriate supports and advocacy. 5. The organisation has processes that demonstrate the right of the individual to participate and make choices about the services received.

Standard 5: Feedback, complaints and appeals

Title	Feedback, complaints and appeals
Expected outcome	Effective feedback, complaints and appeals processes that lead to improvements in service delivery.
Context	The organisation listens to people and takes on feedback as a source of ideas for improving services and other activities. It includes the way the organisation responds to complaints from people using services and their right to have complaints fairly assessed and acted upon.
Indicators	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The organisation has fair, accessible and accountable feedback, complaints and appeals processes. 2. The organisation effectively communicates feedback, complaints and appeals processes to people using services and other relevant stakeholders. 3. People using services and other relevant stakeholders are informed of and enabled to access any external avenues or appropriate supports for feedback, complaints or appeals and assisted to understand how they access them. 4. The organisation demonstrates that feedback, complaints and appeals processes lead to improvements within the service and that outcomes are communicated to relevant stakeholders.

Standard 6: Human resources

Title	Human resources
Expected outcome	Effective human resource management systems, including recruitment, induction and supervisory processes, result in quality service provision.
Context	The organisation has human resource management systems that ensure people working in services (including carers and volunteers) are recruited appropriately and are suitable for their roles within the organisation. Once appointed, people working in the organisation have access to support, supervision, opportunities for training and development and grievance processes.
Indicators	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The organisation has human resource management systems that are consistent with regulatory requirements, industrial relations legislation, workplace health and safety legislation and relevant agreements or awards. 2. The organisation has transparent and accountable recruitment and selection processes that ensure people working in the organisation possess the knowledge, skills and experience required to fulfil their roles. 3. The organisation provides people working in the organisation with induction, training and development opportunities relevant to their roles. 4. The organisation provides ongoing support, supervision, feedback and fair disciplinary processes for people working in the organisation. 5. The organisation ensures that people working in the organisation have access to fair and effective systems for dealing with grievances and disputes.