



HOME AND
COMMUNITY CARE

*A Joint Commonwealth and
State/Territory Program*

The Home and Community Care National Standards Instrument and Guidelines

Acknowledgements

This package has been developed as part of the ongoing commitment, at all levels of government, to improving the quality of services for people receiving services through the Home and Community Care (HACC) Program. This commitment includes assisting agencies to be better equipped to manage the delivery of high quality services.

The first stage of improving the quality of HACC services was the introduction of the HACC National Service Standards in 1991. The second stage is this package, the Standards Instrument. The aim of the Standards Instrument is to show services the extent to which they are complying with the HACC National Service Standards.

The development of the Standards Instrument would not have eventuated without the generous assistance and great enthusiasm of the numerous people who participated in developing this project. Many who contributed to this project gave up considerable time and resources to provide valuable feedback about the Standards Instrument and the service appraisal process. Many of those who participated have also been involved over a number of years in advancing service quality.

Consultation and pilot testing of the Standards Instrument were carried out in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia, Northern Territory and Australian Capital Territory. Whilst there were different experiences in using the Standards Instrument across states and regions there were also many similarities in the issues—all of which have helped shape the content and approach to using this package.

We are confident that through this collaborative approach a very practical and useful way of assisting services work towards meeting the HACC National Service Standards has been developed.

Once again, our sincere thanks to the many contributors to this project.

The Standards Working Group.
(Sub-group of HACC Officials)

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Introduction

Introduction

Aim of This Package

This package aims to provide those people involved in service appraisals with:

- an understanding of service appraisals and the use of the Standards Instrument in this process; and
- a reliable and practical means of assessing the extent to which HACC agencies are complying with the HACC National Service Standards.

There are a number of ways this package can be used and so the application of this package could vary in each State and Territory. This package may also be supplemented by other information provided by State and Territory governments. Agencies should contact their relevant funding authority for more information.

Benefits of Using This Package

By using this package an understanding of the following will be gained:

- what the Standards Instrument is and its link to the HACC National Service Standards;
- why the Standards Instrument was developed;
- the different ways that the Standards Instrument can be used in the service appraisal process;
- how to organise service appraisals using the Standards Instrument;
- how services will be rated against the HACC National Service Standards; and
- how action plans can be used to ensure that steps are being taken/continue to be taken towards meeting the HACC National Service Standards.

Background To This Package

The HACC National Service Standards were introduced in 1991 to provide agencies with a common reference point for internal quality controls. This is mainly through defining particular aspects of service quality and expected outcomes for consumers in seven key areas.

Following agreement from all State and Territory Ministers, the HACC National Service Standards were gazetted on 17 May 1995. States and Territories are now

required, as a result of the gazettal, to include the Standards in all service agreements. Monitoring of compliance with the Standards is now a major part of service reviews.

The importance of the Standards as part of the broader quality assurance framework is widely acknowledged in the HACC Program. However, it has also been acknowledged that the Standards do not contain specific measures for monitoring service outcomes, including outcomes for people receiving HACC services.

Recent reviews of the Program, the gazettal of the Standards and current initiatives in service delivery models such as renewable contracts and funding service agreements, have highlighted the need to extend the HACC National Service Standards to include measurable quality outcomes and specifications for contracts which meet the accountability requirements of the Program.

In May 1995, HACC Officials* commissioned the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) to refine a draft Standards Instrument that measures the extent to which service providers are complying with the Standards.

About 150 service providers around Australia pilot tested the Standards Instrument and approximately 500 people in receipt of HACC services provided feedback on service quality. This participation enabled the pilot testing and further refinement of the Standards Instrument to be immensely successful, particularly in:

- demonstrating that the Standards Instrument is robust and can be reliably and practically used across a wide range of HACC funded agencies for assessing service quality in the HACC Program;
- demonstrating that reliable and valid data on quality can be collected for reporting in State and Territory annual plans and business reports;
- demonstrating that different approaches can be taken to appraising service quality; and
- establishing a basis for further work on collecting feedback on service quality from those people receiving HACC services.

More information on the results of pilot testing the Standards Instrument is at Appendix A.

(a group comprising of Commonwealth and State and Territory officers who collectively determine national policy and direction of the HACC Program)*

Link to Accountability

The extent to which individual agencies are complying with the HACC National Service Standards will be determined by using the Standards Instrument during the service appraisal process. The Standards Instrument measures the quality of services against the HACC National Service Standards. The use of the Standards Instrument will improve accountability of the service appraisal and reporting processes.

These measures of service quality will provide a nationally consistent method for evaluating and monitoring the quality of service provision, as well as for assisting in the planning aspects of the service delivery system on a regional, state, territory and national level. Data on quality will be aggregated and collected at the regional level by States and Territories and provided in State and Territory annual plans and business reports.

By focusing on quality measures, rather than inputs or processes, flexibility and innovation in the way that care needs are met are also encouraged.

In summary, quality measures will be the basis for:

- ensuring service quality requirements, which are included in service funding agreements/contracts, can be measured;
- ensuring data can be provided (a) for monitoring service quality on a regional, state, territory and national level; and (b) for input to the development of strategic policy and planning of the service delivery system; and
- ensuring views from those people who receive HACC services are included in the appraisal of service quality.

In addition to the nationally agreed quality measures, each State and Territory may have additional measures to monitor quality assurance outcomes.

These could include complaints mechanisms and the availability and outcomes of advisory mechanisms. Each State and Territory will also have a range of sanctions and incentives that could be applied as part of the quality assurance process. State, Territory and Local government laws and regulations will also have an impact on the operation of services.

Approaches to Using the Standards Instrument

A variety of approaches to using the Standards Instrument were pilot tested. However, those approaches that included a visit to the agency had the highest reliability and validity. Consequently, it has been agreed by HACC Officials that those approaches which include an agency visit are to be used in appraising service quality. These approaches are:

Joint assessment

this is where the agency completes the Standards Instrument by writing answers against the performance information and assembles the relevant documents prior to a visit. Completion of the ratings against the categories of “fully met”, “partly met”, “not met”, determining the overall score and completing the Agency Appraisal Summary Form are done in conjunction with the visiting assessor;* and

Self-assessment with verification

this is where the agency fully completes the Standards Instrument including their ratings against the categories of “fully met”, “partly met” and “not met”. The ratings are then added up and translated to the Agency Appraisal Summary Form where an action plan is also completed. The outcome of the appraisal is then discussed and verified by a visiting assessor.

Funding authorities will discuss with agencies the type of approach to be used—before starting the appraisal process.

Consumer Feedback

The Standards Instrument focuses on the relationship between agencies, agency staff, organisational practices and those people receiving HACC services. Performance questions attempt to provide greater insight into this relationship and the outcomes achieved in addressing care needs.

However, incorporation of feedback from those people receiving HACC services as a source of additional performance information against the Standards, is recognised as an important component of quality assurance in the HACC Program. It is an independent means of validating the outcome of service

(* assessors could be project officers, HACC agencies (peers) or other personnel approved by State and Territory governments.)

appraisals and as such, assists in identifying those agencies that may be performing poorly against some of the Standards.

It also assists in identifying those agencies that perform well against the Standards.

Consequently, pilot testing of the Standards Instrument also included obtaining feedback from people on the quality of HACC services received. However, definitive conclusions about the link between service quality as defined through the Standards Instrument and consumer feedback could not be made.

HACC Officials, in November 1997, reiterated their commitment to obtaining feedback from people receiving HACC services as an important and integral aspect of validating service quality. They have agreed for further work to occur during the 1998 year on developing feedback approaches that can be reliably used to validate agency appraisals.

Consumer feedback approaches will not be required for reporting in State and Territory annual plans and business reports until the approaches have been tested and ratified by HACC Officials.

How the Ratings From the Instrument Will be Used

Accountability requirements

The scores or ratings derived from the appraisal process will be used to assess the extent to which agencies are complying with the HACC National Service Standards. For example, ratings can be added to determine whether a service is of a high standard, good standard, basic standard or poor standard. For more information on ratings or scoring please refer to that section in this package.

Action plans have also been included in the service appraisal process. Action plans are for agencies to document how they will continue to improve the quality of their service(s). The development of action plans will, in most States and Territories, probably occur in consultation with project officers or other funding authority representatives.

For more information on action plans please refer to the Agency Appraisal Summary Form section of this package.

Continuous improvement

For the first time, on a national level, the HACC Program has for agencies a transparent, reliable and practical approach to obtaining meaningful information on service quality.

The Standards Instrument lends itself in a very practical way to improving the quality of services. It does this by clearly identifying those areas that need attention by agencies. From this, and in conjunction with an agreed action plan, agencies can confidently plan how they will continue to improve the quality of their services. The Standards Instrument also clearly shows agencies those areas that they are performing well in.

National Implementation of the Instrument

HACC Officials have agreed to the national implementation of the Standards Instrument. HACC Officials have also agreed to the collection of service quality information and data for incorporation into State and Territory annual plans and business reports.

Implementation of the Standards Instrument will commence on a state by state basis from the 1998/1999 year onwards.

In most States and Territories, service appraisals using the Standards Instrument, will be linked to agency Funding and Service Agreements. Agencies should contact their relevant State or Territory funding body to find out more details about the service appraisal process and time line for implementation.

Tips on Planning a Successful Service Appraisal for Agencies

Tips on Planning a Successful Service Appraisal for Agencies

Step 1

Find out the type of service appraisal your agency will be undertaking.
Find out who your assessor will be.

Step 2

Read the information contained in this package first and the Standards Instrument, before attempting the appraisal.

Step 3

Decide on how the appraisal should be organised, eg:

- whom from the agency (and possibly outside the agency) will participate;
- date(s) for the appraisal;
- a place to meet during the appraisal; and
- what information will be necessary to answer each objective.
You may want to develop a checklist. You may also want to discuss this with people participating in the appraisal, including the assessor.

Step 4

Complete the appraisal using the notes in the Standards Instrument and reference to other relevant resources such as the HACC National Service Standards. Your assessor may be able to offer guidance in this area.

Step 5

Complete the Agency Appraisal Summary Form.

There are two parts.

The first part of the form records the type of appraisal, when it occurred, who was involved and the outcome. (For those agencies doing a self-assessment with verification you will need to add up the ratings and place the ratings in the summary form. A guide on how to add up your ratings is included along with the Standards Instrument. The completed information should then be sent to the assessor. You will need to arrange the specifics of this with the assessor).

For the second part of the form you will need to identify those things that need to change using the Forward Action Plan. It may not be possible to do everything at once, so you will have to decide what your agency will do within the funding period. Again, your assessor may be able to assist you with this.

Step 6

The appropriate committee members/agency representative will need to sign the Agency Appraisal Summary Form. The relevant person from the funding authority will also need to sign it.

Step 7

The action plan will need to be incorporated into the planning and management activities of the agency.

Always remember that the aim of the appraisal is to improve the service for consumers, so be honest and frank. Project officers or other representatives from the funding body are available to answer your questions about the appraisal process. If you need more information or help please contact the person(s) below:



Agency Checklist for Planning a Successful Service Appraisal

You may want to use this checklist to plan your service appraisal. Set a date by which you aim to have the task completed and/or tick the completed box once the task is completed.

