

# ADULT CARE SERVICES



**ACS 778**

**Quality Standards in Adult Care Services –  
Elderly & Physical Disability Area Teams and Sensory  
Services**

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# **Quality Standards in Adult Care Services - Elderly and Physical Disability Area Teams & Sensory Services.**

## **Introduction**

These quality standards apply to all elderly and physical disability services provided by Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) Adult Care Services (ACS) area teams, hospital teams and the sensory services team. They are set out as promises we make to everybody who uses, or seeks to use, our services.

Our standards are based on good practice as defined by the Commission for Social Care Inspection, British Association/College of Occupational Therapists and the General Social Care Council and reflect what we have to do by law. They also incorporate the county council's vision of delivering good quality services to the people of Hertfordshire. They are implemented through our policies and procedures and all staff are informed about the standards through the Performance, Management and Development Scheme.

### **There are sixteen standards, divided into 5 categories:**

- Information about our services
- Working in partnership with users and carers
- Working in partnership with other organisations
- Recording and sharing of information
- Performance, management and development of staff

We monitor these standards through the Service Improvement Process, which ensures that managers regularly check and review the work undertaken by all staff in our department.

### **Underpinning our standards are two core themes:**

The individual is kept at the centre of all that we do

and

Diversity and difference are acknowledged and accepted leading to an environment where everyone feels valued.

**Please also see the Hertfordshire County Council [Customer Care Standards](#).**

# Quality Standards

## Information about our Services

- 1. We will provide information about our services in a way that is easy to understand and is accessible to all.**

### What this means in practice

- Information leaflets about our services are available using plain language, avoiding jargon. Written information is made available in other languages and alternative methods of communication, for example, British Sign Language (BSL) or an interpreter.
- Service users can access information about our services from the [hertsdirect.org](http://hertsdirect.org) website.
- Clear and consistent verbal information about our services is given by staff over the telephone and in person.

- 2. We will be clear about what help we can provide and who is entitled to access this help.**

### What this means in practice

- All staff understand and are able to explain the department's 'Fair Access to Care' eligibility criteria.
- If a decision is made that someone is not eligible for services, the reason for this decision is explained by staff and the explanation confirmed in writing if appropriate

- 3. We will inform people if they are to be charged for a service.**

### What this means in practice

- Advice and information about HCC's charging policy for services will be provided at the earliest opportunity to service users and their carers.
- Staff will have an understanding of HCC's charging policy and procedures and know where to seek advice.
- Other professionals, for example, GP or district nurse, will be informed of HCC's charging policy so that service users are aware at time of referral to ACS.

## **Working in Partnership with Users and Carers**

### **4. We will treat everybody who comes into contact with Adult Care Services with respect and courtesy at all times.**

#### **What this means in practice**

- a) Staff at all levels and in all circumstances will behave professionally and politely at all times.
- b) Staff will not discuss someone's personal affairs with them or others in a public place.
- c) Staff will introduce themselves to service users and their carers. Staff will wear a Hertfordshire County Council identity badge at all times. They will find out how people prefer to be addressed and respect that preference.
- d) Staff will listen carefully to service user and carer views. Staff will respect the value of a person's time – people will not be kept waiting unless it is unavoidable. Every effort will be made to keep to appointment times, but if there is an unavoidable delay contact will be made with the service user to explain and apologise. Time with service users and carers will not be used by staff to vent their own pressures or problems. Staff will take time to explain things, to answer questions and to give information. They will not discuss a service user in their presence with other people in the third person as if they were not there.
- e) Staff respect the individuality of each person and their concerns, and do not seek to compare their situation with others who may be "worse off".
- f) Staff will seek specialist communication advice and input as needed, for example, a BSL signer or interpreter.
- g) Any form of abuse or harassment between staff and members of the public is unacceptable. Staff will remain calm if members of the public are abusive or aggressive.

### **5. We will work in partnership with people who use our services and their carers, to achieve agreed outcomes.**

#### **What this means in practice**

- a) Staff will explain the process of the assessment and how the agreed outcomes are going to be achieved. Staff will give an explanation if for some reason the outcomes can not be met either partially or in full.
  - b) We will work together with service users and their carers to draw up a care plan that keeps the person at the centre of the assessment and reflects everyone's view of the situation. Individuals have the right to have choices and control about the outcomes they seek.
  - c) A care plan will set out clearly identified needs and objectives, an action plan and agreed outcomes.

**6. We will respond to service requests so that no one is left at risk.**

**What this means in practice**

- a) We aim to respond to requests as promptly as possible within nationally required time frames:
- assessment process is started within 48 hours of notification.
  - assessments are achieved within 28 days, 70% within 14 days.
  - services are delivered within 28 days, 70% within 14 days.
  - equipment is delivered within 7 days of the assessment process.
- b) Service users will receive contact from the Client Services team who deal with an initial new enquiry. Requests are sent to the area Referral Management Team where decisions are made about the urgency of a referral. We aim to respond rapidly to urgent and high risk situations. Once allocated to a staff member contact will be made at the earliest opportunity.

