



**PROVIDING
INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE
FOR**

IAQF Cymru
Wales



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

ASSESSMENT SERVICES

WE CARE · WE ASSESS · WE ADD VALUE



**THE
ORGANISATION
DEVELOPMENT
FRAMEWORK**



Written specifically for voluntary and not for profit organisations, the Assessment Services Ltd Odessey Standard for Information & Guidance has been included in the Welsh Government's Information Advice Quality Framework as one of their approved Standard.

The Information Advice Quality Framework divides the provision of information, advice and guidance services into five broad headings:

- **Type One** – Information
- **Type Two** – Guidance
- **Type Three** – Advice
- **Type Four** – Advice with Casework
- **Type Five** – Specialist Casework

The Odessey Standard for Information & Guidance covers types one and two.*See Glossary

To achieve the Odessey Standard, the voluntary and not for profit organisation will:

- have defined and set the standards expected for their service delivery,
- take accountability for the service they deliver and ensure this is provided effectively and ethically to meet the needs of the clients service users, and
- explore the client/service users' needs and provide information along with signposting referral to other relevant services where the enquiry is more complicated.

For organisations based in Wales who meet the Odessey Standard, it provides public recognition that their information and guidance services are aligned to the Information Advice Quality Framework for Wales - supporting any funding applications.

The following guide provides information, advice and guidance to organisations wishing to use the Odessey Standard to:

- review and develop their service offer,
- gain an External Assessment of their processes and approaches to delivering their service, and
- achieve External Validation of their information and guidance service for Commissioners / Funding.



THE ODESSEY STANDARD

GUIDANCE FOR ORGANISATIONS
What his might look like in practice

Element 1: Governance - Senior Leaders

E L E M E N T 1 : G O V E R N A N C E	1		
	The roles and responsibilities of the Managing Committee, the CEO/ Senior Leaders, and any Operational Managers are clearly defined and do not overlap.	a There is a clear understanding of the different roles within the organisation..	You will have a clear understanding of the different roles within the organisation that may be written into descriptions of roles, for example the purpose of the Management Committee and job descriptions for paid and unpaid staff.
	2		
	Senior Leaders oversee the strategic direction of the organisation and the values by which it operates and defines what good governance means in line with the strategy it seeks to deliver.	a The organisation has a clear written approach to governance that sets out: • Purpose/remit • Management structure • Internal/external communications • Meetings calendar • Management committee meetings	You will have a clear governance structure that ensures there is strategic oversight of the organisation and scrutiny of its actions and performance. You may have a meetings calendar, or agreement on how frequently the Management Committee will meet. Your Management Committee minutes will confirm the areas of review and scrutiny, actions/ responsibilities identified along with the frequency of those meetings.
	3		
	Those involved in the implementation of the strategy can differentiate between strategic aims, organisation planning, and operational practice, and ensure these are actioned effectively.	a An agreed strategic plan is established that sets out the aims, objectives and planned measurable achievements in line with its constitution and identified service needs.	You will have a clear understanding of what you want to achieve in the short, medium and long-term. This may be included in a Strategic/Business Plan and may be supplemented by approved funding proposals. In confirming your objectives, the needs of your community will have been taken into account that demonstrates a service that will meet an identified need.
	b A documented risk evaluation of objectives is carried out regularly (at least annually).	You will review your objectives at least annually, setting out the risks that these objectives may include and the actions you are taking to mitigate/ avoid/reduce those risks and who/how/when these risks will be reviewed.	
	c The strategic/business plan is reviewed regularly (at least annually) and updated as a result of these reviews.	You will review your Strategic/Business Plan at least annually. This may be through a report to the Management Committee, or if you are single funded, through progress reports to funders. Where there are reports to funders, your Management Committee will review any implications of the evaluation.	



E L E M E N T 1 : G O V E R N A N C E - S E N I O R L E A D E R S

G O V E R N A N C E

4

Senior leaders can show they have identified the areas of the organisation that require legal and ethical parameters, and plans, processes or principles are in place.

a Senior leaders can describe and provide evidence of the legal and ethical parameters in which they work.

You will have a range of policies that meet your needs as an organisation, and you are clear about the values you operate within.

b The organisation maintains an Office Manual (or separate documents) that sets out organisational policies and procedures.