Description	Notes	Date By	Completed
1 Find out the type of service appraisal your agency will undertake and who your assessor will be.			
2 Read the information contained in this package before attempting the appraisal. Ensure that others who will be involved in the appraisal have a chance to read all the relevant information as well.			
3 Decide on how the appraisal should be organised. For example, decide on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • whom from the agency (and possibly outside the agency) will participate; • date(s) for the appraisal; • where you will meet; • what information will be necessary to answer each objective. You may want to develop your own checklist. You may also want to discuss this with the assessor. 			
4 Complete the appraisal using the notes in the Standards Instrument and reference to other relevant resources such as the HACC National Service Standards.			
5 Fill out the Agency Appraisal Summary Form: Part 1: Summary of the Agency's Appraisal			
Part 2: Action Plan			
6 Ensure the relevant representatives from the funding authority and the agency sign the Agency Appraisal Summary Form.			
7 Ensure the action plan is incorporated into agency planning and management activities.			

List of Resources

List of Resources

Following is a list of resources that may help with:

- the service appraisal process; and/or
- implementing changes that are necessary to improve service delivery.

These resources are available from the State or Territory Department responsible for the HACC Program. Other resources may also be available. For more information please contact:

Place contact sticker here

Resources

Getting It Right for You, Your Guide to The Home Community Care (HACC) Program National Service Standards (agency information) (1991)

Getting It Right for You, Your Guide to The Home and Community Care (HACC) Program National Service Standards (consumer information) (1991)

Home and Community Care Program Statement of Rights and Responsibilities (1990)

Home and Community Care Program: Complaints Policy (1992)

HACC Managing Complaints Training Package (Folder Kit 1993)

“No Trouble” Managing Complaints: The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Home and Community Care National Service Standards Training Package (1996)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Financial and Management Training (1997)



A Guide to Scoring

A Guide to Scoring

An Overview

The Standards Instrument provides a means to determine the extent to which agencies are complying with the HACC National Service Standards. The Standards Instrument is therefore based on the Standards.

The Standards Instrument is divided into seven sections according to the seven HACC Objectives listed in the “Guidelines for the HACC Program National Service Standards”. The seven HACC Objectives are:

1. access to services;
2. information and consultation;
3. efficient and effective management;
4. coordinated, planned and reliable service delivery;
5. privacy, confidentiality and access to personal information;
6. complaints and disputes; and
7. advocacy.

Each of the above objectives has a number of service standards. Overall there are 27 service standards accompanied by 25 performance questions.

There is information within the Standards Instrument called “replying to the performance information” which guides agencies on the type of performance information that should be covered when attempting to answer the questions.

These answers must be used, along with performance criteria, to determine the extent to which agencies are complying with the HACC National Service Standards. Performance criteria are used to determine whether an agency satisfies a “met”, “partly met” or “not met” rating.

There are two levels of performance criteria:

Minimum criteria

minimum criteria are those which agencies must meet in order to avoid a “not met” rating against the service standard; and

Further requirements

further requirements are those requirements necessary to achieve a “met” rating against the service standard.

More Information on Ratings

In some instances, a rating is based on the responses to more than one question. The minimum criteria listed for each question must be satisfied to avoid a “not met” rating. The further requirements listed for each question must be satisfied to achieve a “met” rating.

There is no inconsistency if a service is still able to improve performance in an area where the standard is considered to be “met”.

Similarly, a “not met” rating does not indicate that an agency has met none of the *Minimum Criteria*.

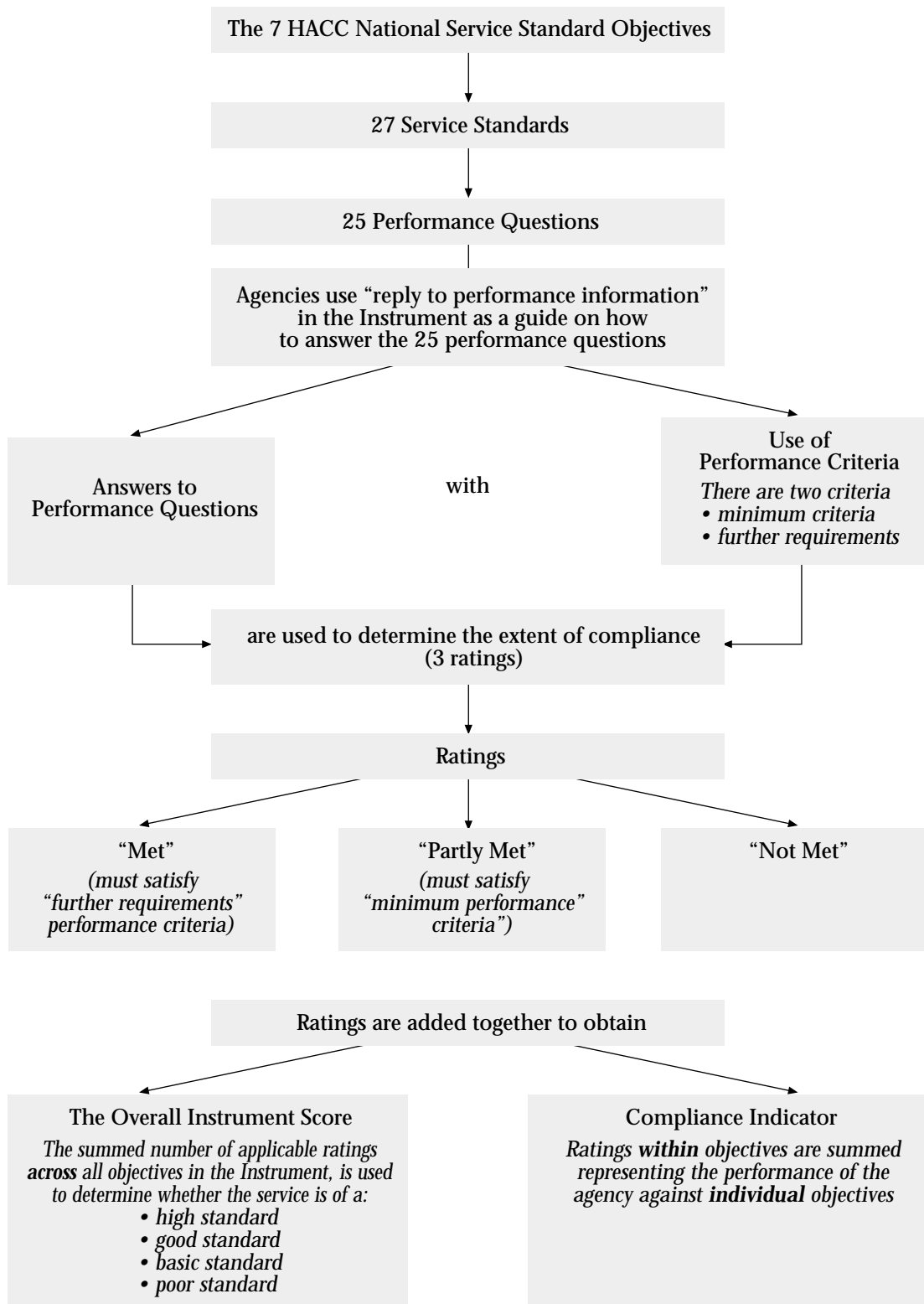
Furthermore, it is acknowledged that, as a result of the ongoing commitment of many HACCC funded agencies to quality assurance, some agencies provide service quality far exceeding that described in the Standards Instrument.

The Standards Instrument has been designed to be relevant to all HACCC funded agencies with the exception of those solely providing advocacy, information, and/or education services. In a few cases, however, one or more criteria listed as *Further Requirements*, or even as *Minimum Criteria*, will not be relevant to an agency. In a few cases, criteria may be relevant but only to a limited extent or in a modified manner.

Recognising the diversity inherent in the delivery of HACCC funded services, the *Special Considerations* segment lists areas for which it is recognised that performance requests may apply only in part, not at all, or with flexible interpretation to an agency. There may be other issues, not listed under *Special Considerations*, which affect the relevance of the performance criteria to agencies.

The extent to which the agency must satisfy the performance criteria to receive a “met”, “partly met” or “not met” rating is necessarily a matter requiring knowledge of and judgements about the individual circumstances of the agency. The Standards Instrument is not intended as a rigid prescriptive tool for agency practice. Rather it is intended as a guide for agencies to ensure that services are provided in a way that promotes quality outcomes for consumers. It should be interpreted so as to be applicable to the charter and circumstances of every agency, as varied as they may be.

In summary, the structure of the National Standards Instrument and its associated guidelines looks like this:



Calculating the Overall Performance of Agencies

The Instrument Score

The Instrument Score represents the overall performance of the agency against the HACC National Service Standards as measured in the Standards Instrument.

Categories of Overall Performance Against the Standards

<i>Instrument Score</i>	<i>Overall Performance Against the Standards</i>
17.5 to 20	High
15 to 17.4	Good
10 to 14.9	Basic
Less than 10	Poor

The Instrument Score is calculated in the following way:

- Performance against the Standards is assessed according to a rating of “met”, “partly met” or “not met”, as described previously.

As indicated in the Standards Instrument:

- a “met” rating receives a score of 2,
- a “partly met” receives a score of 1, and
- a “not met” receives a score of 0.

Individual ratings are added together to achieve a summed score with a possible range of 0 to 42.

This summed score is then divided by the number of ratings used to calculate it, that is, the number of ratings received in the Standards Instrument, and then multiplied by 10. This figure represents the Instrument Score and is the average of the ratings achieved by the agency. The Instrument Score has a possible range of 0 to 20.

For a minority of agencies, one or more Standards and their associated performance information may be inappropriate for inclusion in the appraisal process. In these cases, it may be necessary to have no score recorded in the categories of “met”, “partly met” or “not met”. If scores are simply added these agencies would lose the value of a score for that standard, in the same way as if they had scored a “not met”. The method of calculating the average rating ensures that these agencies are not unfairly penalised in this manner. Their Instrument Score is only based on **applicable** standards but allows all agencies to be compared according to a common scale, regardless of the number of standards applicable to each.

Examples of calculating the overall performance of agencies follows.

Instrument Score

Calculating the Overall Performance

Example 1.

(Met ratings = 2, Partly Met = 1, Not met = 0)

Agency A received **16 “met”** ratings, **3 “partly met”** ratings, and **2 “not met”** ratings. The number of ratings is $16 + 3 + 2 = 21$.

1. Ratings are added together to form a summed score:
 $(16 \times 2) + (3 \times 1) + (2 \times 0) = 35$
2. The summed score 35 is divided by the number of applicable ratings, in this case, 21 and is then multiplied by 10.
 $35/21 \times 10 = 16.7$
3. With an Instrument Score of 16.7, the overall performance of Agency A against the Standards is “good”.

Objective	Number Falling into Following Categories			
	Met	Partly Met	Not Met	Number Where Performance Information Not Applicable
1. Access to Services	1	1	1	
2. Information and Consultation	3			
3. Efficient and Effective Management	3	1		
4. Coordinated, Planned and Reliable Service Delivery	5			
5. Privacy, Confidentiality and Access to Personal Information	1	1		
6. Complaints and Disputes	3			
7. Advocacy			1	
Sub Totals	$16 \times 2 = 32$	$3 \times 1 = 3$	$2 \times 0 = 0$	
Total Summed Score	35			

Instrument Score

Calculating the Overall Performance

Example 2.

(Met ratings = 2, Partly met = 1, Not met = 0)

Agency B received 8 “met” ratings, 9 “partly met” ratings, and 3 “not met” ratings. One standard and its associated performance information were not applicable. The number of ratings is 8 + 9 + 3 = 20. Only applicable ratings are added together.

1. Ratings are added together to form a summed score:
 $(8 \times 2) + (9 \times 1) + (3 \times 0) = 25$
2. The summed score 25 is divided by the number of “applicable” ratings only, in this case, 20 and is then multiplied by 10.
 $25/20 \times 10 = 12.5$
3. With an Instrument Score of 12.5, the overall performance of Agency B against the Standards is “basic”.

