

Assessment of Need Policy and Procedure

1. What is a needs assessment?

The overall aim of a needs assessment is for the support worker and the client to understand more about the client in relation to their circumstances and environment. The needs assessment should elaborate on the needs identified in the Supporting People referral form. If the referral form is incomplete, it needs to be sent back to the referrer to obtain more information.

The outcome from the assessment (i.e. support plan) provides the basis to maintain, improve, or bring about changes in the client and their environment, based on the five support outcomes.

Assessments provide an important tool to:

- Make informed decisions on referrals and applications so that eligibility and suitability for the service can be determined and to identify prospective clients needs
- Develop a support plan, with the involvement of the client
- Agree the timing of review and the amount of support required

All assessments should be objective and based on sound evidence irrespective of individual support workers approach and style.

Assessment and support planning are distinct, but inter-related processes. Assessments do not stop once a support worker has drawn up and agreed the support plan with the client, but continue so that the plan can be amended and updated as it becomes out of date, goals have been achieved or when circumstances change. The review of the needs and support of the client needs to be carried out at least annually, or when there is a change in circumstances.

1.1 Appeals

Clients' views are to be recorded as part of the assessment process. Any disagreement with the outcome of an assessment or review needs to be recorded in the comments box and resolved with both the client and staff member. If a decision is made and the client disagrees, they have the right to appeal. Clear guidelines need to be given to the client regarding the process of appeal and staff additional to those who carried out the initial assessment should attend.

1.2 Involving Clients

Before a needs assessment is completed, it is important to explain to the client the purpose of a needs assessment, that their involvement is paramount, and what outcomes they can expect from it.

Ensure that the client and their advocate (where appropriate) are fully involved in the process and that their views are taken into account. When assessing clients as part of the application process, it is necessary to provide written feedback on the outcome of both successful/ unsuccessful applicants and where possible advise the unsuccessful applicant of potential alternative providers.

1.3 Involving Staff

All staff should contribute to assessments and the development of support plans. They should be provided with adequate guidance such as supervision, training and in their initial induction to enable them to do this.

All needs assessments, risk assessments and support plans need to be quality monitored internally by a senior member of staff, following a review or a new client commencing support within 4 weeks of the changes.

1.4 Recording of Information

All assessments and reviews should be fully documented and placed on the clients file. Support logs should be completed fully to show what support has been given to the client each week and the time taken to complete this support. This will be monitored by the Supporting People team each quarter to ensure accurate payment is made.

These files need to be available to the client and other agencies, subject to the services' Confidentiality Policy and in line with the Data Protection Act 1998.

2 The Assessment Process

During the assessment process the support worker should adhere to the following process:

- All parties need to agree the need and purpose of the assessment
- Identify who is to contribute and how
- Gather information from different sources
- Examine and classify the information provided
- Identify gaps and information to follow up and check
- Draw provisional conclusions from the information for feedback
- Examine alternative way forward for the client
- Agree a support plan that links to the outcomes identified within the needs assessment.

2.1 Consent

It is important that the client is supported during the completion of the assessment to ensure they fully understand the content before requesting they sign the form.

The client should be clear that it may be necessary to share information with relevant agencies and should be reassured that confidentiality between themselves and the support worker will be observed at all times. When the

V6 2011

assessment has been signed a copy should be offered to the client. Clients need to be aware that they can initiate a review of their needs at anytime.