Policies will include (not exhaustive list):

- Confidentiality
- Impartiality
- Safeguarding – children, young people and adults
- Equality and Diversity
- Data protection/ information management
- Health and safety
- Well-being
- Complaints handling
- Remote/lone working
- Feedback/client voice
- Conflicts of interest
- Referral
- Staff/volunteer recruitment, supervision, performance review and continuous professional development
- Quality assurance

Policies are reviewed regularly to ensure they remain fit for purpose.

You will have a range of policies that meet your needs as an organisation. You may have been supported through your local voluntary sector council (or equivalent) to develop these. Any template policies will have been tailored to your organisation.

You will have a review cycle for policy review and policies will clearly show when they were last reviewed and the date of the next review. You will also have a process for ensuring updates are made between planned reviews if there are relevant changes.

You will complete equality and diversity monitoring of clients/service users and staff against protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010

c Appropriate procedures to ensure legal and regulatory compliance have been established.

You will hold relevant registrations/ authorisations for the work you carry out, for example Information Commissioner's Office registration.



E L E M E N T 1 : G O V E R N A N C E - S E N I O R L E A D E R S

G O V E R N A N C E	5 Senior leaders regularly review governance arrangements to ensure that the evidence shows they are effective, and report progress to the legally accountable people, organisations and internal or external stakeholders.	<p>a Senior leaders regularly review the integrity of their approach and the needs of funders/stakeholders specifically where public funding is used.</p>	<p>Your Management Committee will review, at least annually, how they are approaching their role and if any changes are needed.</p>
	6 Senior leaders show they consider and respond appropriately to feedback and guidance provided.	<p>b There are clear established procedures for financial management, including budget holder responsibilities, budget setting and governance arrangements.</p>	<p>You will have a budget that is set at least annually and arrangements in place for at least quarterly variance analysis, including cashflow forecast. Your Management Committee will review the overall financial position at intervals that are relevant for your organisation, but at least every six months. Role/job descriptions will document the financial management responsibilities within your organisation.</p>
	7 Senior leaders have accountability for service delivery.	<p>c Employer responsibilities are carried out. The performance of the senior leader is reviewed and salary levels are set.</p>	<p>The Management Committee, or a sub-committee, will have oversight of the employment/human resource arrangements for your organisation; staffing arrangements may be a standing item on your agenda. Although the day-to-day arrangements may be delegated to the Manager/Senior paid person, they will be aware of employment issues of your organisation. The Management Committee, or sub-committee, will review both the performance and salary of the Manager/Senior paid person at least annually.</p>
6 Senior leaders show they consider and respond appropriately to feedback and guidance provided.	<p>a Senior leaders use feedback and research to inform the future direction of the organisation.</p>	<p>You may gather feedback from a range of sources, for example, stakeholders, clients/ service users, funders, staff (paid and unpaid), volunteers and partners and you will be able to give examples of changes as a result of the feedback gained. You will know the needs of your area. The research you have undertaken may be a result of preparing a funding bid, or analysis that is available through your networks.</p>	
7 Senior leaders have accountability for service delivery.	<p>a Senior leaders can describe how they maintain a scrutiny role for the information and guidance delivery and ensure that it is of high quality and is delivered to its intended recipients.</p>	<p>Your Management Committee may review performance data and quality reviews. They may review reports for funders that indicate the level of activity and any outcomes achieved.</p>	



E L E M E N T 2 : D E F I N E D S E R V I C E O F F E R - L E A D E R S

D E F I N E D S E R V I C E O F F E R

8

Leaders and managers have defined service delivery to meet the intended benefits/objectives.

a Leaders and managers can describe why the service is needed and how research has informed its design, including a needs assessment of Welsh speakers.

You will know why your service is needed. You may have undertaken research yourselves or used research available on the needs of your area. You may have used this information in a funding proposal. Your research will also consider the needs of Welsh speakers and you will have developed a plan to work towards Welsh language delivery

b Leaders and managers have set out the intended impact of the information and guidance at both cohort and individual level.

You will know what difference you want your service to make on your clients/service users. This may include both hard and soft outcomes.

c There is a written description the information and guidance service offer that includes:

- The service offer
- The client/service user groups that will be served
- Qualification and experience of staff delivering the information and guidance
- The intended impact of the information and guidance on offer
- Code of conduct (staff, volunteers and clients/service users)
- A named individual who has overall responsibility for information and guidance in the organisation

You will have a Statement of Service, leaflet or promotional materials that describe the service that you offer. The document will provide sufficient information for potential clients/service users to decide if the service is right for them. The information will include: offer, client/service user groups, staff qualifications and experience, impact, any associated costs, the person with overall responsibility.

d The written description of the information and guidance service is publicly available.