Objective	Number Falling into Following Categories			
	Met	Partly Met	Not Met	Number Where Performance Information Not Applicable*
1. Access to Services	2		1	
2. Information and Consultation	2			
3. Efficient and Effective Management	4			1
4. Coordinated, Planned and Reliable Service Delivery		5		
5. Privacy, Confidentiality and Access to Personal Information		2		
6. Complaints and Disputes		2	1	
7. Advocacy			1	
Sub Totals	8 x 2= 16	9 x 1= 9	3 x 0= 0	
Total Summed Score	25			

* It is useful to identify the areas where performance information is not applicable to an agency even though “not applicable” ratings are excluded in calculations.

The Compliance Indicator

The Compliance Indicator represents the performance of the agency against the **individual** Objectives of the HACC National Service Standards.

The Compliance Indicator is calculated in the following way:

- Performance against the Standards is assessed according to a rating of “met”, “partly met” or “not met”.

As indicated in the Standards Instrument:

- a “met” rating receives a score of 2;
- a “partly met” receives a score of 1; and
- a “not met” receives a score of 0.

The scores for individual ratings of “met”, “partly met” and “not met” are added together **within** each Objective.

This summed score is then divided by the number of ratings used to calculate it, that is, the number of ratings received for each Objective. This figure represents the Compliance Indicator and is the average of the ratings achieved by the agency for each Objective. The Compliance Indicator has a possible range of 0 to 2. This range is used to distinguish the compliance indicator from the overall performance Instrument Score.

The number of Standards in each Objective varies. If scores were simply added across Standards within an Objective it would not be possible to compare agency performance against one Objective with performance against another. The method of dividing the summed score by the number of relevant ratings allows performance against Objectives to be compared according to a common scale.

Examples of calculating the compliance indicator are provided on the next page.

Forms to record ratings during the service appraisal process are included after the examples.

Scores on Individual Objectives

Calculating the Compliance Indicator

Example 1.

(Met Ratings = 2, Partly Met = 1, Not Met = 0)

Agency A received 1 “met” rating and 2 “partly met” ratings under Objective 1.

The number of ratings is $1 + 2 = 3$

1. Ratings are added together to form a summed score:
 $(1 \times 2) + (2 \times 1) = 4$
2. The summed score 4 is divided by the number of applicable ratings,
 in this case, 3.
 $4/3 = 1.3$

Objective	Number Falling into Following Categories			
	Met	Partly Met	Not Met	Number Where Performance Information Not Applicable
1. Access to Services	1	2		
Sub Total	$1 \times 2 = 2$	$2 \times 1 = 2$		
Total Summed Score	4			

Example 2.

Agency B received 3 “met” ratings and 1 “not met” rating for Objective 4. One standard and its associated performance information under this Objective was not applicable to Agency B. The number of ratings is $3 + 1 = 4$. Only applicable ratings are added together.

1. Ratings are added together to form a summed score:
 $(3 \times 2) + (1 \times 0) = 6$
2. The summed score 6 is divided by the number of applicable ratings, in this case, 4.
 $6/4 = 1.50$

Objective	Number Falling into Following Categories			
	Met	Partly Met	Not Met	Number Where Performance Information Not Applicable
1. Access to Services	3		1	1
Sub Total	$3 \times 2 = 6$		$1 \times 0 = 0$	
Total Summed Score	6			

Summary of Ratings

You may want to use this form during the appraisal process for recording agency ratings. The categories of “met”, “partly met” and “not met” could be ticked (✓) or alternatively, a rating number could be inserted.

Objective 1—Access to Services

How does your agency prioritise need and allocate available resources?

<i>Met</i>	<i>Partly Met</i>	<i>Not Met</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>2</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>0</i>

How can your agency demonstrate that access to services by special needs groups occurs on a non-discriminatory basis?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

How does your agency ensure that a consumer’s previous refusal of a service does not prejudice future attempts to access your agency’s services?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

Objective 2—Information and Consultation

How does your agency ensure that consumers are aware of their rights and responsibilities?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

How does your agency ensure that consumers are informed about available services?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

How does your agency ensure that consumers are informed about the basis of service provision, including any changes that may have to occur?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

Objective 3—Efficient and Effective Management

What information on the level of need in your community does your agency collect?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

How can you show that your agency builds this information into service development?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

How can your agency show that as a consequence of service evaluation, services are changed or modified?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

How can your agency show that it involves consumers’ in service management?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

<i>Met</i>	<i>Partly Met</i>	<i>Not Met</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	1	0

How can you show that your agency practises accountable management?

How does your agency ensure that staff are appropriately skilled/competent to carry out services for consumers?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

Objective 4—Coordinated, Planned and Reliable Service Delivery

How does your agency ensure that it regularly monitors consumer needs? How often does your agency conduct formal reviews of clients and how is the time for formal review determined?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

How do you inform clients and staff of the individually tailored service or care which clients should receive?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

How does your agency ensure that consumers’ cultural needs are taken into account when providing care/support?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

How does your agency ensure that the special needs of consumers with dementia, memory loss and similar disorders and their carers are taken into account?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

How does your agency ensure that the special needs of consumers with intellectual disabilities are taken into account?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

Describe the referral process used by your agency, including factors taken into consideration, and any follow up action taken by your agency.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

How does your agency cooperate with other agencies in order to meet consumer needs? Where appropriate—How is case coordination determined in your service system—how can you show that this happens?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

Objective 5—Privacy, Confidentiality and Access to Personal Information

How does your agency ensure that the release of consumer information occurs with the consent of the consumer or their advocate or legal guardian?

Met	Partly Met	Not Met
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	1	0

Does your agency enable consumers to access their personal information upon request?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

Objective 6—Complaints and Disputes

How does your agency ensure that consumers are aware of the complaints process?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

How can your agency demonstrate that consumer complaints are dealt with fairly, promptly, confidentially and without retribution?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

How can your agency demonstrate that it can offer assistance to help with the conflict about a service between a client and his/her primary carer?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

Objective 7—Advocacy

How does your agency ensure that advocates are involved in representing the rights and concerns of consumers?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Information from these pages can be transferred to the following forms:

1. Form for Recording the Overall Performance (Instrument Score) *Page 27*
2. Form for Recording Compliance Indicators (Scores on Individual Objectives) *Page 29*

The Instrument Score

Form for Recording the Overall Performance

This form should be completed at the end of the service appraisal.

This form collects information on the overall Instrument score.

Objective	Number Falling into Following Categories			
	Met	Partly Met	Not Met	Not Applicable
1. Access to Services				
2. Information and Consultation				
3. Efficient and Effective Management				
4. Coordinated, Planned and Reliable Service Delivery				
5. Privacy, Confidentiality and Access to Personal Information				
6. Complaints and Disputes				
7. Advocacy				
Sub Totals	x 2=	x 1=	x 0=	
Total Summed Score =				

Total Overall Performance

1. Number of Ratings =

2. Total Summed Score =

3. Total Summed Score ÷ Number of Applicable Ratings = Instrument score

4. Instrument Score x 10 =

The overall Instrument score should now be placed on the Agency Appraisal Summary Form.

Scores on Individual Objectives Form for Recording Compliance Indicators

This form should be completed at the end of the service appraisal. This form collects information on compliance indicators.

Information on compliance indicators should be placed on the Agency Appraisal Summary Form.

Objective	Number Falling into Following Categories							Compliance Indicator (summed score divided by ratings)
	Met	Partly Met	Not Met	Not Applicable	No. of Applicable Ratings	Summed Score		
1. Access to Services	x2=	x1=	x0=					
2. Information and Consultation	x2=	x1=	x0=					
3. Efficient and Effective Management	x2=	x1=	x0=					
4. Coordinated, Planned and Reliable Service Delivery	x2=	x1=	x0=					
5. Privacy, Confidentiality and Access to Personal Information	x2=	x1=	x0=					
6. Complaints and Disputes	x2=	x1=	x0=					
7. Advocacy	x2=	x1=	x0=					



Agency Appraisal Summary Form

Agency Appraisal Summary Form

This form consists of two parts:

Part 1. Summary of the agency's appraisal

Part 2. Action plan.

Part 1 Summary of the Agency's Appraisal

Date of appraisal Type of appraisal

Name of agency

Contact person and telephone

Facsimile/E-mail

Participants

.....

.....

The overall performance against the Home and Community Care National Service Standards falls into one of the following categories.

(Please tick the appropriate box)

High Standard

(More than 17.4)

Good Standard

(Between 17.4 and 15)

Basic Standard

(Between 14.9 and 10)

Poor Standard

(Less than 10)

List those objectives where the compliance indicators are less than 1.00

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Action Plan Completed

Yes No

Date(s) for Reviewing Action Plan Outcomes

.....

Continued over...

Continued

Date of next appraisal

.....

Comments

.....

.....

Signatures of relevant representatives from the agency and funding authority

.....

.....

Part 2 Action Plan

Please describe what your agency will do and by when if more work is needed on particular objectives.

Tasks to be Done

Time Frame

Persons to Complete Task

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Where assistance is needed to fully implement the above—please detail what this assistance is and where it could come from.

.....

.....

.....

.....



Standards Instrument



HOME AND
COMMUNITY CARE

A Joint Commonwealth and
State/Territory Program

The Home and Community Care National Standards

Instrument

Please Complete

Agency Name

Region /State

Notes

1. The next page contains a list of the questions that are contained in the Standards Instrument. You may wish to use this page as a guide while completing the Standards Instrument, to assist you in determining the breadth of information to be included in responses to each question.
2. As the HACC target group includes frail aged people, younger people and disabilities and the primary carers of both of these groups of people, the word “consumer” in the HACC National Service Standards Instrument can be taken to refer to any or all of these groups.
3. Where agency documentation provides appropriate answers against the performance information required in the Standards Instrument, you should attach these documents and refer to them in your answers. Some questions may be answered by reference to agency policy. Attach this document and indicate the relevant pages and sections. In addition, indicate how these policies operate in practice.
4. In line with principles regarding the protection of privacy and confidentiality, client records should not be individually identified in completing this Instrument.
5. It is recognised that agencies must operate within the resources made available to them by governments and this will be taken into account in monitoring the implementation of those standards.

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Commonwealth Department of Health and Family Services
Publications Approval Number 2470

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Objective 1—Access to Services1

How does your agency prioritise need and allocate available resources?

How can your agency demonstrate that access to services by special needs groups occurs on a non-discriminatory basis?

How does your agency ensure that a consumer's previous refusal of a service does not prejudice future attempts to access your agency's services?

Objective 2—Information and Consultation11

How does your agency ensure that consumers are aware of their rights and responsibilities?

How does your agency ensure that consumers are informed about available services?

How does your agency ensure that consumers are informed about the basis of service provision, including any changes that may have to occur?

Objective 3—Efficient and Effective Management21

What information on the level of need in your community does your agency collect?

How can you show that your agency builds this information into service development?

How can your agency show that as a consequence of service evaluation, services are changed or modified?

How can your agency show that it involves consumers' in service management?

How can you show that your agency practises accountable management?

How does your agency ensure that staff are appropriately skilled/competent to carry out services for consumers?

Objective 4—Coordinated, Planned and Reliable Service Delivery39

How does your agency ensure that it regularly monitors consumer needs? How often does your agency conduct formal reviews of clients and how is the time for formal review determined?

How do you inform clients and staff of the individually tailored service or care which clients should receive?

How does your agency ensure that consumers' cultural needs are taken into account when providing care/support?

How does your agency ensure that the special needs of consumers with dementia, memory loss and similar disorders and their carers are taken into account?