**7. We will ensure that everyone who receives an assessment has a copy of an agreed care plan.**

**What this means in practice**

- a) A 'contact assessment' will record basic personal details and highlight reason for contact being made with ACS.
- b) The single assessment process ensures a shared system of recording between service users, social care and health professionals and makes sure that service users are aware of a plan of action to meet the agreed assessed needs.
- c) A more detailed assessment is recorded on an 'overview assessment', which includes a jointly signed care plan, a copy of which is given to the service user.

**8. We will ensure that we regularly monitor and review the services we offer to individuals to take account of any change in circumstances.**

**What this means in practice**

- a) When a care plan is implemented staff will make contact with a service user and / or their carer to monitor and review the service. Contact may be made by telephone or in person.
- b) The purpose of a review is to ensure that the care plan is still meeting the needs and agreed outcomes. We aim to review services on an annual basis, and further reviews can be arranged as required.

## **9. We actively seek feedback about our services.**

### **What this means in practice**

- a) We seek and welcome feedback from service users and carers about the quality and effectiveness of services.
- b) 'Having Your Say' forms are used to seek feedback from service users and carers, as part of the assessment and review process.
- c) We also consult with service users, carers and other professionals when developing and improving service delivery.

## **10. All comments and complaints are taken seriously and investigated, and feedback is used to improve our services.**

### **What this means in practice**

- a) We have a comprehensive system in place for dealing with comments and complaints about our service. No service user will be treated unfairly or detrimentally if they wish to complain.
- b) Feedback may be picked up via a 'Having Your Say' form. Other complaints received by letter, 'Have your Say' leaflet, e-mail, telephone or in person will be dealt with by the appropriate person. Our policy is to respond and address complaints within a set time frame of 10 working days; if necessary this can be extended, with the complainant's agreement, for a further 10 days. Every complaint is taken seriously and any learning points from a situation will be implemented at the earliest opportunity.

## **Working in Partnership with other Organisations**

### **11. We will work in partnership with other organisations who provide services on our behalf to monitor and improve quality.**

#### **What this means in practice**

- a) We are committed to working in partnership with organisations that provide services on our behalf. We encourage close working relationships with service providers. ACS staff work closely with service providers to arrange, commission and monitor services.
- b) We work closely with partner agencies such as health (including hospital and primary health care staff), Children, Schools and Families, Hertfordshire police, housing departments and private, voluntary and independent organisations to ensure that the needs of vulnerable people are met efficiently and effectively.

**12. Systems are in place to plan, monitor, evaluate and improve our services.**

**What this means in practice**

- a) Systems are in place to plan, monitor and improve the quality of services at a national, corporate, strategic and local level.
- b) The ACS quality assurance system known as the Service Improvement Process (SIP) is used throughout the department.
- c) Quality Monitoring Officers evaluate services across the department.
- d) Contract Officers liaise closely with service providers to ensure compliance and improve service delivery.
- e) Staff members are able to feed back matters of concern to relevant officers.
- f) A Service Improvement Plan is in place to review and monitor the services provided within the department.

**Recording and Sharing of Information**

**13. We will keep clear and accurate records of all our work.**

**What this means in practice**

Staff members are aware of the need to record care plans in a legible and accessible manner to ensure that the care plan reflects the agreed outcomes.

**14. We will keep relevant information about service users and carers securely and only share with appropriate people.**

**What this means in practice**

- a) Any personal information whether recorded in written or electronic format will be kept securely and in a manner respecting the confidentiality of the service user.
- b) Staff will not discuss a person's situation in a public area where confidential information could be divulged.
- c) In line with the Data Protection Act the circulation of personal information is limited, whilst not denying other care professionals information.

**15. Service users and carers can ask to see what we have written about them.**

**What this means in practice**

- a) Service users are informed about their right to access their records.
- b) A copy of the care plan in an appropriate format is shared with service users as a matter of course.

**Performance, Management and Development of Staff**

**16. We will ensure that a learning and development programme is in place. This supports staff to work competently with service users and carers, in a way that understands the diversity of the people of Hertfordshire, and that reflects national and professional standards.**

**What this means in practice**

- a) Newly appointed members of staff have a mandatory induction programme which allows them an opportunity to learn about the aims and objectives of the organisation and understand how policies and procedures facilitate this.
- b) All staff members work within a 'performance management and development' framework. They receive regular supervision, appraisal and opportunities for further professional development.
- c) Staff members are encouraged to give consideration to their continuous professional development in accordance to professional bodies such as the General Social Care Council or the College of Occupational Therapists.
- d) Our high standard of social care meets the General Social Care Council standards and those of the Health Professions Council (Occupational Therapists).

We ensure that all social care staff have the necessary skills and training to enable them to:

- protect the rights and promote the interests of people using our services and their carers.
- strive to establish and maintain trust and confidence of service users and carers.
- promote the independence of service users while seeking to ensure that their behaviour does not harm themselves or other people.
- uphold public trust and confidence in social care services.
- be accountable for the quality of their work and take responsibility for maintaining and improving their knowledge and skills.