



The Centre for Housing and Support Service Excellence Standards

Guide 1

For organisations working in care and support that are new to the service

CHS Service Excellence Standards

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Let's start at the beginning

This document is an introduction to the CHS Service Excellence Standards for organisations providing care and support services.

We're going to assume you have no knowledge at all of the Service Excellence Standards (SES) and are not sure whether they are even relevant to your organisation. We'll answer the second point first.

It doesn't matter if you provide personal care, sheltered or supported housing, specialist services such as family intervention projects, are part of a consortium, offer integrated housing, care and support or even intensive housing management, the SES are 100% relevant to you; so please read on.

How are choices made?

If your customers have a choice of service provider - whatever kind of service you provide - how can you set yourself apart from the rest?

How can you prove, beyond doubt, to people who may be new to the concept of care and support, that you provide high-quality services, delivered by expert, sensitive and well-trained staff, in a suitable setting and environment, with the service user (the customer) at the heart of everything you do? That's a tall order.

A SES sticker on your front door, a SES plaque on your reception desk or the logo on your website and letterhead says all that and more. It displays for all to see, that your services have been independently assessed and verified. If your customers need to know what your SES accreditation means, a look at our website will show just how important an accolade this is.

It's not easy

The CHS have been providing accreditation for excellence in the form of our Code of Practice for Support Services for 20 years.

This year, the original Code of Practice has seen the most significant upgrade in its history; one that made it worthwhile to change the name to reflect new best practice in housing where outcomes are the most important benchmark by which organisations like yours should be assessed.

The Code of Practice and its successor, the Service Excellence Standards, have had that longevity because they have proven genuine value.

Service providers do not opt for re-accreditation year after year (which they do) if it's not worth their time, effort and investment.

Be aware though, accreditation by the CHS Service Excellence Standards is not a 'pay-a-fee-and-get-a-stamp' concept. This accreditation has 'teeth'; it wouldn't be worth working for if it didn't. However, precisely because it does have teeth, it says so much about you.

Moreover, the SES accreditation process actually helps you build better, more robust procedures, checks your quality systems and proves that customer focus is embedded in everything you do.

It can even help you to make sure that entirely new services provide exemplary quality from day one, by using the Service Excellence Standards to plan your aims and objectives.



Other quality marks

We all know about the QAF, so let's just reiterate if you have a SES accreditation, you've probably got at least a Level B QAF by default - many Supporting People teams across the country 'passport' SES achievers straight through. And let's not forget, the SES is endorsed by DCLG who encourage commissioners to take this CHS Accreditation into account.



The Rt. Hon. Don Foster MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government writes,

"I am pleased to welcome these new Standards which place more emphasis on putting the customer's voice at the centre of the accreditation process."

"Giving customers greater choice and control is at the heart of driving forward improvements in the delivery and quality of public services and better outcomes, especially for the most vulnerable".

The sincerest form of flattery

We're aware that other organisations have or are planning similar 'quality marks' and we applaud them for following our lead. What they will never have however is our 20 year history - a history that gives us a unique insight and wealth of experience in providing the preeminent 'benchmark' for care and support services.

It's been a process of continual refinement, updating, learning by experience, modifying, improving and expanding the original Code of Practice into today's Service Excellence Standards. It's been a process that ensures the SES continues to be at the forefront of quality assessment for all types of care and support services since 1993.

The CHS Service Excellence Standards are now, and will continue to be, the premier quality award for your kind of service. Your SES accreditation could be your greatest USP.

OK, so what's involved?

Accreditation by the Service Excellence Standards proves beyond doubt that your organisation has the following attributes:

- A focus on the positive outcomes experienced by customers as a result of using the housing, care and support services you provide.
- A strong emphasis on communicating with customers to hear, understand and act upon their experiences.
- An achievement progression that supports organisations such as yours to continuously improve services.



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Seven core standards

All organisations must have their service assessed against the following seven core standards:

1. **Principles and governance:** ensuring you manage the service in the best way possible.
2. **Equal and respectful:** how you ensure your customers are treated equally and with respect.
3. **Effective and personalised:** how you tailor services to meet customer's individual needs and wants in a way that puts them in the driving seat.
4. **Respected and involved:** how you make sure your customers can participate in decision making about the service however, and whenever they wish.
5. **Complimentary and coordinated services:** how each service works with other agencies to make sure that it meets your customer's needs without unnecessary duplication.
6. **Value for money and effective use of resources:** how you ensure you are receiving good value for money.
7. **Customer safety:** how you keep your customers safe from abuse, whilst encouraging them to take sensible risks.