How does your agency ensure that the special needs of consumers with intellectual disabilities are taken into account?

Describe the referral process used by your agency, including factors taken into consideration, and any follow up action taken by your agency.

How does your agency cooperate with other agencies in order to meet consumer needs? Where appropriate—How is case coordination determined in your service system—how can you show that this happens?

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How can your agency demonstrate that it can offer assistance to help with the conflict about a service between a client and his/her primary carer?

Objective 7 — Advocacy 79

How does your agency ensure that advocates are involved in representing the rights and concerns of consumers?

Objective 1

Access to Services

To ensure that each consumer's access to a service is decided only on the basis of relative need.

Service Standards

- 1.1 Consumer Outcome:**
Formal assessment occurs for each consumer.
- 1.2 Consumer Outcome:**
Consumers are allocated available resources according to prioritised need.
- 1.3 Consumer Outcome:**
Access to services by consumers with special needs is decided on a non-discriminatory basis.
- 1.4 Consumer Outcome:**
Consumers in receipt of other services are not discriminated in receiving additional services.
- 1.5 Consumer Outcome:**
Consumers who reapply for services are assessed with needs being prioritised.

How does your agency prioritise need and allocate available resources?

Minimum Criteria

The agency should be able to demonstrate that it has assessment criteria that are clear and appropriately comprehensive for the service it provides and the circumstances under which it operates.

Assessment tools should provide the basis for determining the ongoing relative need and priority of each consumer, as appropriate to the service.

All consumers should undergo a formal assessment prior to or at commencement of service. Some agencies may legitimately not routinely conduct assessments of consumer need for all clients. Where this does not occur the agency should justify this with a description of the service provided and the process by which consumers access the service, including a description of how formal assessment information is coordinated with other agencies or relevant bodies.

Further Requirements

The reasons for refusing services to potential consumers should be documented, and should consistently comply with agency guidelines.

Agencies which refuse services to potential consumers due to resource constraints should demonstrate that waiting lists, if kept, are reviewed in order to reprioritise consumer access to services as necessary.

Response times between referral and service delivery and between initial assessment and service delivery should be appropriate to clients' needs.

Replying to the performance information

Describe the assessment tools used by your agency, attaching appropriate forms where available. Indicate (where appropriate) whether these assessment tools take into account the consumer's:

- severity of disability, including the difficulties they experience with tasks of daily living;
- the presence of dementia, memory loss, and related disorders;
- requirements for medical or nursing help;
- safety of their physical environment;
- geographical isolation;
- financial disadvantage;
- cultural background;
- social contacts; and
- the availability of a carer.

Describe the information you record about the carer's level of need.

Comment on what information you collect on:

- condition of the carer physically;
- condition of the carer psychologically;
- condition of the carer financially;
- the social support available to the carer; and
- the carer's competing commitments such as employment.

Comment on how you use your assessment criteria to prioritise consumer need and how these criteria are suitable to your agency's target group.

In describing how your agency allocates resources you should show how you go about determining differences in service delivery between consumers. This should include details about:

- the amount of service provided given the assessment outcome;
- the response time you allow between referral and service delivery or between initial assessment and service delivery depending on the clients needs;
- the criteria used to determine which consumers are refused service or put on a waiting list; and
- if applicable, how often waiting lists are reviewed in order to reprioritise consumer access to services.

How can your agency demonstrate that access to services by special needs groups occurs on a non-discriminatory basis?

Minimum Criteria

To meet this standard at the minimum level the agency should demonstrate that its services are accessible to all identifiable groups within the target population as appropriate. The agency should be able to demonstrate that it has considered and taken action to overcome barriers of access to services for special needs groups.

Bearing in mind the agency's target group, special needs groups that the agency should have considered when promoting access to services include the following:

- a) people of non-English speaking background and, where appropriate, sub-groups within the larger ethnic groups;
- b) people of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent;
- c) rurally isolated people;
- d) people with dementia; and
- e) financially disadvantaged people.

Further Requirements

Information in regard to the number of consumers with special needs accessing the service should be collected, and an attempt made to compare these numbers with the proportions of special needs groups in the community. Where special needs groups appear under-represented among the agency's consumers, it should demonstrate that it has explored the reasons for this and is attempting to address them where appropriate.

The agency should be able to demonstrate that it has links with other service providers whose target groups are those in special needs groups and that the agency cooperates with these through such processes as referral.

Special Considerations

Some HACC funded agencies may be designed to provide services only to a specific target population, making access to their services inappropriate for some consumers. In such cases, agencies should have sufficient service network links to refer consumers to agencies more appropriate to them.

Replying to the performance information

Your agency should be able to demonstrate that the needs of special needs groups are taken into account in facilitating their access to services.

Describe what action your agency has taken to facilitate access to services by the following special needs groups:

- a) non-English speaking background people and, where appropriate, sub-groups within the larger ethnic groups;
- b) people of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent;
- c) rurally isolated people;
- d) people with dementia; and
- e) financially disadvantaged people.

If you are able to compare the profile of your client base with the profile of persons likely to be in need of assistance in the community (through the use of demographic profiles) you should show how these profiles match for these groups.

Other agencies in your region may provide services to special needs groups. If so, indicate how you coordinate with them in the delivery of services to these groups, for example, through referral or case coordination. In addition, if your agency does not target the special groups listed here please provide an explanation of why this is not done.

How does your agency ensure that a consumer's previous refusal of a service does not prejudice future attempts to access your agency's services?

Minimum Criteria

Where a consumer declines an offer of service, or the agency refuses a service to a potential consumer, information should be provided to that person about when, and under what circumstances, the person could reapply for service.

Information should be provided to consumers about their right to refuse a service.

The agency should have clear guidelines for ensuring that consumers understand the reason for refusal of a service.

Further Requirements

The agency should have written policies and procedures to ensure that a consumer's refusal of a service does not affect their future access.

Where an agency keeps a waiting list for services, it should adequately inform clients of how this process works.

Special Considerations

For some HACC funded agencies the issue of previous refusal of a service may be of limited relevance; for example, where services are generally only provided once or where another agency determines eligibility for service. For these agencies, the criteria outlined above should only be applied as far as is appropriate and assessment should be made accordingly. Where none of the listed criteria and further requirements are appropriate, no rating should be given against this question.

Replying to the performance information

To answer this question show how agency policy supports the right of consumers to refuse a service and describe how this is reflected in practice, including how your agency reassures consumers they can come back to the agency after they have refused or ended a service.

Show how your agency reassures consumers they can come back to the agency after your agency has refused them a service.

Describe the procedures your agency has in place to ensure that consumers understand the reason for refusal of a service by your agency.

Where appropriate, indicate what practises occur to inform clients of waiting list procedures after immediate delivery of a service has been refused.

Objective 2

Information and Consultation

To ensure that each consumer is informed about his or her rights and responsibilities and the services available, and consulted about any changes required.

Service Standards

- 2.1 Consumer Outcome:**
Consumers are aware of their rights and responsibilities.
- 2.2 Consumer Outcome:**
Consumers are aware of services available.
- 2.3 Consumer Outcome:**
Consumers are informed of the basis of service provision, including changes that may occur.

How does your agency ensure that consumers are aware of their rights and responsibilities?

Minimum Criteria

The agency should explain the means by which it ensures that consumers are made aware of their rights and responsibilities. It is expected that, to meet this standard at its minimal level, the agency will both provide the consumer with a written copy of their rights and responsibilities, and explain these to the consumer verbally.

The agency should demonstrate that it provides information about privacy and confidentiality procedures in writing to consumers, and that it explains these procedures to consumers at the time of their commencement with the service.

The agency should demonstrate that it provides information to consumers at the time service delivery begins about what an advocate is, how to obtain one, and their right to use one.

Further Requirements

The agency should periodically remind consumers of their rights and responsibilities.

The agency should be able to demonstrate that staff and volunteers are also made aware of issues relating to consumer rights and responsibilities.

When explaining rights and responsibilities to consumers, agencies should be sensitive to any special linguistic, cultural, physical or intellectual requirements.

Special Considerations

For the consumers of some agencies' services, written versions of rights and responsibilities may be inappropriate, for example where clients are unable to read. Where standard written information is not appropriate to the consumer the agency should be able to demonstrate that it makes provision to inform these consumers about their rights and responsibilities.

Replying to the performance information

Outline the procedures your agency has in place to ensure that consumers, including carers, are aware, and are reminded, of their rights and responsibilities including privacy and confidentiality and their right to an advocate of their choice.

Where your agency has a policy relating to this standard indicate what this is and show how this is implemented in agency practises.

Where available, attach examples of fliers or brochures your agency uses to inform clients of their rights.

Describe how your agency's staff and volunteers are made aware of issues relating to consumer rights and responsibilities.

Indicate how your agency is sensitive to any special linguistic, cultural, physical or intellectual requirements of consumers when explaining rights and responsibilities. Give examples of how your agency seeks to overcome the difficulties that some clients may have in hearing about or understanding their rights.

How does your agency ensure that consumers are informed about available services?

Minimum Criteria

Consumers should be made aware of what services are available from the agency either in writing or through verbal explanation.

How much information is provided to consumers about services from other agencies may depend upon the needs of consumers, however the agency should be equipped to provide this information when necessary. To this end, the agency should be aware of other support services available in the region.

Further Requirements

The agency should make provision for consumers to be aware of services available from other agencies.

The agency should keep consumers informed of services available by regular reminders.

Staff should be aware of the service choices available for consumers.

Replying to the performance information

Detail the means by which your agency provides information to consumers about the services available from your agency and, where relevant, from other agencies. Where available, attach agency brochures or information booklets.

Describe how your agency regularly reminds consumers of what services are available and how often this is done.

Describe how your agency keeps relevant staff and volunteers abreast of the service options available to consumers and the services offered by other agencies.

How does your agency ensure that consumers are informed about the basis of service provision, including any changes that may have to occur?

Minimum Criteria

The agency should clearly advise all consumers, upon commencement, how it has reached its decision about what services the agency will provide to them and for how long.

The agency should inform consumers about the circumstances in which a service may no longer be provided or may need to change.

The agency should clearly advise all consumers of their right to appeal a service provision decision.

The agency should clearly discuss any changes to service provision with consumers, and explain, in writing where appropriate, the changes to be made and the reasons for them.

The agency should advise its consumers of its fee system and how charges, if any, will be applied to the consumer.

Further Requirements

The agency should indicate that consumers were involved in making decisions about the service provided to them.

The agency should demonstrate that when assessing consumers' needs, relevant information is provided to consumers in regard to the service options which they may choose from. This should include presenting consumers with options in relation to service delivery, not only in regard to the types of services available but the choice of staff and choice of service delivery times.

Where an agency ends a service to a consumer it should inform consumers of any available alternative services and inform consumers of the circumstances in which the agency may again be able to assist him or her.

Replying to the performance information

Indicate the way in which your agency informs clients of how decisions were made about the service which is provided to them. This should relate to decisions about the types of services they will receive and the length of time they will be receiving them.

Include, where applicable, details of how clients are informed of the fees and charges which your agency applies.

Describe how you allow consumers to have a voice in determining their service provision.

Indicate how you accommodate consumer choice of staff and service strategies within the constraints of available resources.

Detail the procedures your agency follows when a change is made to the service being provided to a consumer, for instance, whether you give notice in writing of the proposed reduction or end of a service with an accompanying explanation.

Comment on whether you inform consumers of the option for appeal before the service is changed or ended, whether you inform consumers of any available alternative services, or whether you inform consumers whose service is due to cease of the circumstances in which your agency may again be able to assist him or her.