Your service description is available to potential clients/service users, this may be on your website or you may distribute leaflets in public buildings such as libraries. You may distribute information via partner organisations to enable effective signposting/referral to your service.



E L E M E N T 2 : D E F I N E D S E R V I C E O F F E R - L E A D E R S

D E F I N E D S E R V I C E O F F E R

9

Leaders and managers have ensured that the information and guidance delivery is effectively resourced.

a The information and guidance aspect of delivery is resourced with appropriately qualified and experienced people who have access to resources to complete their roles effectively which include physical, technological, partnerships/networks, continuous professional development.

You will need to demonstrate how, when planning your service delivery, you ensure there are sufficient and appropriate resources to deliver the service/s effectively. This may be included in your Strategic/Business Plan or discussed and recorded in your Management Committee minutes.

b Staff (paid or unpaid) and volunteers receive relevant Continuous Professional Development for their role. Training includes, but not limited to:

- Benefits system
- Debt and financial capability
- Housing rights
- Employment rights
- Equalities/human rights/discrimination
- Data protection
- Health and social care

You need to confirm the skills, knowledge, competencies and/or qualifications needed for each job role (whether paid or unpaid). This may be included in job descriptions/ personnel specifications. Your induction processes may also demonstrate how staff are provided with initial essential training to begin their roles. Anyone who has recently joined your organisation, or is new to a role, should be able to outline the effectiveness of their induction.

c Staff receive relevant CPD for their role. Training includes, but not limited to:

- Customer care
- Data protection
- Complaints handling
- Equality & Diversity
- Safeguarding
- Conflicts of interest
- Information and advice knowledge and skills

You are committed to supporting the continuous development of your staff and will be able to provide a training budget, individual/organisation training plan/s and training records.

10

Leaders and managers have established effective client/service user record/management systems.

a Leaders and managers can demonstrate how client/service user record systems meet legislative and operational requirements.

You will have a client/service user record system that meets the needs of your organisation and the service you are offering. You will be able to describe how the records you keep are sufficient for your needs, and any personal data is protected.

11

Leaders and managers have established effective partnership and networking activities.

a Leaders and managers can describe how the partnerships and networks established support services to client/service users and organisational development.

You can describe the partnerships and networks you are involved with and how these benefit your service/s. This could be organisation's with whom you have a contractual relationship, those that you network with in order to provide more comprehensive support to your clients/service users, or information sharing to inform your own practice.



ELEMENT 3: QUALITY AND SERVICE DEVELOPMENT - LEADERS

QUALITY AND SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

12

Leaders and managers know that service delivery is of a high quality.

a There is monitoring activity that demonstrates the impact, or contribution to the impact, of the information and guidance delivery, both at cohort and individual level, which is used to improve performance continuously.

There is a strong linkage with the criteria in section 8, linked together they help to demonstrate 'plan, do review'. You need to provide information on the measurement of the aims and objectives you set in criterion 8b and, knowing the results, what improvements you have put in place. The emphasis here is on knowing what you have achieved against the objectives you set and implementing changes as a result. You may have this information in Management Information statistics, funder's reports, annual reports etc.

b Leaders have established a quality assurance cycle that focusses on the information and guidance aspects of service delivery.

You will need to describe the systems you have in place to monitor the quality of service delivery and how these processes help you to improve your service to clients/service users. For example, observations of staff, self-assessment review etc. You may have a Quality Calendar that sets out the quality assurance activities during the year.

13

Leaders and managers lead and encourage development in service delivery.

a Leaders and managers ensure that continuous improvement is at the heart of what they do. They can describe changes implemented as a result of quality assurance activities that benefit clients/service users in receipt of information and guidance.

You will be able to describe how the results of your different processes e.g. quality assurance, feedback, monitoring and review have built upon strengths and identified areas for development.

14

Leaders and managers ensure that the service delivery meets the needs of clients

a Leaders and managers can describe how service delivery is shaped to meet the needs of clients/service users through feedback, research, current thinking and policy to inform service delivery.

There is a strong link with criterion 8a. You will be able to describe how, on an ongoing basis, you ensure that your service is meeting the needs of your clients/service users. You may have a client/service user panel or have access to local needs analysis through local authorities or other stakeholders.



