

Service Quality Standards

Assessment Guide

1 Introduction

Service Quality Standards (SQSs) define the level of management and service provision that service units are expected to attain. A total of 16 SQSs have been developed based on four principles. This guide explains in detail the requirements and criteria of the 16 SQSs, as well as the relevant assessment indicators.

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) should tailor appropriate plans for their respective service units/service types in order to meet the requirements of the SQSs. NGOs and service units are required to effectively implement the policies, procedures, mechanisms, plans, etc. formulated under the criteria of the 16 SQSs. This guide is used to assess whether service units meet the required level of service quality under the SQSs.

2 Assessment

Assessments may be conducted by designated personnel of the Social Welfare Department (SWD) or the NGO personnel responsible for self-assessment^{Note} through interviews/contact with staff members, interviews/contact with service users (or by way of questionnaire surveys), observation, document review and other methods as appropriate.

Interviews/contact with staff members include communicating with NGO management, and the supervisor and frontline staff of the service unit. Interviews/contact with service users (or by way of questionnaire surveys) include communicating with service users, their family members, and other significant stakeholders. During interviews/contact, the individuals involved may be required to explain, elaborate on, or clarify relevant policies, procedures, and the implementation of the SQSs.

Assessments may also be conducted through on-site observation to assess the actual implementation status of relevant SQSs. In addition, depending on the actual situation and needs, assessments may include the examination of relevant documented policies and procedures of the NGO/service unit, along with documentation demonstrating the implementation of SQSs and relevant criteria by the service unit, such as records of implementation, minutes of meetings, and documents arising from other workflows.

Note: When conducting self-assessments, NGOs may refer to/use the “[Self-assessment Checklist](#)” at Appendix 1 of the Service Quality Standards, which is available on the SWD website.

Principle 1: Clearly define the purpose and objectives of the service with a transparent mode of service delivery

Standard 1: Preparation of service information

Criterion	Assessment indicator
<p>The service unit should prepare up-to-date service information that clearly states its purpose, objectives, target service users and mode of service delivery, and should make it accessible in a timely manner to potential service users, members of the public, and other relevant parties.</p>	<p>(i) The service unit has up-to-date service information in clear and easily understandable language (e.g. service leaflets, brochures or multimedia materials, etc.), covering its:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) purpose; (b) objectives; (c) target service users; (d) mode of service delivery; and (e) mechanisms for service users to apply for and withdraw from the service. <p>(ii) Depending on the nature of the service and its target service users, the information may need to be provided in more than one language to meet the communication needs of service users, or be explained to individual service user by designated staff.</p> <p>(iii) Information under this criterion is accessible to service users, relevant individuals/organisations/groups, and members of the public. (Where appropriate, service information should be distributed to those who need it.)</p>

Standard 2: Review and update of policies and procedures

Criterion	Assessment indicator
<p>The service unit should establish a mechanism for reviewing and updating its policies and procedures related to service delivery.</p>	<p>(i) The service unit has a mechanism for reviewing and updating its policies and procedures related to the SQSs on service delivery (i.e. SQSs 6, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16). The review mechanism for the relevant SQSs should be documented and should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the timeframe for review and update and/or the circumstances under which a review and update is required; (b) the personnel/committee responsible for conducting the review; (c) appropriate methods for collecting and adopting feedback from service users and staff; and (d) the date of the last review/update.

Standard 3: Records of operations and activities

Criterion	Assessment indicator
The service unit should maintain accurate and up-to-date records of service operations and activities for reporting to the SWD as stipulated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) The service unit maintains up-to-date records of service operations and activities pertaining service performance standards as required under the Funding and Service Agreement and other relevant service documents.(ii) Mechanisms (including supervision, review, record audits and training) are established to ensure that the information collected and recorded is accurate and up to date, and that records and statistics submitted to the SWD are accurate.(iii) Service statistics and reports pertaining to the service unit's performance are accessible to service users, relevant parties, and members of the public.