Describe how your agency responds to a request from a consumer to make a change to the service they receive. Detail the processes that occur and give an estimate of how quickly your agency is able to respond to such requests.

Objective 3

Efficient and Effective Management

To ensure that consumers receive the benefit of well-planned, efficient and accountable management.

Service Standards

3.1 Consumer Outcome:

Consumers receive appropriate services provided through the processes of ongoing planning, monitoring and evaluation of services.

3.2 Consumer Outcome:

Consumers receive services from agencies that adhere to accountable management practises.

3.3 Consumer Outcome:

Consumers receive services from appropriately skilled staff.

What information on the level of need in your community does your agency collect?

How can you show that your agency builds this information into service development?

How can your agency show that as a consequence of service evaluation, services are changed or modified?

Minimum Criteria

The agency should make an assessment of need in the community it is intended to service. This may include investigation of the unmet need in the community and estimation of future need but should, at the very least involve a study of the characteristics of those currently accessing its services, those on waiting lists and those being turned away from the service.

The agency should regularly review this information and evaluate its services in relation to this information. This may take place in planning workshops and staff meetings from which minutes may be available.

The agency should change or modify services as a result of service evaluation. This may involve following up on decisions made at staff and planning meetings.

The agency should have a review system to measure the effectiveness of service changes made as a consequence of service evaluation.

Further Requirements

The agency should consult with consumers through forums, surveys or other methods of receiving information about consumer need, in this way ensuring that the services it provides are relevant and appropriate.

The agency's assessment of need in the community it is intended to service should include consideration of special needs groups: people of non-English speaking background; people of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent; rurally isolated people; people with dementia; and financially disadvantaged people.



Special Considerations

The ability of an agency to gain information on the level of need in the community will depend upon factors such as the resources available to it and the strength of its service network. What can be expected from an agency in relation to this standard will vary according to these factors but, at a minimum, all agencies should be able to demonstrate that they have been resourceful in obtaining this information within their means.

Replying to the performance information

For this standard you should provide detail on what information on the level of need in your community your agency collects. This may include how you evaluate the characteristics and needs of consumers, including carers. It may include how your agency estimates the amount of unmet need in your region, taking into account services provided by other agencies in the region. It may also include how your agency makes use of the information gathered in the process of assessment, reassessment, through consumer surveys, or through analysis of information on those to whom you have refused service.

If your agency does not undertake analysis of the level of need for services in the community please explain why this is so.



Replying to the performance information

This standard asks that you demonstrate how your agency builds information on community need into service development plans. Provide detail on how information on consumer need is used to monitor service provision, distribution and service gaps. You may wish to detail how your agency estimates future need for its services.

Minutes from meetings, or planning workshops in which these issues were discussed may be an information source used to answer this question.



Replying to the performance information

To answer this question, give examples of new or modified projects or shifts in resources which were made in response to a need identified during service evaluation. For example, if you identified a group growing in need, indicate what implications this had for service delivery. You may also wish to outline the plans your agency has for adapting to the future needs of consumers.

Provide detail on the review system your agency uses to measure the effectiveness of service changes.

If your agency has identified a community need but has been unable to respond to it please explain why this is so.

How can your agency show that it involves consumers in service management?

Minimum Criteria

The agency should demonstrate that it actively encourages the involvement of consumers in agency management and provide details of how this is done. For example, consumer advisory groups or participation on the management board.

Further Requirements

The extent of consumer involvement in management may depend upon many factors, such as the level of disability of the consumers. For very disabled consumers, involvement in agency management may only be practically addressed through consumer surveys. The agency should demonstrate that it has considered consumers' circumstances when seeking their involvement in service management.

Replying to the performance information

Consumer participation in planning and decision making may occur in a number of ways. For example, by having consumer representation on management committees, by routinely asking consumers for feedback, verbally or in writing, about the service and recognising this input in service development, or by publishing management plans and inviting consumers to comment or participate. This standard asks that you describe how consumer participation occurs in your agency.

How does your agency take into account such factors as consumer disability, isolation or communication difficulties in seeking their involvement in service management?

How can you show that your agency practises accountable management?

Minimum Criteria

This question is directed at aspects of organisational level management rather than at the level of management of services to individual clients. At the broadest level, the agency should show how it monitors its activities and evaluates whether it is meeting its organisational objectives, including those set out in the Funding and Service Agreement.

The agency should demonstrate that it follows appropriate financial management/accounting procedures and maintains appropriate records.

The agency should demonstrate that it complies with relevant State/Territory and Commonwealth award and legislative requirements, including those related to the premises occupied by the agency (building access and safety issues and leasing requirements).

The agency should demonstrate that it has developed comprehensive policies to guide decision making and service delivery practises within the agency, and that these are adequately conveyed to staff.

The agency should demonstrate that it clearly conveys the lines of responsibility and accountability to all staff, including volunteers.

Further Requirements

The agency should show how it monitors the quality of services purchased by the agency from a third party.

Special Considerations

In circumstances where financial management/accounting procedures and other aspects of service management are compiled at another branch of the organisation, the agency should provide detail of the information it sends on.

Replying to the performance information

At the broadest level, show how your agency monitors its activities and evaluates whether it is meeting its organisational objectives, including those set out in your Funding and Service Agreement.

Some of the management policies and practises which you may wish to detail (if they have not been covered elsewhere) include:

- how your agency deals with fees, means testing, donations;
- how you inform the community and government authorities of the operation of the agency including the services which you provide;
- details of compliance with the relevant State/Territory and Commonwealth award and legislative requirements;
- how your agency ensures that subcontractors enlisted by your agency provide quality services to consumers;
- how your agency informs staff of their roles, the administration of the agency and accountability for their work;
- how your agency makes sure that information about positions of authority within the agency is publicly available and provided to consumers;
- where relevant, how your management committee is selected and operates;
- how your agency ensures that premises occupied by it are of an appropriate standard (for example, facilitates access for people with disabilities, meets State regulations and leasing requirements).

Documentation which may be usefully cited to reply to this standard include: your Funding and Service Agreement and records indicating how this is being met; financial reports; annual reports; where applicable, licences and other legal requirements such as those relating to Occupational Health and Safety; and outcomes of other reviews or accreditation processes your agency may have undertaken.

How does your agency ensure that staff are appropriately skilled/competent to carry out services for consumers?

Minimum Criteria

The agency should have procedures in place to ensure that staff with appropriate skills are recruited. Staff should be selected with careful thought to the tasks they must perform and the clients they serve.

The safety and security of consumers should be upheld by adequate selection and training procedures, for example: police checks; character references; and training in health and safety issues.

The agency should maintain the skills and competence of its staff by facilitating training.

Further Requirements

The agency should consider the requirements of special needs groups when selecting staff, for example, by obtaining staff with the ability to speak a second language or staff with experience working with those with dementia.

The agency should ensure ongoing skill development of staff, for example through training needs assessments and provision for study leave.

The agency should demonstrate that it has strategies in place to ensure that staff:

- a) remain abreast of current issues in service delivery, for example, infection control, occupational health and safety;
- b) are aware of issues relevant to non-English speaking background people, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders, rurally isolated people, and financially disadvantaged people;
- c) are trained in dealing with people with dementia, memory loss and similar disorders; and
- d) are aware of their responsibilities in regard to client rights.

Where volunteers are active in service delivery, the agency should be able to show that training is available to volunteers which is appropriate to the tasks they undertake.

Replying to the performance information

Given the services which your agency provides and the tasks which your staff undertake in relation to those services, describe how your agency ensures that staff are adequately skilled or competent.

Provide details on how your selection procedures and your staffing profile are tailored to the services your agency provides and the type of clientele you service. Where available, provide duty statements and selection criteria for staff which are appropriate to the roles they must perform and evidence that staff are recruited in accordance with these.

Comment on how your agency undertakes analysis of the training needs of staff.

Provide detail on what training is made available, with comment on how you ensure that staff:

- a) remain abreast of current issues in service delivery, for example, infection control, occupational health and safety;
- b) are aware of issues relevant to non-English speaking background people, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders, rurally isolated people, and financially disadvantaged people;
- c) are trained in dealing with people with dementia, memory loss and similar disorders; and
- d) are aware of their responsibilities in regard to client rights.

Describe how training is made accessible to staff.

Indicate what proportion of your staff have received training and how regularly staff knowledge and skills are updated in this way.

If your agency makes use of volunteers, describe how the training needs of this group are met.

Objective 4

Coordinated, Planned and Reliable Service Delivery

To ensure that each consumer receives coordinated services that are planned, reliable and meet his or her specific ongoing needs.

Service Standards

- 4.1 Consumer Outcome:**
Each consumer receives ongoing assessment (formal and informal) that takes all support needs into account.
- 4.2 Consumer Outcome:**
Each consumer has a service delivery/care plan which is tailored to individual need and outlines the service he or she can expect to receive.
- 4.3 Consumer Outcome:**
Consumers cultural needs are addressed.
- 4.4 Consumer Outcome:**
The needs of consumers with intellectual difficulties, including dementia, memory loss and similar disorders, and intellectual disabilities are addressed.
- 4.5 Consumer Outcome:**
Consumers receive services which include appropriate coordination and referral processes.

How does your agency ensure that it regularly monitors consumer needs? How often does your agency conduct formal reviews of clients and how is the time for formal review determined?

Minimum Criteria

The agency should demonstrate that the interval between reassessments is appropriate to the client group and that a substantial proportion, if not all clients, are reassessed within the determined period.

The agency should be able to justify why their reassessment interval is deemed appropriate.

The comprehensiveness of the reassessment process should be appropriate to the potential needs of clients.

The agency should demonstrate that any information it gains through either formal or informal reassessment is used to ensure that the services it provides to consumers continue to be appropriate.

Changing care needs of consumers should be reflected in amended service delivery or care plans.

The management of client information should be such that staff and, where appropriate, volunteers are kept informed of changes to client service delivery or care plans.

Further Requirements

The agency should also demonstrate that it takes advantage of its contact with clients to informally reassess or monitor their needs.

Special Considerations

Where an agency largely relies on informal reviews and it cannot demonstrate that it has a determined process for dealing with this information appropriately it should receive a “not met” rating.

Where assessment and reassessment are conducted by another agency designated as responsible for case management, the agency should be able to demonstrate that it is appropriately informed of changes in the consumer’s needs.

Replying to the performance information

Describe the processes, both formal and informal, that your agency has in place to monitor consumer needs. Show how results of reassessment are incorporated into service delivery or care plans. Outline the procedures your agency uses to take action on reassessments when changes are required to service delivery or care plans. For instance, how is this information made available to the relevant staff, and how are the changes monitored to ensure they are appropriate for the consumer.

In commenting on how your agency ensures that it regularly monitors consumer needs, detail how your agency decides on the appropriate length of time between formal reassessments. Give an indication of how many of your clients are formally reassessed in your determined reassessment interval. Comment on how fully the support needs of the client are assessed in this process.

Apart from formal reassessments, how does your agency ensure that the needs of consumers are regularly heard and how your agency can effect service delivery? Comment on how frequently clients are informally reassessed. If informal reassessment forms a substantial component of assessment in your agency, how does your agency ensure that staff understand the processes by which this information informs service delivery and their role in participating in this.

Similarly, for formal reassessment, how does your agency ensure that staff understand the reassessment policy and associated procedures. If your agency does not undertake formal reassessment of clients please indicate why and outline how the changing needs of clients are taken into account.

How do you inform clients and staff of the individually tailored service or care which clients should receive?

Minimum Criteria

The agency should deliver services to consumers that are determined by the consumer's needs and, where possible, preferences.