**ELEMENT 4: DELIVERY OF INFORMATION & GUIDANCE
PEOPLE (DELIVERY STAFF/VOLUNTEERS)**

DELIVERY OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

15

People take pride in high quality delivery.

a People ensure that information and guidance interventions are progressive and ensure actions build upon previous experience.

People can describe how they support clients/ service users to make progress.

b People can describe the client/service users journey and their role in supporting clients/ service users. They can provide examples of the progression of clients/service users.

People will be able to describe how they support clients/service users, ensuring that their needs are addressed. This may include:

- Contracting
- Initial assessment/diagnostic
- Exploration of options
- Signposting/referral



**ELEMENT 4: DELIVERY OF INFORMATION & GUIDANCE
PEOPLE (DELIVERY STAFF/VOLUNTEERS)**

16

People use their skills, knowledge, experience and qualifications to provide a high-quality service to clients/service users.

a People delivering information and guidance have the required knowledge, skills and experience to undertake their role/s.

This is strongly linked to criterion 9b. People will be able to describe how their knowledge, skills and experience enables them to support clients/service users effectively.

b People can describe how their qualifications, experience and continuous professional development support clients/service users to achieve their goals.

This is strongly linked with criterion 9c. People will be able to describe how their training has had an impact on their practice. Examples here could include short courses, shadowing, development activities during team meetings, informal training, reading, sharing best practice, attending conferences, peer observation of service delivery as well as formal qualifications. You/your staff will maintain training records that include regular equality and diversity training, data protection/information management and, where appropriate to the role, complaints handling.

c People can describe how they contribute to the delivery of information and guidance and the difference that they make.

People can describe their role in delivering the service to clients/service users and how they have enabled them to make progress. This may include direct delivery of information and guidance, along with signposting and referral to other, more appropriate, agencies.

d People can describe how they implement policies of confidentiality, impartiality, safeguarding, equality & diversity, data protection into their practice.

This links with criterion 4b. The implementation of equality and diversity could be demonstrated by providing materials in a range of formats, or by using monitoring data to target specific groups; for example you may have found through monitoring that there is an engagement gap between different groups and so you implement new approaches to address this. You could give examples of how you refer clients to other providers to demonstrate impartiality. Confidentiality can be demonstrated by People explaining how they cover it at the start of an interview, by being described in clients/service users materials, records stored in locked cabinets or by clients/service users confirming their understanding of how the service is confidential. People can also describe how any professional codes of practice in their work with clients/service users are upheld.



ELEMENT 5: CLIENT EXPERIENCE - CLIENTS/SERVICE USERS

CLIENT EXPERIENCE	<h1>17</h1> <p>Clients/service users confirm that they understand what is available to them.</p>	<p>a Clients/service users can describe how they found out about information and guidance available and what it offers.</p>	<p>Clients/service users can describe and give examples of how they know what to expect from the service/s as explained to them at the beginning of their interaction with the organisation.</p>
		<p>b Promotional materials set out the information and guidance available including any eligibility criteria.</p>	<p>This is strongly linked with criterion 8d. Clients/service users will be able to describe how they found out about the service you offer.</p>
	<h1>18</h1> <p>Clients/service user are supported to make the best out of the service offer.</p>	<p>a Clients/service users can describe the options and choices presented to them and the support to enable them to make their own decisions.</p>	<p>Clients/service users will be able to describe their experience of using the service and how they were able to make an informed decision about their next steps.</p>
		<p>a Clients/service users can describe examples of where signposting and referral has been beneficial or where a conflict of interest has been identified</p>	<p>Clients/service users will be able to describe how signposting and/or referral has supported them to make progress.</p>
	<h1>19</h1> <p>Where it is more appropriate for them, clients/service users are signposted and referred to other service delivery.</p>	<p>a Clients/service users confirm they were informed of the organisation's policies or know where they might find them: policies including, data protection, confidentiality, complaints handling, Equality and Diversity.</p>	<p>Clients/service users can describe their understanding of the organisation's key client/service users facing policies and how they impact them.</p>
		<p>b Clients/service users can describe information resources provided to support decision making.</p>	<p>Clients/service users can give examples of the resources used, for example, researching useful websites for information, or using signposting/referral directories.</p>
	<h1>20</h1> <p>Clients/service user have access to information resources appropriate to their needs.</p>	<p>a Clients/service users can describe when and what feedback has been sought on the information and guidance delivery..</p>	<p>This is strongly linked to criterion 14a. You may conduct client/service user surveys, focus groups or develop case studies to help inform service planning.</p>
		<p>b Clients/service users can describe information resources provided to support decision making.</p>	<p>Clients/service users can give examples of the resources used, for example, researching useful websites for information, or using signposting/referral directories.</p>
	<h1>21</h1> <p>The needs of Clients/service users are used to shape the service.</p>	<p>a Clients/service users can describe when and what feedback has been sought on the information and guidance delivery..</p>	<p>This is strongly linked to criterion 14a. You may conduct client/service user surveys, focus groups or develop case studies to help inform service planning.</p>
		<p>b Clients/service users can describe information resources provided to support decision making.</p>	<p>Clients/service users can give examples of the resources used, for example, researching useful websites for information, or using signposting/referral directories.</p>