Eight optional further accreditations

In addition to the seven core standards - against which we test all service providers - there are eight additional service standards. These have been designed to be specific to different types of care and support services.

Organisations may choose to be further accredited by one or more of these service standards.



The eight service standards are:



Intensive Housing Management

For organisations that provide Housing management services only and who provide no care and support services.



Resource Support

Assistance in financial inclusion and independence, i.e. benefits, worklessness and preparing for work support, budgeting.



Cognitive Support

Intervention for people with learning disabilities and mental health issues, including people with dementia.



Safety Support

Assistance to customers requiring support to maintain personal safety and security, either because of external threat of violence, such as women escaping domestic abuse or for some older and vulnerable customers, the maintenance of safety and security through the use of assistive technology.



Family Support

Intervention with families in need (such as the Family Intervention Project model). This may include assistance with parenting skills and preventative work with young parents.



Inclusivity Support

Assisting individuals to avoid/reduce social exclusion e.g. gypsies and travellers, anti-social behaviour, or for older people, the prevention of isolation. In future this could include dealing with offenders, particularly with employment and accommodation intervention to reduce reoffending.



Physical Support

Services for people with physical needs, including personal care, medication management, advice and assistance with assistive technology and aids and adaptations.



Substance Support

Specialist support with, for example, substance or alcohol misuse.

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What are the stars for?

Accreditations can be won at four levels. These are:



Policy Ready

This level indicates that the provider is able to evidence that all policies and processes are in place to achieve positive outcomes, but is not yet able to show sufficient examples of where this has been achieved in practice. This does not imply that the quality of the service is below what is required, only that comprehensive outcomes evidence cannot yet be submitted.



Improving

This level indicates that the provider is able to evidence that on average, services managed by the provider are supporting customers to achieve positive outcomes as a direct result of using the service. The assessor has determined that whilst most services are achieving above average results, up to 25% of services show areas of significant weakness, and that where statistical data has been submitted, an average of between 51% and 70% positive results have been achieved.



Good

This level indicates that the provider is able to evidence that the majority of services are supporting customers to achieve positive outcomes as a direct result of using the service; resulting in real improvements or maintenance of a good quality of life. The assessor has determined that fewer than 10% of services evidence areas of significant weakness and that where statistical data has been submitted, an average of between 71% and 90% positive results have been achieved. No services are attracting an achievement score of 1 or 2.



Outstanding

This level indicates that the provider is able to evidence that the vast majority of services managed are supporting customers to achieve significant and positive outcomes as a direct result of using the service; resulting in real improvements or maintenance of a good quality of life. Where statistical data has been submitted, averages of over 90% positive results have been achieved. No services are attracting an achievement score of 2 or 3.

As we said, accreditation by the Service Excellence Standards is not easy, but there would be no value in it, if it were.



How does it work?

Achieving accreditation by the Service Excellence Standards is not a process to be embarked upon lightly; it takes at least a year - usually 18 months to gain accreditation, but a major part of the process is the hand-holding and advice we give you along the way. Think of this as 'built-in consultancy', because that's exactly what it is.

The process works as follows:

You register with the Centre for Housing and Support to become accredited by the CHS Service Excellence Standards.

We agree with you which standards you wish to be judged against and arrange an assessor to help with collecting the evidence.

You have the option to ask your staff and customers to join a working group to help prepare the evidence.

Our assessor visits you to explain the Service Excellence Standards and what you have to do.

You collect documents, photographs, voice recordings, videos - real life examples of evidence to show how well you deliver your services, and upload all this evidence to a special internet site.

We arrange for an assessor to read all the evidence, talk to your staff and customers. The assessor closely examines all the evidence and visits your locations to meet your staff and customers.

The assessor decides if you meet the standards required for accreditation by the Service Excellence Standards.

When you are awarded accreditation by the CHS Service Excellence Standards, you can proudly advertise and promote your accreditation to all and display certificates and plaques at your various locations.

Finally, we add your name to the list of SES accredited service providers on our website, so customers and potential customers can check the validity of your achievement.

So is it worth all the work?

Anita Cartmell, Supported Housing Manager, Worcester Community Housing Ltd says,

"As a quality award, the new CHS Service Excellence Standards is an excellent example of a set of standards that really challenges organisations.

"This challenge does not stop at checking that we have the necessary policies and procedures in place but goes on to actually talk to our customers to find out about their experience of our service. It is not easy to successfully achieve accreditation by 'the Standards' but it is, in our opinion, the most worthwhile and prestigious quality standard in the sector."