Both consumers and staff should be kept informed of changes to service delivery or care plans.

The agency should provide service delivery/care plans to all consumers or the agency should be able to give reasonable account for those clients who did not have one.

Further Requirements

The agency should thoroughly discuss service delivery or care plans with consumers before implementation, and how consumers have been given options, within service constraints, from which to choose.

Consumer service delivery/care plans should be prepared in a timely manner.

Special Considerations

Some agencies may not provide services that require a service delivery plan or care plan, for example, those providing home maintenance and modification. These agencies should inform consumers of the work performed through other means such as job sheets or invoices.

Where agencies do not have a service delivery/care plan or equivalent, they should be able to demonstrate why it is reasonable that this has not been done. For instance, care plans may not have been drawn up for clients serviced in a crisis situation, or another agency may be case managing the client.

For some services which are delivered on a one-off or crisis basis, a written agreement may not be practical. In these circumstances, verbal agreements may be sufficient, but these should also provide information to consumers about the service which they can expect to receive, and the basis upon which it is delivered.

Replying to the performance information

Service delivery or care plans should be clearly outlined to consumers. Detail how your agency provides this information to consumers.

Describe the process in which service delivery or care plans are discussed with consumers before implementation, and how consumers are given options, within service constraints, from which to choose.

Describe how staff are kept informed of the changing service needs of clients.

What proportion of clients currently receiving your services have an individually tailored and negotiated plan?

On commencing with your service, how soon are consumers informed of their service delivery/care plan?

In circumstances where you feel that it is not appropriate for your agency to have a formal service delivery or care plan with its clients, for example, because of the transient nature of client contact, these circumstances should be explained.

How does your agency ensure that consumers' cultural needs are taken into account when providing care/support?

Minimum Criteria

The agency should provide evidence that it has specific processes and practises in place which will ensure that consumers' cultural, linguistic and religious needs are addressed. For example, information available in languages other than English, use of interpreters, and staff training in cultural issues.

The agency should have procedures in place for indicating to staff what the individual client's needs and preferences are in relation to their cultural background. For instance, this may be indicated in the client's care plan.

The agency's services should be structured in such a way as to promote access to services by special needs groups.

The agency should make provision to allow relevant special needs groups to understand their rights and responsibilities, including their right to an advocate, and their rights in relation to privacy and confidentiality.

The agency should make provision to allow relevant special needs groups to be aware of other services available. Information about the complaints process should also be accessible to consumers of non-English speaking background.

Further Requirements

The agency should be able to demonstrate that it actively encourages the participation of consumers of non-English speaking backgrounds or who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. This may involve such measures as promoting the voice of these consumers in how their services are delivered or developed.

Special Considerations

If the agency does not provide services tailored to certain cultural groups it should indicate why this is not done or how it coordinates with other agencies that target these groups.

Replying to the performance information

Describe the procedures your agency has in place for identifying the special cultural needs of consumers.

Describe how your agency takes into account cultural needs, commenting on:

- a) information available in languages other than English;
- b) use of interpreters;
- c) staff training in cultural issues;
- d) you may also like to include specific examples of how care plans have been designed in consultation with clients to ensure that their cultural needs have been addressed in the provision of care/support.

Show how your agency makes provision to allow relevant special needs groups to understand their rights and responsibilities, including their right to an advocate and their rights in relation to privacy and confidentiality.

Show how your agency makes provision to allow relevant special needs groups to be aware of other services available.

Show how your agency makes provision for relevant special needs groups to be informed about the complaints process.

Indicate how your agency informs staff of the individual client's needs and preferences are in relation to their cultural background.

How does your agency promote the participation of consumers of non-English speaking backgrounds or who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. For example, how is their participation in the development of service delivery/care plans encouraged, or more broadly, how is their participation in service development and management encouraged.

If your agency does not provide services tailored to certain cultural groups, indicate why this is not done or how you coordinate with other agencies that target these groups.

How does your agency ensure that the special needs of consumers with dementia, memory loss and similar disorders and their carers are taken into account?

Minimum Criteria

People with dementia and those with related disorders have additional needs which agencies should take into account. At a minimal level this should be reflected in the development of care plans which recognise the individual circumstances and background of this person. Where appropriate, physical environments should be conducive to maintaining independence and quality of life and services should be appropriately modified to take into account their spiritual, emotional, social, cultural, physical, intellectual and psychological needs.

Agencies with clients with dementia and similar disorders should have protocols in place to identify an appropriate person to act as an advocate for the person with dementia. Where possible, this person should be the client's choice and the client's consent to share information with this person should be obtained. This key person should be consulted in the development of care plans and kept informed of service provision arrangements and changes that occur to this.

Further Requirements

Staff and, where appropriate, volunteers should receive training and information about the additional needs of this group of consumers.

Staff should be aware of the protocols the agency follows to refer people suspected of having dementia for appropriate assessment.

The agency should be able to show that it responds to the additional stress placed on carers of people with dementia and similar disorders. It should be able to show that carers of those with dementia or similar illness are informed of the additional care options available to them, including respite and local support groups. In addition, the needs of carers should be taken into account when planning services for the person with dementia.

Special Considerations

This question may not be appropriate to agencies providing services to the young disabled. In this case it is not necessary for the agency to provide information against this question.

Replying to the performance information

Describe how your agency takes into account the additional needs of clients with dementia, memory loss and similar disorders and their carers, including, where appropriate, descriptions of special protocols or procedures that you have in place for this group.

Comment on the how the additional needs of this group are taken into account in the development of care plans.

What steps are taken to identify advocates or persons known and trusted by the person with dementia or similar illness and how this person or persons are used in the ongoing process of care planning and delivery.

Describe the ways in which your staff and volunteers are informed of the additional needs of this group of consumers and how their knowledge and skills are kept up to date in this regard. Among the protocols you should describe are those which staff use to refer people suspected of having dementia for appropriate assessment.

Provide details of how the carers of those with dementia or similar illness are informed of the additional care options available to them, including respite and local support groups and describe how the needs of carers are taken into account when planning services for the person with dementia.

How does your agency ensure that the special needs of consumers with intellectual disabilities are taken into account?

Minimum Criteria

The special needs of people with intellectual disabilities should be reflected in the services provided to them. Services should be tailored in such a way as to satisfy the individual needs and personal goals of the person with an intellectual disability.

Support should be flexible to meet the changing needs of consumers with an intellectual disability.

Service delivery/care plans for meeting such goals and needs should be developed in consultation with the consumer. Consumers should be encouraged to participate as fully as possible in decisions and choices relating to the services they receive. This choice should be facilitated in the ongoing course of service provision.

The role of key persons including advocates, families, carers or others should be recognised by agencies. The agency should facilitate the involvement of such persons where it is the wish of the consumer.

Further Requirements

The agency should encourage and support access to other services to meet the needs of consumers with an intellectual disability. Information and support should be offered to access mainstream services and other specialist services as appropriate.

Staff and, where appropriate, volunteers should be aware of relevant community and mainstream services.

Where possible, staff should be matched to individual consumers to best meet the consumer's needs.

Special Considerations

This question is of most relevance to agencies providing services to the young disabled. It is not necessary for agencies providing services to older persons to provide information against this question if none of their clients have an intellectual disability.

Replying to the performance information

Describe how your agency takes into account the individual needs and goals of consumers with an intellectual disability in the development and delivery of services. Describe the process of consumer consultation in the development of service delivery/care plans.

How does this process allow for changing consumer needs and individual consumer choice and decision-making? What flexibility in service delivery exists to accommodate for such changing needs and choices?

What steps are taken to identify and involve advocates, family, carers or other key persons in the ongoing process of care planning and delivery?

Describe the ways in which your staff and volunteers are informed of the community and mainstream services available to consumers with an intellectual disability.

Provide details of how consumers with intellectual disabilities are informed of and supported in their use of other services available to them in the community.

Describe the referral process used by your agency, including factors taken into consideration, and any follow up action taken by your agency.

How does your agency cooperate with other agencies in order to meet consumer needs? Where appropriate – how is case coordination determined in your service system and how can you show that this happens?

Minimum Criteria

The agency should show that consumers are involved in, and informed of the referral process. Client preferences and care needs should be the principle factors taken into consideration when making referrals.

Agencies should undertake coordinated service delivery at the individual level. This may be demonstrated by:

- a) comprehensive assessments, which take into account all support needs resulting in referrals to other agencies where appropriate;
- b) maintenance of a comprehensive list of other agencies in the area, which is regularly updated in regard to coordinators' names and service activities, to ensure the appropriateness of referrals made;
- c) demonstration of a cooperative approach to assessment by utilising assessments made by other agencies, or by carrying out joint assessments with other agencies; and
- d) demonstration that the agency takes steps where multiple agencies are involved to identify the agency responsible for case management.

Further Requirements

Follow up for both clients referred to the agency and clients referred on to other agencies should occur in a timely manner.

Assessment or reassessment should occur in such a way that the agency can identify client need and eligibility for HACC services even where the agency itself may not be able to assist.

The agency should inform other agencies of the services which it provides, and take steps to obtain information and feedback from other agencies.

The agency should demonstrate that it works with other agencies to coordinate service delivery at the regional level by participation in activities such as regional HACC coordination meetings.

Special Considerations

Some aspects of this standard may not be relevant to agencies that provide services to consumers based on the referral of another agency or body and who do not undertake their own comprehensive assessments.

Replying to the performance information

In the process of assessment, reassessment, or informal reassessment your agency may identify client needs which the agency itself cannot fulfil. With the clients permission, HACC funded agencies should coordinate with other agencies in meeting the service needs of clients.

Describe the referral process used in your agency, including how consumers are involved and informed of this process. Where available, refer to agency policy and demonstrate how this is translated into agency procedure by providing examples of referral forms and detailing how these are used.

Outline how client preferences are taken into account in the referral process. For instance, how your agency deals with cases in which clients do not want involvement from another specific agency.

Detail the factors that your agency takes into account when considering referral of clients. These should include how you decide on their eligibility for services, whether you make an assessment of their relative need, and how you assess the appropriateness to the client of your services in relation to other available services.

Provide detail on what information you keep on other agencies that would be appropriate for client referral.

Outline the processes followed by agency staff in following up on referrals. These may include descriptions of established procedures you have for linking with and referring to other agencies and procedures for keeping in touch with clients during these processes. If they are established, how does your agency link with and participate in agency/service provider networks. Describe the documentation your agency keeps on responses to referrals, including referrals from other agencies and referrals from your own agency to others.

Comment on the time taken between referral of clients from other agencies until assessment and service delivery in your agency.



Replying to the performance information

If there is more than one agency providing care to your clients, describe how these services are coordinated. How is case management decided? How are the assessments and care plans of other agencies taken into account and responsibility for service delivery made clear to all parties?

If your agency needs to reduce or end a service, does consultation with other relevant agencies occur before the service is reduced or ended? Where further referral is necessary are all agencies informed?

Objective 5

Privacy, Confidentiality and Access to Personal Information

To ensure that each consumer's rights to privacy and confidentiality are respected, and he or she has access to personal information held by the agency.

Service Standards

- 5.1 Consumer Outcome:**
Consumers are informed of the privacy and confidentiality procedures and understand their rights in relation to these procedures.
- 5.2 Consumer Outcome:**
The release of consumer information occurs with the consent of the consumer or their advocate or legal guardian.
- 5.3 Consumer Outcome:**
Consumers are able to gain access to their personal information.

How does your agency ensure that the release of consumer information occurs with the consent of the consumer or their advocate or legal guardian?