Principle 2: Manage resources effectively, flexibly, and keep pace with the times to continuously improve service quality

Standard 4: Duties and responsibilities

Criterion	Assessment indicator
The service unit should clearly define the duties and responsibilities of all management personnel and staff, and shall display an organisation chart on its notice board and/or website(s).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) The service unit has accurate job descriptions, duty statements, and lines of accountability for all regular posts, as well as the responsibilities and membership list of the NGO's governing board.(ii) The service unit displays an up-to-date organisation chart on its notice board and/or website(s), delineating the overall structure, lines of accountability, and the staff establishment for all regular posts subvented by the Lump Sum Grant (LSG).(iii) The job descriptions, duty statements and organisation charts required under this criterion are made available to all staff, service users, relevant parties, and members of the public.

Standard 5: Human resource management

Criterion	Assessment indicator
The NGO/service unit should have human resource policies and procedures in place for	<ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) The NGO/service unit* has relevant human resource policies and procedures in accordance with the requirements set out in the Social Welfare Services LSG Subvention

<p>the effective implementation of human resource management.</p>	<p>Manual available on the SWD website, and has documents specifying:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) staff recruitment, performance appraisal and promotion selection criteria, etc.; (b) provision of induction training for new recruits; (c) staff training/development plans; (d) staff supervision and disciplinary matters; and (e) the personnel responsible for recruitment, promotion and disciplinary actions, as well as measures to avoid conflicts of interest. <p>(ii) Relevant policies and procedures under this criterion are accessible to staff.</p> <p>* Regardless of whether the relevant policies and procedures are implemented by the NGO or the service unit, the service unit should maintain a record of such policies and procedures.</p>
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Standard 6: Service performance evaluation and collection of feedback

Criterion	Assessment indicator
<p>The service unit should regularly plan, review and evaluate its own performance, and should have a mechanism for collecting relevant parties' feedback on its service performance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) The service unit has record(s) of the overall operational plan(s) that specifies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) planned services/work and the objectives to be achieved; (b) the tools and timeframe for evaluation; and (c) the evaluation of the service unit's performance. (ii) There are mechanisms for collecting and responding to feedback on service performance provided by service users, staff and other interested parties. (iii) The service unit takes appropriate follow-up actions on service performance or quality issues identified during the review and evaluation process, and documents such actions. (iv) Information under this criterion is accessible to service users, staff, other interested parties, and members of the public.

Standard 7: Financial management

Criterion	Assessment indicator
<p>The NGO/service unit should develop and endorse policies and procedures for budgeting, financial</p>	<p>(i) The NGO/service unit* has policies, procedures, and relevant mechanisms for managing financial resources and monitoring financial performance in accordance with the financial management requirements stipulated in the Social Welfare Services LSG Subvention Manual available on the</p>

<p>resource management, and financial performance monitoring to ensure effective financial management.</p>	<p>SWD website and financial guidelines for the relevant service, so as to utilise resources in a flexible, prudent, and cost-effective manner.</p> <p>* Regardless of whether the relevant policies and procedures are implemented by the NGO or the service unit, the service unit should maintain a record of such policies and procedures.</p>
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Standard 8: Legal obligations

Criterion	Assessment indicator
<p>The NGO should ensure that the service unit and its staff comply with all relevant legal obligations and legislation governing their operations and service delivery.</p>	<p>(i) The service unit has a checklist of all legislation governing its operations and service delivery, and makes all relevant legislation accessible to its staff. “Relevant legislations to comply with SQS 8 – Checklists” (Appendix 2) available on the SWD website serves as the basic requirement for assessment.</p> <p>(ii) There are monitoring procedures to monitor the performance of the service unit and its staff to ensure their compliance with all relevant legislation and legal obligations, and to seek legal advice when necessary.</p>

