Quality System Policy

1   Policy Statement

Department of Communities (Disability Services) is committed to ensuring the highest quality of services for people with disability in the context of major reforms across the disability sector. For Disability Services contracted and provided supports and services, an enhanced Quality System is implemented. This policy defines the Quality System and identifies guiding principles and key features of the system.

The Quality System reflects the context of disability services now and into the foreseeable future by:

- prioritising a person centred approach by supporting independence, choice and control by individuals, as well as recognising that some individuals may need support with decision making
- ensuring confidence in accountable disability services and supports where consistent standards and appropriate safeguards protect vulnerable individuals
- applying the six National Standards for Disability Services (the Standards) and their indicators of practice in quality evaluations
- setting an example of best practice to inform national disability reforms in which the best elements of structures unique to Western Australia are retained.

An effective Quality System provides:

- a strong foundation for people using disability services and supports to achieve the best outcomes
- the ability to evaluate the success of services and supports by the extent to which service users make progress on their goals
- alignment with the requirements of national and state disability reforms
- use of a robust evidence base, accountable processes and systematic approach to assess quality
- safeguards and assistance to make relevant and appropriate decisions that are in the best interests of the individual
- facilitation of continuous improvement and capacity building in organisations
- efficient resolution of issues affecting the delivery of quality supports and services.

Contemporary quality systems incorporate independent or external monitoring capability.

The Quality System managed by Disability Services includes a range of internal[1] and external monitoring activities, using transparent approaches to support quality service delivery and safeguards for people with disability. Enhancements to the Quality System aim to continuously improve on these processes and assist accountability of disability service organisations.

This document is supported by policy guidelines[2] that detail the required approach to terms and conditions within the policy.

2   Policy Scope

The policy applies to:

- Service providers with contracts with the Department of Communities, Disability Services, including NDIS sites and Disability Services provided supports and services[3]
- Disability Justice Services

Exclusions from the policy are:

- Service providers in WA which receive a grant
- Services purchased by individuals using self-managed funds[4] where the individual chooses to engage services from providers that are not registered with Disability Services.

3   Policy Context

This policy is set against both national and state-based reforms which have been designed to empower people with disability to have greater independence, choice and control over their lives. Major drivers at a state level include:

- Schedule 1 and Schedule 2 of the Disability Services Act 1993 prescribe the Principles and Objectives applicable to services and people with disability. Section12(i) of the Act outlines the requirements for Disability Services to ensure standards which service providers must follow for the provision of disability services.
- The Delivering Community Services in Partnership Policy (2011) which aims to improve outcomes for West Australians by empowering service users in the planning,

---

[1] Internal monitoring activities include SIRs, consumer complaints, contract management, People at Risk support, Public Interest Disclosure, implementing annual self-assessments submitted by providers, scheduling quality evaluation of internal and external providers.

[2] Quality system: Guidelines for Quality Evaluation

[3] Head agreements with contracted disability service organisations clearly states the requirement for organisations to comply with the National Standards for Disability Services. Services provided by Disability Services include the planning and support functions of Local Coordinators.

[4] Note: the planning and decision making leading to self-managed funding is within the scope of the Quality System.

design and delivery of community services, as well as enhancing the ability of the community sector to deliver services within a more streamlined funding and contracting environment.

- Disability Services person-centred approaches to individual planning and outcomes and individualised funding.

The drivers at a national and international level include the:

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2008), ensuring that measures are taken to 'prevent all forms of exploitation, violence and abuse'
- Roll out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in Western Australia, with the April 2012 COAG affirmation by all jurisdictions to a scheme
- National Disability Strategy (2010-2020) and Agreement (2010-2020)
- National Standards for Disability Services (the Standards) approved for adoption by the Council of Australian Governments
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), with the April 2012 Council of Australian Governments in December 2013 and implemented in WA in July 2014
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Quality and Safeguarding Framework

4   Principles

The principles for applying the Quality System adopt the quality management principles described in the National Standards for Disability Services (see definition of Quality Services for more detail).