GLOSSARY	
Clients/Service Users	Clients/service users are those who receive information and guidance services; they may be past, present or potential clients/service users of the service.
Continuous Professional Development	People (paid and unpaid staff and volunteers) will receive ongoing training and development relevant to their role/s.
Guidance	Describes a service which may discuss the advantages and disadvantages of different options without making specific recommendations. It may include making and receiving referrals, identifying emergencies and prioritising issues. <i>Example: A client wants to understand his finance options before choosing a new or used car. The money adviser explains the features of various purchasing options but does not recommend a particular finance option or provider.</i>
Information	Describes a service which gives clients/service users the information they need for them to know more and do more about their situation. It can include providing information about policies, rights and practices; and about local and national services and agencies who may be able to offer the client further help. Responsibility for any further action rests with the client. <i>Example: A client/service user asks whether he can get help with his council tax. You provide him with a leaflet "Help with Council Tax" and provide details of two local advice services which offer advice on welfare benefits.</i>
Leader	This is the person who has day to day operational management of the organisation. In small organisations, the leader may also have a strategic role in working with the Management Committee.
Objectives	Any objectives need to be agreed and measurable, using the SMART acronym.
People	Staff (paid or unpaid) and volunteers who deliver information and guidance services to clients/service users. In small organisations, people may carry out different roles.
Plan	A plan is a documented outline of what is to be achieved in the future. All plans will have a named person who is responsible and there will be a clear review cycle.
Policy	A policy is a documented approach to a specific issue. All policies will have a named person who is responsible and there will be a clear review.
Procedures	A procedure is a written description of the steps step's senior leaders, managers, delivery staff and volunteers are required to follow. All procedures will have a named person who is responsible and there will be a clear review cycle.
Senior Leaders	The group that has oversight of the governance of the organisation. In a small voluntary sector organisation this may be a Management Committee.



ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY - GUIDANCE FOR ORGANISATIONS

If you wish your organisation to be assessed and subsequently accredited with the Odessey Standard, you will need to submit a booking form which can be accessed via the Assessment Services website.

Assessment Services Ltd will then appoint an Assessor who will guide you through the assessment process.

The different stages that contribute to the assessment process are described below.

Self-assessment	You will complete this using the Assessment Services online self-assessment tool You will be able to upload relevant documents to support your self-assessment description
Pre-assessment	Your assessor will conduct a mystery shopping phone call to your organisation Your assessor will conduct a desktop review of your self-assessment and uploaded documents
On-site	Your assessor will spend no more than a day completing interviews with senior leaders, managers, delivery staff, volunteers and clients/service users via telephone, Zoom or Skype
Reporting	Assessment record pack will be produced including: o A completed desktop review of the information and written documentation shared through the online tool o Feedback highlighting areas for development and areas of strength
Mid-point intervention	Your ongoing accreditation to the framework is subject to a mid-point intervention. At approximately 18-months following successful accreditation, your assessor will arrange to have a telephone, Zoom or Skype call with you to discuss developments in your service since the visit. The focus of the Standard is on continuous quality improvement and therefore your assessor will be exploring with you the developments you have made.
Renewal	Your accreditation must be renewed every three years. However, if there are any significant changes to your organisation and/or your services, a further intervention may be required.

GET IN TOUCH

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**THE
ORGANISATION
DEVELOPMENT
FRAMEWORK**

ASSESSMENT SERVICES

WE CARE · WE ASSESS · WE ADD VALUE

HELPING ORGANISATIONS ACHIEVE THE OUTCOMES THEY DESIRE