Ruth Jennings, Operations Manager, Midland Heart says,

"The changes CHS have made to create the new Service Excellence Standards are extremely positive for our sector.

"The ability for the standards to be flexible to each individual service regardless of the funding arrangements, along with the move away from purely paper-based submissions is a welcome change as we mould and shape our services to meet our customers' needs and expectations into the future.

"The change towards continually submitting information to improve your star rating reflects a journey and commitment to excellence, for which we should all be striving."

Colin Molton, Executive Director, SSW and Director Champion for Older and Vulnerable People with the Homes and Communities Agency. Says,

"HCA, congratulate the CHS on the launch of your new Service Excellence Standards which we believe will form a useful and worthwhile award for providers to work towards.

"We believe that the SES will be complementary to the review processes undertaken by commissioners and local authorities and we wish CHS success in promoting its use across the country."

Michelle Reid, Chief Executive of TPAS says,

"As a champion for tenant empowerment, TPAS supports the new CHS Service Excellence Standards. At a time when the relationship between resident and provider has never been more important, we believe that the CHS Standards continue to ensure greater tenant involvement in the development and delivery of support services."

Now it's over to you

It's a big step - we know that, but as we said at the start, this is the way you can prove, beyond doubt that you provide high-quality services, delivered by expert, sensitive and well-trained staff, in a suitable environment, with the customer at the heart of everything you do.

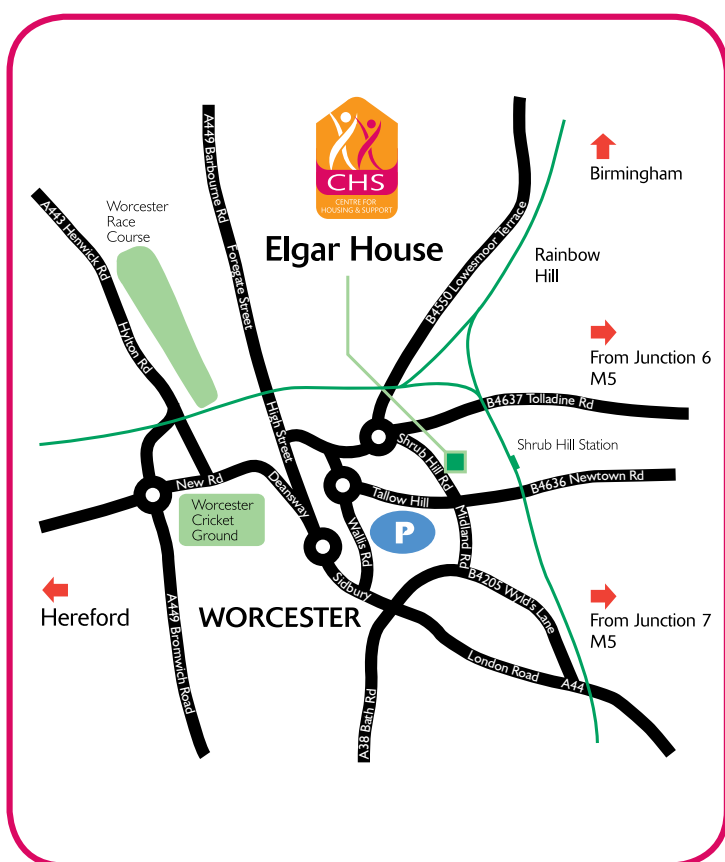
More information

There are further brochures in this series and of course you can read the Service Excellence Standards pages on our website at www.chs.ac.uk/ses.

You will probably have questions, and it's always good to talk with an expert, so call the Centre for Housing and Support on 01905 727272 and we'll find one to speak with you.

Developing Excellent People

The Centre for Housing and Support is at the forefront of national training provision for professionals working in Housing-related Support and the voluntary sector. The Centre helps equip professionals to do what they do best - provide a highly effective service to vulnerable people with differing needs and aspirations.



CHS services include:

- Apprenticeships and Advanced Apprenticeships in Housing at Level 2 and Level 3
- Level 2, Level 3 and Level 4 Qualification Courses in Housing Practice
- A Level 3 qualification in homelessness
- Qualifications in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of older people
- Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications in assistive technology and telecare
- The Foundation Degree in Housing with Support
- CHS In-house Training
- The CHS Service Excellence Standards
- The CHS membership service

The Centre for Housing and Support offers everything you need for training and qualification opportunities for professionals in Housing-related Support. We also provide Consultancy, Event Management and many other services; please see our website for details.

For further details contact:

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