The Quality System is also:

- **Impartial** - towards all stakeholders
- **Sensitive and respectful** - to individuals' specific needs and backgrounds, including the need to maintain confidentiality and use feedback to identify improvements for stakeholders
- **Considered** – considers risk and promotes and supports continuous improvement and capacity building, but acknowledges autonomy for service providers to use best practice to ensure service providers comply with contractual requirements regarding the Standards and any other requirements of the Quality System
- **Appropriate** – timely responses to ensure service providers' compliance with contractual quality requirements regarding the Standards and any other requirements of the Quality System
- **Independent** – the monitoring or evaluation process is independent of the service provider
- **Accountable** - and recognised methods are used throughout the quality evaluation process, which are transparent, evidence based, objective and consistent.

5   Definitions

Person centred approach: A way of supporting and working with people with disability that keeps the person at the centre of decision making across planning, funding and support and service arrangements.

Individual outcome(s): The difference or differences for an individual as a result of their involvement in a service or activity.

Individual: The person with disability.

Quality Services:
The National Standards for Disability Services describe the following characteristics of a quality service:

- sound governance and management in all aspects of service planning, development and provision
- clear communication to staff, people with disability and other stakeholders
- continuous improvement and evidence based practice
- a range of methods for including people with disability and people important to them in planning, delivery and review at the individual, service and organisational levels
- compliance with workplace related legislation and regulation.

Quality System:
- Quality System means the coordinated activities which direct an organisation with regard to quality and reflects the individual's contact and interaction with the disability system.
- The term Quality System replaces former terminology such as Standards Monitoring, quality assurance system and Quality Management Framework (QMF).

Safeguards:
Safeguards refer to supports and mechanisms that promote, enhance and protect an individual's:
- human rights
- decision making5, choice and control
- safety and wellbeing
- citizenship and quality of life.

When individuals are vulnerable and are at risk of experiencing compromised outcomes, safeguards provide a range of preventative and reactive responses to minimise vulnerability and risk.

---

[5] The starting assumption is all individuals have capacity to make decisions and exercise choice, regardless of their disability, unless proven otherwise. Capacity is decision-specific.

Safeguards can include a range of informal and formal supports and mechanisms that operate at the level of the individual, the community, their disability services or overarching government systems and legislation.

Safeguarding strategies and practices are assessed within the quality evaluation process.

6   Consultation

The development of this policy document has included consultation with Policy and Planning, the Senior Managers' Working group and endorsed by Disability Services Executive.

7   Implementation

This policy has a number of guidelines to facilitate its implementation. The Quality System allows for flexibility as contexts change, while retaining its key principles.

8   Funding or resource implications

This policy will be implemented within the current Quality System budget allocation.

9   Related legislation, Disability Services policies and guidelines

- Disability Services Act 1993
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 and NDIS rules
- Disability Services Regulations (2004)
- Western Australian National Disability Insurance Scheme Operational Policy Eligibility
- Individual Safeguarding Position Paper
- Individualised Funding Policy
- WA NDIS and Local Operations policies and operational guidelines
- Outcomes Based Measurement (2014)
- People at Risk Policy (2009)
- Serious Incident Reporting

10   Communication

This policy will be communicated to service users, service providers and Disability Services staff using existing communication channels. Information will be provided directly to stakeholders through the Disability Services intranet and internet.

11   Training

Training and support will be implemented with quality evaluators, service providers, service users and Disability Services staff.

12   Evaluation and Review

Due to the possibility of contextual drivers progressing or changing, this revised Policy will be reviewed 12 months from its endorsement.

13   Document control

Publication Date	September 2017
Review Date	September 2018
Owner	Executive Director – Sector Engagement and Development
Custodian	Quality and Safeguarding Manager

14   Amendments

Version	Date	Author	Description of Key Changes
1	March 2014	W Murrary	Original document
2	March 2015	A Rye	Terminology updated
3	Sept 2017	Quality and Safeguarding Manager	Alignment to NDIS
4	Sept 2017	Digital Communications Officer	Rebranded document