Standard 9: Safe environment

Criterion	Assessment indicator
<p>The service unit should take all reasonable steps to ensure that staff and service users are in a safe environment and understand the procedures for responding to major emergencies.</p>	<p>(i) The service unit has practicable measures to ensure a safe environment for staff and service users, including but not limited to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) providing fire-fighting and other necessary safety equipment (e.g. first aid boxes) and establishing procedures for regular (e.g. annual) maintenance and keeping records of repair and maintenance of such equipment; (b) conducting regular maintenance and repair of equipment used for providing direct services, and using such equipment under proper supervision (where appropriate); (c) conducting regular inspections and relevant environmental safety assessments of the internal and external areas of the premises in order to develop and implement appropriate safety management strategies; recording the results of safety assessments; and documenting the actions taken to rectify problems and the outcomes achieved;

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">(d) when transporting service users (regardless of whether the vehicle is owned by the service unit), taking all relevant transport and road safety measures, including properly supervising the service users during transit;(e) if the service unit owns vehicles and employs drivers, taking safety precautions, including employing qualified drivers and maintaining the vehicles to ensure their roadworthiness;(f) having in place procedures for responding to major emergencies; and conducting fire drills at least once every 12 months (if the frequency of fire drills for the relevant service is governed by legislation/a code of practice, such requirements shall be followed) and keeping relevant records; and making staff and service users understood how to respond in emergencies/emergency situations (including the duties and responsibilities assigned to staff); and(g) maintaining precautionary measures and contingency plans (reference may be made to relevant government guidelines) for inclement weather (such as tropical cyclones and rainstorms) to ensure the safety of staff and service users, and informing them of the potential impact on work and service delivery. <p>(ii) The service unit maintains records of all accidents or injury incidents involving staff and/or service users that occurred within the premises of the service unit/other venues of service provision, as well as records of how such incidents were handled.</p> |
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Principle 3: Identify and meet service users' specific needs

Standard 10: Information on service entry and exit

Criterion	Assessment indicator
The service unit should ensure that service users are provided with clear and accurate information and understand the channels for entering and leaving the service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) The service unit maintains documentation that details the policies, procedures and criteria for application, entering and leaving the service. Such policies should clearly demonstrate that admission criteria are non-discriminatory (except where provision is based on relative needs or for compliance with funding requirements), and precisely define the service targets and the criteria for determining admission priorities.(ii) The service unit has mechanisms for handling rejected applications and service terminations, stating the reasons for rejection or termination, and, where applicable, referring applicants to other service units.(iii) Information under this criterion is accessible to service users, staff, other interested parties, and members of the public.

Standard 11: Assessment of service users' needs

Criterion	Assessment indicator
The service unit should appropriately assess and meet service users' needs, and should consult relevant parties as appropriate during the assessment and planning processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) The service unit has policies and procedures for assessing and meeting service users' needs, which include:<ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) the designation of responsibilities for assessment, planning and review;(b) the relevant parties involved;(c) methods of assessment;(d) regular reviews and revisions; and(e) maintenance and updating of records.(ii) Mechanisms have been established to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) record plans for meeting service users' needs (e.g. goals, actions taken, relevant timeframes, etc.);(b) inform service users or other relevant parties of their right to participate in the assessment and planning processes, and incorporate their views as appropriate;(c) involve relevant parties (e.g. service users, family members, staff and medical personnel) in the needs assessment, planning, monitoring and review processes; and(d) update the records of service users at least once a year.

	(iii) The policies, procedures and relevant information (as appropriate) under this criterion are accessible to service users, staff, other interested parties, and members of the public.
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Principle 4: Respect the rights of service users

Standard 12: Informed choices

Criterion	Assessment indicator
The service unit should, as far as practicable, respect service users' right to make informed service choices, and should provide them with the opportunity to make service choices and decisions based on the information received.	<p>(i) The service unit has relevant policy and procedure documentation specifying:</p> <p>(a) under what circumstances and in what manner service users will be provided with information about the service unit's operations that may affect the services they receive; and</p> <p>(b) how and when service users are informed of available choices, and how they are consulted regarding their decisions.</p> <p>(ii) Relevant policies and procedures under this criterion are accessible to service users, staff, other interested parties, and members of the public.</p>