Minimum Criteria

The release of information about clients to other agencies should only occur with their consent or, where relevant, the consent of their advocate or legal guardian. The agency should demonstrate that it has procedures in place to ensure that the consumer's agreement is gained before information about that person is passed on to another agency or person.

Further Requirements

The agency should have obtained written consent (for example, by having clients sign a confidentiality release form) or, if more appropriate, the agency should have obtained verbal consent at the time a referral or where exchange of information is being considered.

Where an agency has consumers sign confidentiality release forms, at the time of their assessment, the agency should also indicate that consumers are informed of who information will be released to—on the basis of these forms.

The agency should inform consumers of their right to withdraw consent to release personal information.

Special Considerations

Some agencies may not be routinely involved in the exchange of client information with other agencies. In such circumstances, signed confidentiality release forms may not be appropriate.

For some agencies it may be necessary to release information about a consumer in response to an emergency situation. Where there is the potential for this to occur, the agency should have made provision to release information with the consumer's prior consent.

Replying to the performance information

Please state whether it is ever necessary for your agency to pass on personal information to another agency or person about consumers, for example, when making referrals. If this is the case, how do you ensure that consumers agree that the agency may pass on information about them in each circumstance?

What are the procedures that your agency follows governing the exchange of information with other agencies?

Provide detail on the number of consumers who have signed confidentiality release forms expressed as a percentage of the number of consumers for whom personal information was released.

What provisions are made for the release of consumer information in the case of an emergency?

What provisions are made for the release of consumer information in cases where consumers are unable to sign.

If your agency gains the consent of consumers to release information, how do you inform them and give them a choice of who this information is going to.

Does your agency enable consumers to access their personal information upon request?

Minimum Criteria

Where the agency holds client records it should demonstrate that it has a policy on granting access to this personal information by consumers, and that consumers are clearly advised of this.

The agency should demonstrate that it has procedures in place to determine whether a person is an appropriately authorised representative of a consumer and should be granted access to that consumer's records.

Further Requirements

The agency should inform consumers of the types of personal records kept by the agency and of the legal responsibility of the agency to safeguard this information.

Replying to the performance information

Outline or cite your agency's policy in relation to allowing consumers access to their personal information.

Describe how your agency informs clients of what information your agency holds about them and their right to access this information.

Describe the circumstances in which a request for information would be denied.

If your agency does not have a formal policy, the nature of the records kept by your agency should be described.

Objective 6

Complaints and Disputes

To ensure that each consumer has access to fair and equitable procedures for dealing with complaints and disputes.

Service Standards

- 6.1 Consumer Outcome:**
Consumers are aware of the complaints process.
- 6.2 Consumer Outcome:**
Each consumer's complaint about a service, or access to a service is dealt with fairly, promptly, confidentially and without retribution.
- 6.3 Consumer Outcome:**
Services are modified as a result of 'upheld' complaints.
- 6.4 Consumer Outcome:**
Each consumer receives assistance, if requested, to help with the resolution of conflict about a service that arises between the frail elderly person or younger person with a disability and his/her carer.

How does your agency ensure that consumers are aware of the complaints process?

Minimum Criteria

The agency should demonstrate that it provides information about the complaints process to consumers, and that it explains these procedures to consumers at the time of their commencement with the service. Such information should include details of who to contact in the agency and what position of authority they hold.

Further Requirements

The consumer should be made aware of how they can express their informal concerns to the agency about the service they received.

The agency should demonstrate that it takes some action to periodically remind all consumers of these procedures.

The agency should inform consumers of the external bodies within the State or Territory to whom complaints can be taken.

Replying to the performance information

In detailing how your agency ensures that consumers are made aware of the complaints process, attach relevant handouts and cite relevant policy documents or client handbooks where appropriate.

Describe how your agency informs consumers of your agency's internal processes for handling complaints including which person in the agency they can approach and what position of authority that person holds.

Discuss the means by which your agency ensures that consumers are aware of methods for informally having their concerns resolved.

How often does your agency remind consumers of your complaints process?

Describe how your agency informs consumers of the external processes for handling complaints available within the State or Territory.

How can your agency demonstrate that consumer complaints are dealt with fairly, promptly, confidentially and without retribution?

Minimum Criteria

To meet this standard at a minimal level the agency should demonstrate that it has a complaints process which is designed to be fair and enable a timely response, (for example, the person affected by a decision should be informed of all facts against him or her and given an opportunity to put his or her case), the decision maker should act fairly and without bias, and the decision making process should occur within a specified time frame.

The agency should have processes for ensuring confidentiality and non-discriminatory treatment of consumers who make a complaint.

Further Requirements

The agency should be able to outline the process by which 'informal complaints' or concerns are dealt with, again demonstrating that it is fair, timely, treated confidentially and does not result in discriminatory treatment of the client involved.

Staff should be aware of both the formal and informal procedures for dealing with consumer complaints and should receive training in resolving complaints and disputes.

Replying to the performance information

Describe your agency's complaints policy and process. This description of your complaints policy and process should indicate that your agency's complaints process is fair. For instance, the person affected by a decision should be fully informed of all facts against him or her; a person affected by a decision should be given an opportunity to put his or her case; and the decision maker should act fairly and without bias.

Processes for ensuring confidentiality and continued non-discriminatory treatment should be explained.

Give an indication of how quickly your agency acts on complaints which it receives.

Staff training in dealing with complaints should be detailed.

Give examples of how your agency goes about the resolution of less formally stated concerns expressed by consumers.

How can your agency demonstrate that it can offer assistance to help with the conflict about a service between a client and his/her primary carer?

The term 'carer' refers to the primary carer of a frail elderly person or a younger person with a disability. Service providers have a responsibility to mediate and attempt to negotiate a solution if conflict about a service arises between the carer and the frail elderly person or younger person with a disability. For example, the primary carer may wish to have some hours of respite care in which the person they care for attends centre day care. The person being cared for may not wish to do this.

Minimum Criteria

While some agencies may not have formal policies relating to this issue, the agency should be able to demonstrate that it has a clear and appropriate way of dealing with such situations. In general:

- a) agencies should encourage early, open discussion of any potential difficulties;
- b) the use of advocates should also be encouraged, preferably at an early stage. The agency should provide advice to this effect; and
- c) referrals to advocacy or counselling services should be arranged if requested.

Staff should be aware of the policies and procedures relevant to conflict about a service arising between the carer and the frail elderly person or younger person with a disability.

Further Requirements

The agency should be able to demonstrate that it is aware of the special needs of some groups in relation to this standard, for example, consumers with dementia and their carers.

Replying to the performance information

Provide detail of your agency's policies and procedures with regard to dealing with situations of conflict about a service between a frail elderly person or younger person with a disability and their carer.

Outline the circumstances under which your agency would offer assistance in a conflict between a consumer and his or her primary carer.

Outline what type of action your agency might take when a conflict about a service arises (for example, referral to or provision of mediation/conflict resolution services or support services, or information on alternatives for conflict resolution).

Comment on how your agency's policy on this matter is appropriate and available to different special needs groups, for example, consumers with dementia and their carers.

If you do not have a formal policy covering this situation, describe the action your agency would take or has taken in the past.

Objective 7

Advocacy

To ensure that each consumer has access to an advocate of his or her choice.

Service Standards

- 7.1 Consumer Outcome:**
Each consumer has access to an advocate of his/her choice.
- 7.2 Consumer Outcome:**
Consumers know of their right to use an advocate.
- 7.3 Consumer Outcome:**
Consumers know about advocacy services—where they are and how to use them.
- 7.4 Consumer Outcome:**
The agency involves advocates in respect to representing the interests of the consumer.

How does your agency ensure that advocates are involved in representing the rights and concerns of consumers?

Minimum Criteria

The agency should demonstrate that it has policies and procedures in place to encourage the use of an advocate where that is the wish of the consumer.

The agency should demonstrate that it provides information to consumers about what an advocate is, how to obtain one, and their right to use one.

The agency should be aware of the types of service provided by advocacy groups in their area.

Further Requirements

The agency should also demonstrate that it takes some action periodically to remind all consumers about advocacy, and in particular, takes steps to convey this information to consumers who may appear to have a particular need for it.

The agency should have established links with advocacy groups in their area. Inviting advocacy agencies to speak to staff and consumers may be one demonstration of establishing such links.

The agency should have taken steps to inform staff of advocacy services and train them on the involvement of advocates.

Special Considerations

If the agency is one which provides advocacy services for consumers, it should ensure that clients are aware of their rights in relation to these services, including the option to change advocates and obtain one from another service if desired.

Replying to the performance information

Describe the means by which your agency ensures that consumers receive and understand information about their rights to use an advocate and how to access advocacy services — attaching relevant documents and handouts where available.

Indicate whether your agency makes it clear to consumers that they are free to ask a family member, friend or other person to advocate on their behalf, and that the agency would welcome the involvement of this advocate.

Does your agency ensure that consumers are aware that they can change their nominated advocate at any time?

Describe how your agency promotes the involvement of advocates. What are your agency's policies and procedures on the involvement of advocates (cite relevant agency policy or client handbook, etc.)

Comment on the links your agency has established with advocacy groups in the area who may assist consumers.

What action does your agency take periodically to remind all consumers about advocacy, and in particular, does your agency take steps to convey this information to consumers who may appear to have a particular need for it.

Describe the measures your agency takes in informing and training staff on involving advocates.

If your agency provides advocacy services for consumers describe how you make clients aware of their rights and responsibilities in relation to your services and how they are made aware of their right to choose another advocate.



Appendices

Appendix A



The HACCC Service Standards Instrument Pilot Project

***Prepared for the HACCC Officials
Standards Working Group (1998)***

Executive Summary

Objectives

The objectives of the Project were

- to produce a refined quality assessment Instrument for use in appraising community care agencies against the HACC National Service Standards;
- to provide advice on the use of the Instrument in terms of validity, accuracy and reliability;
- to provide advice on the use of the Instrument concerning appropriate scoring;
- to provide advice on the use of the Instrument with regard to data collection;
- to advise on methods for obtaining valid and reliable consumer input and its incorporation into the Instrument; and
- to undertake a comparison of the Instrument with other existing service appraisal methods that HACC funded agencies may have completed.

Overall Findings

The principal findings of the Consultancy were as follows:

- that the Instrument could be reliably and validly applied to the assessment of performance against the HACC National Service Standards for a wide range of HACC funded agencies;
- that, provided an effective method of assessment is applied, and incorporating the refinements to the Instrument recommended in this report, the Instrument is of sufficient reliability and validity to obtain scores against the HACC National Service Standards for compliance and comparison purposes; and
- that, notwithstanding the need to shorten the Instrument, service providers generally responded favourably to the Instrument.

Main Findings of Quality Measures Instrument

Effectiveness of the Instrument

There was a very high level of agreement among service providers that all of the standards and their performance information were clear, practical, desirable and appropriate. On average:

- standards were considered clear by 95% of service providers;
- standards were considered practical by 91% of service providers;
- standards were considered desirable by 99% of service providers; and
- standards were considered appropriate by 94% of service providers;

Many service providers indicated that the Instrument was unnecessarily long and repetitive. The changes to the Instrument recommended in this report reduce its length by deleting repetitive requests for performance information.

On average, agencies participating in the pilot rated well against the standards. Agency performance against the standards was highest for Objective 1: Access to Services and Objective 4: Coordinated, Planned and Reliable Service Delivery. Agencies performed least well against the standards under Objective 5: Privacy, Confidentiality, and Access to Personal Information and Objective 7: Advocacy.

The Best Method for the Collection of Instrument Data

Overall, of the assessment approaches tested (see below), the approaches that included a visit to the agency had the highest reliability.

The methods of assessment trialed in the pilot were:

- joint assessment**, in which agencies and assessors (who were regional government HACC officers) completed the Instrument and ratings against the standards together during an assessment interview;
- self-assessment with verification**, in which the agency completed the Instrument and ratings, and assessors (regional government HACC officers) later visited the agency to verify those ratings;
- self-assessment**, in which agencies completed the Instrument and ratings on their own and were randomly selected for a verification visit by an assessor, who was a regional government HACC officer, after submission of the Instrument;
- independent/external assessor assessment**, in which verification visits or joint assessments were carried out by assessors who were external to and independent of the HACC government or service provider system; and

- (e) *peer review*, in which assessments were carried out by assessors who were HACC service provider peers. For the most part, peer review assessments relied on the completed Instrument and accompanying documentation and did not include a visit to the agency as part of the assessment.

Other key findings from the pilot testing of the Instrument include:

- the joint assessment method was seen as particularly beneficial to new or small agencies;
- for the self-assessment with verification method, receiving the agency's completed documentation prior to the visit would have benefited assessors;
- while independent/external assessors had the advantage of lending greater objectivity to the assessment process, it was also felt to be the case that regional government project officers brought to the assessment process the benefits of familiarity with services and their environments; and
- the peer review process was seen to have great potential benefit to agencies by encouraging closer service provider networking and information sharing, particularly if assessments were to include an agency visit. It was, however, considered to require substantial resource commitments by participants.

Implementation Issues

Training

Training prior to the implementation of the HACC National Service Standards Instrument, for both agencies and assessors, is recommended. Training for service providers would assist them in completing the Instrument and would reduce the time required of assessors for assessments.

Training for assessors would assist in improving the consistency with which different assessors apply the Instrument to agencies. On going training is also recommended to provide a venue in which quality assessment challenges across the range of HACC funded agencies could continue to be addressed.

Agency Capacity for Self-Assessment

The ability of an agency to adequately complete the Instrument on their own should be taken into account in determining whether the agency should be assessed by the joint assessment method or by the self-assessment with verification method.

Recommendations for Further Work

The Instrument does not specifically address the characteristics of agencies providing services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, particularly in more remote regions where indigenous culture strongly affects service provision. It is recommended that further work on this be considered.

Conclusions

The choice of assessment method should take into account the needs and resources of the agency. Nevertheless, the inclusion of an agency visit by an assessor during the assessment process is highly recommended for the following reasons:

- service providers were more likely to find the standards or performance information appropriate to their agency when the assessment method involved service providers completing the Instrument with the assistance of an assessor;
- agreement on ratings between agencies and assessors was highest when assessment was a joint process between the agency and the assessor; and
- inter-rater reliability was highest when the Instrument was rated by assessors who undertook a visit to the agency (joint assessments or self-assessment with verification).

Summary of Findings for Obtaining Reliable and Valid Consumer Input

Of the two methods of collecting consumer feedback trialed in the pilot, telephone interviews, rather than mail out surveys, were found to be a more effective means of obtaining valid consumer feedback. Findings in support of this were as follows:

- the overall consumer participation rate for the telephone interviews (94%) was far higher than that of the mailed survey (34%);
- the response rate to individual items was superior for the telephone interviews compared to the mailed surveys. Averaging over items, missing data occurred in 15% of cases for the mailed surveys but there was no missing data for the telephone interview items;

- some consumers indicated that they had difficulty understanding some questions. These questions could be answered immediately in the telephone interviews. In the mailed survey this may have been responsible for the high proportion of missing data. Moreover, responses were sometimes given to items on the mailed survey which were irrelevant, suggesting some compromise in the validity of consumer responses; and
- the telephone interviews were considered more effective than mailed surveys in eliciting consumer feedback that concurred with agency assessments.

Consumer feedback information should not be incorporated into a scoring system for agencies against standards at this stage, but rather used as a means of identifying problems to be addressed. Consumer feedback is an important aspect of service quality assessment. It can be used both to identify agencies that may be performing poorly against some standards, and to inform assessors, prior to an agency visit, of potential problems in service quality.

The telephone interviews and mailed surveys were representative of the national profile of HACC consumers with regard to the proportions in each category of age and sex but not with regard to proportions from non-English speaking background and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent.

Recommendations for Further Work

In the pilot a relatively small sample of consumers (75) participated in telephone interviews. Despite the finding that this was the most effective method of obtaining consumer feedback trialed, a number of key questions regarding service quality did not show a relationship with assessor's ratings of agencies. This may have been because of weaknesses in the consumer survey method or consumer survey items in eliciting accurate information on consumer viewpoints. However, it should be recognised that consumer feedback may be important input to agency assessment even where negative comments come from only one or two consumers. Therefore, items that do not show a substantial association with assessment results obtained using the Instrument should remain in the survey as they provide an alternative perspective, and in particular, one that allows for input by a minority of clients.

It is recommended that the consumer feedback Instrument be subject to further testing with a larger sample of consumers using telephone interviews. In this

way, it may be possible to develop a strategy for obtaining important service information from consumers on key aspects of quality.

Summary of Findings for the Comparison of Standards to Other Quality Appraisal Approaches

As part of the Project, a detailed study was undertaken comparing the HACC Service Standards with Community Health Accreditation and Standards Program standards (CHASP), Australian Council of Healthcare Standards (ACHS), and Disability Service Standards (DSS) (Butkus, 1997). This comparison focused on the content of the standards and did not attempt to review or compare their processes of implementation.

It was found that while there were areas of overlap, there were also a number of areas in which the standards of these other quality appraisal systems did not adequately address the HACC Service Standards. The DSS were most compatible with the HACC Service Standards in terms of content, and the least compatible were the ACHS.

The findings of the comparison of HACC standards with CHASP and DSS revealed that, despite their similarity, no meaningful comparative score could be obtained. While there was some overlap in the areas of service quality measured by these methods, it would be necessary for agencies to address additional issues of quality not raised in either CHASP or DSS if they were to be fully appraised against the HACC standards.

The findings of the comparison of HACC standards with ACHS revealed that no meaningful comparative score could be obtained, and that none of the HACC Objectives were completely covered by the ACHS standards. Agencies that had undertaken an ACHS review would need to address issues of quality under each of the HACC Objectives, precluding the use of an abridged Instrument for these agencies.

For agencies that have undergone a review under another scheme, it is recommended that they fully complete the HACC National Service Standards Instrument at their first review, referring to other appraisal method results as appropriate. This would allow the performance of these agencies to be compared to other HACC agencies completing the Instrument. Subsequent reviews or reassessments may draw more heavily on the results of other appraisal methods.

Products of the HACC National Service Standards Instrument Pilot Project

As a result of the work undertaken for the HACC National Service Standards Instrument Pilot Project (described in this report), the HACC National Service Standards Instrument and the Consumer Survey were extensively revised. This resulted in the production of:

- a shortened and refined HACC National Service Standards Instrument for use in quality assessment of HACC agencies against the HACC National Service Standards. The refined Instrument contains 25 performance information requests pertaining to 27 standards (down from 31 in the original Instrument);
- a method for scoring agencies against the HACC National Service Standards to produce an overall Instrument Score that summarises agency performance, ranging from 0 (the poorest performance) to 20 (the highest performance);
- a method for calculating a Compliance Score that gives a summary rating of agency performance against each of the seven major Objectives around which the HACC National Service Standards are organised, ranging from 0 (poorest performance) to 2 (highest performance); and
- a shortened and refined version of the consumer feedback questionnaire which generates information that can be mapped to the HACC National Service Standards.

Any enquiries about or comments on this publication should be directed to:

Anne Jenkins

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

GPO Box 570

Canberra ACT 2601

Telephone 02 6244 1173

Glossary

Words and expressions used in the Standards Instrument and associated guidelines have the following meanings.

Advocate means a person who, with the authority of the consumer, represents the consumer's interest.

Agency means an organisation that is responsible for providing HACC services to consumers.

Assessment is a process by which a consumer's need for HACC services is evaluated. Assessment considers all the consumer's needs, and may involve an evaluation of other factors, such as the availability of informal care and the consumer's ability to pay where fees are charged for a service. Assessment should be conducted in close consultation with the consumer.

Assessors are those people approved by the funding authority to be involved in service appraisals. Assessors could be project officers, HACC agencies (peers) contracted parties or other personnel approved by State/Territory governments.

Carers are relatives, friends or neighbours who provide unpaid help with the activities of daily living to members of the HACC target group.

Care Plan/Service Delivery Plan is a plan developed in consultation with the consumer which describes the type of service to be provided, the frequency and hours of actual service, the location at which the service will be provided and the responsibility of the service agency, its staff and the consumer.

Complaints and Disputes refer to instances which involve a problem or cause for discontent relating to some aspect of the agency or the service being provided to the consumer.

Compliance Indicator represents the performance of the agency against the individual objectives of the HACC National Service Standards.

Consumers are frail elderly persons or younger people with severe to moderate disabilities living in the community who, in the absence of basic maintenance and support services provided through the HACC Program, are at risk of premature or inappropriate long term residential care. The term consumers also refers to the carers of such persons.

Dementia is a disorder of memory and thinking, severe enough to interfere with a person's life.

Home and Community Care (HACC) Program is a cost shared Program between the Commonwealth and State and Territory governments. Through the Program, financial assistance is provided for a range of services to support people living at home who are at risk of inappropriate or premature institutionalisation. The HACC target group is frail older people, younger people with disabilities and the carers of these people.

HACC National Service Standards is a common reference point for internal quality controls through defining particular aspects of service quality and expected outcomes for consumers. The Standards comprise:

(A) Seven Objectives

- which set out the broad goal of the HACC Program in terms of service management and delivery to consumers;

(B) Consumer Outcomes

- for each objective, consumer outcomes that are expected from the service, are specified;

(C) Service Principles

- for each consumer outcome there is a list of policies and procedures which need to be in place to provide a quality service and positive consumer outcomes. This list is not exhaustive.

Instrument Score represents the overall performance of the agency against the HACC National Service Standards as measured in the Standards Instrument.

Standards Instrument or Instrument is the tool used to determine the extent to which agencies are complying with the HACC National Service Standards.

Objectives refers to the seven objectives in the HACC National Service Standards which are:

- 1 access to services;
- 2 information and consultation;
- 3 efficient and effective management;
- 4 coordinated, planned and reliable service delivery;
- 5 privacy, confidentiality and access to personal information;
- 6 complaints and disputes; and
- 7 advocacy.

Performance Criteria refers to two levels of criteria—minimum criteria and further requirements.

Ratings refer to the categories of “met”, “partly met” or “not met”.

Relative Need means that within available resources, priority for receiving services is directed to persons within the target group most in need of home and community care.

Service is the support or assistance provided to a consumer.

Service Appraisal/Service Review is a process that determines the extent to which agencies are complying with the HACC National Service Standards. There are two main types of service appraisals/reviews:

- **self assessment with verification**—this is where the agency fully completes the Standards Instrument including their ratings against the categories of “fully met”, “partly met” and “not met”. The ratings are then added up and translated to the Agency Appraisal Summary Form where an action plan is also completed. The outcome of the appraisal or review is then verified by a visiting assessor;
- **joint appraisal**—this is where the agency completes the Standards Instrument by writing answers against the performance information. Completion of the ratings against the categories of “fully met”, “partly met”, “not met”, adding up the ratings and completing the Agency Appraisal Summary Form are done in conjunction with the visiting assessor.

Service Standard or Standard refers to the 27 service standards that are part of the HACC National Service Standards.

Staff are the workers, those paid or unpaid (volunteers) who work for an agency.