Standard 13: Service users' private property

Criterion	Assessment indicator
The service unit should ensure that service users' rights regarding their private property are respected, and, where appropriate, should provide service users with the opportunity to keep their personal belongings in a safe and secure place.	<p>(i) The service unit has policies and procedures to ensure that service users' rights regarding their private property are respected and protected, and, where applicable, to ensure that their property is not used for other purposes against their will.</p> <p>(ii) Where appropriate, service users are provided with a safe and secure place to keep their personal belongings. If such arrangements cannot be made, the service unit has procedures in place to advise service users to take care of their own belongings.</p> <p>(iii) If the service unit is responsible for collecting money from service users and/or managing their money and other valuables on their behalf, appropriate procedures and monitoring mechanisms are in place and strictly enforced, which include:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the circumstances under which service users' money (including donations/fees) and valuables are collected and/or managed; (b) the methods by which service users' money and valuables are collected and/or kept, and the procedures for monitoring the use of their money; and (c) the proper maintenance of records and the establishment of accounting controls. <p>(iv) Relevant policies and procedures under this criterion are accessible to service users, staff, other interested parties, and members of the public.</p>
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Standard 14: Privacy and confidentiality

Criterion	Assessment indicator
The service unit should ensure that service users' privacy and dignity are respected.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) The service unit has policies and procedures to ensure that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) service users' needs for privacy and dignity are respected and acknowledged; (b) service users are informed of their rights regarding privacy and dignity; (c) when service users' data are collected, accessed, transferred, and stored, reference should be made to the recommendations of the Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data and the data should be handled in a secure and appropriate manner that complies with relevant legislation to ensure confidentiality; and (d) cybersecurity measures are implemented and cybersecurity awareness is fostered. (ii) If the service unit is responsible for providing aided personal care activities, written guidelines are in place to ensure that service users' privacy and dignity are respected while carrying out necessary personal care. (If the mentioned services are regulated by legislation or codes of practice, they must be conducted in accordance with the relevant provisions.) (iii) The policies, procedures and relevant information (as appropriate) under this criterion are accessible to service users, staff, other interested parties, and members of the public.

Standard 15: Handling of complaints

Criterion	Assessment indicator
<p>The service unit should handle complaints properly, and should inform service users and staff of their right to lodge complaints and the procedures for doing so.</p>	<p>(i) The service unit has documentation detailing policies and procedures for handling complaints (including anonymous complaints), which include informing service users and staff of their right to lodge complaints and the relevant procedures. The mechanism and procedures for handling complaints should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) a reasonable timeframe for reviewing/investigating and resolving the complaint (depending on the corrective actions required); (b) the designation and rank of staff members responsible for handling complaints; (c) how/when to respond to the complainant; and (d) proper documentation of all complaints and actions taken to resolve them. <p>(ii) Relevant policies and procedures under this criterion are accessible to service users, staff, other interested parties, and members of the public.</p>

Standard 16: Freedom from abuse

Criterion	Assessment indicator
<p>The service unit should ensure that service users' right to be free from verbal, physical and sexual abuse by others is respected, and should provide appropriate opportunities for staff and service users to raise concerns about verbal, physical or sexual abuse.</p>	<p>(i) The service unit has policies and procedures for preventing and handling abuse, in order to safeguard service users' right to be free from verbal, physical and sexual abuse by others.</p> <p>(ii) Appropriate mechanisms (including training, guidance, and supervision) are in place to ensure that staff clearly understand how to safeguard service users' right to be free from abuse.</p> <p>(iii) Appropriate mechanisms are in place to encourage and support service users and staff to have the opportunity to raise issues and concerns about verbal, physical and sexual abuse, and to inform them that they may lodge related complaints and that they will not be treated unfavourably as a result.</p> <p>(iv) Relevant policies and procedures under this criterion are accessible to service users, staff, other interested parties, and members of the public.</p>