

National Occupational Standards

Sensory Services:

Standard 5 - Enable individuals with sensory needs to access training, employment and career development

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STANDARD 5 - ENABLE INDIVIDUALS WITH SENSORY NEEDS TO ACCESS TRAINING, EMPLOYMENT AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

ELEMENTS OF COMPETENCE

1. Work with individuals with sensory needs to identify their training, employment and career development needs and preferences
2. Enable individuals with sensory needs to identify, seek, prepare for and access training, employment and career development opportunities
3. Support individuals to sustain training and employment and to evaluate the effectiveness of the work opportunities

ABOUT THIS STANDARD

For this standard you need to support individuals with sensory needs to plan for, identify and seek training and employment and career development activities that are realistic for them and appropriate to their needs. You will need to be able to signpost individuals to relevant specialist agencies and offer support where appropriate. The standard is relevant for all levels. Sections of the standard can be used for induction purposes, professional development and for training.

For this standard you will be expected to work in partnership with individuals and to collaborate with key people to identify and seek training and employment and career development activities.

Although the primary responsibility for your professional development rests with you, the standard also requires management support to facilitate the continuing professional development of the workforce.

Evidencing your performance, knowledge and understanding

The **performance criteria** sections under each element and the **knowledge and understanding** section indicate areas that you should be able to evidence in relation to your performance or knowledge and understanding.

Values underpinning the whole of this standard

The values underpinning this standard have been derived from the key purpose statement¹. You must work within the principles and values of the relevant service standards, guidance and codes of practice/ conduct for health and social care in the four countries to achieve this standard.

Key principle

Communication underpins the entire standard and all the standards in this suite. It is vital that those working in the field of sensory impairment with children, young people and adults have the necessary and appropriate skills to communicate effectively with people who may use a range of communication tools/ techniques or methods. This standard relates to those working with people who need sensory support services and all communication must be appropriate to the needs of people with sensory support needs. It is also important that workers recognise the need for specialist communication skills and the risk of miscommunication.

Knowledge and understanding

The knowledge and understanding for this standard will relate to country specific regulatory requirements and codes of practice applicable to the scope of your work and those of colleagues. It will also relate to your role and the level of responsibility you have within your organisation to undertake activities to achieve a high quality service.

KEY WORDS AND CONCEPTS

This section provides explanations of the key words and concepts used in this particular standard. Note, in National Occupational Standards it is quite common to find words or phrases used that you will be familiar with, but which, in the detail of the standards, may be used in a very particular way. Therefore, we would encourage you to read this section carefully before you begin working with the standard and to refer back to this section as required.

¹ The key purpose of the sensory services workforce is to empower people who use these services to maximise their independence, opportunities, strengths and skills.

Active support

Support that encourages the individual to maximise their independence and promotes lifestyle choices. In the case of children and young people this would also be relevant to the role of parent/ carer or the children themselves as a part of their own care planning process.

Circumstances

Relevant circumstances could include: young people leaving foster or residential care, individuals with sensory needs as part of an acute illness or disability which could require retraining or a career change, individuals whose condition may be likely to deteriorate in the short, medium or long term, individuals who are long-term unemployed.

Communication

This standard makes it explicit that you:

- Must have the skills to be able to effectively communicate with the individual you are supporting, or in a case where specialist communicators are needed arrange for these to be put in place
- Should use the individual's preferred means of communication both receptively and expressively in the most appropriate format and should listen actively
- Need to be constantly aware that communicating will be complex and that the risk of misunderstanding is significant

Development opportunities

These are encouraged as part of induction and continuous professional development (CPD) and include a variety of methods, e.g. training courses, educational programmes, qualifications, coaching, mentoring, action learning sets, reading, self-directed learning, secondment opportunities and personal and professional support.

Disadvantage, discrimination and social exclusion

This relates to race, gender, religion, sectarianism, language, age, class, disability (including sensory disability), poverty, culture, belief and sexual orientation.

In practice you must take account of the relevant policies and procedures within your organisation or agency.

Documents and records

Refers to documents and records that could be about the individual, needs and circumstances that could affect their job opportunities in the short, medium and long term. For example, information on the type of jobs available to the individual, how to apply for relevant jobs, examples of people who with similar needs and circumstances have succeeded in taking up and maintaining positions and how to access the support needed to enable the individual to seek, gain and continue in employment, training or career development activity.

Empowerment

Empowerment is a process of enabling individuals (children, young people and adults) who are at a disadvantage at both personal and organisational levels to gain more autonomy and control over their lives.

Individuals

In the standard "individual" refers to children, young people and adults who may require health and/or social care and children's, educational or training services. It also refers to advocates and interpreters or people who work with them to express their views, wishes or feelings and to speak on their behalf.

Information

Information may be verbal, written, electronic and/ or in a wide range of other accessible formats.

Issues

Issues means, what impacts on the individual or is relevant to their experience. The use of the word "issue" does not imply a difficulty, but simply an aspect of the person's life that is the focus of the current work.

Key people

Key people include: family, friends, carers, social workers, communicator guides and others such as job coaches, careers advisors, Connexions, Careers England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales or other such agencies that the individual has a supportive relationship with including benefits advice agencies.

Needs

Needs could include: transitions, physical, sensory, emotional, educational/ learning needs and mental health needs. Needs may be, short, medium or long-term.

Partnership working

The process of working collaboratively with other professionals or organisations, e.g. Optometrists, Eye Clinic Liaison Officers, Hospital Departments, those in education or training, Local Societies and Voluntary and Community Services (Third Sector Organisations) to raise the profile of sensory support issues and to offer appropriate support.

Rehabilitation/ habilitation

Rehabilitation involves a wide range of support that aims to maximise independence, skills and confidence. Rehabilitation can involve helping people to regain abilities or functions lost due to illness or injuries.

Habilitation defines the coordinated use of medical, social, educational, and vocational measures to help people develop their functional ability. This contrasts with helping people to regain abilities lost due to illness or injuries rather than people who have been born with impairments.

Rights

The rights that individuals have to:

- Be respected
- Be treated equally and not be discriminated against
- Be treated as an individual
- Be treated in a dignified way
- Have privacy
- Be protected from danger and harm
- Be cared for in a way they choose
- Have access to information about themselves
- Communicate using their preferred methods of communication and language

In the case of children and young people, they have the right to be actively involved in the decisions that affect them.

Risks

Risk is the inevitable consequence of people taking decisions about their lives. But it means different things to different people. There is no one definition. In social care, as in the rest of life, risk can be viewed negatively. Because of perceptions of risk which may or may not be real, a person might be prevented from doing things which most people take for granted. So perceived risk must be tested and assessed against the likely benefits of taking an active part in the community, learning new skills and gaining confidence. What needs to be considered is the consequence of an action and the likelihood of any harm from it. By taking account of the benefits in terms of independence, well-being and choice, it should be possible for a person to have a support plan which enables them to manage identified risks.

A decision about the perceived or actual risk needs to be taken in conjunction with the person using services themselves, as well as the professionals involved. Just as taking a risk is a personal choice, levels of risk are perceptions, and a judgement about an acceptable level of risk should be a joint decision.

Services

Refers to services provided by your own organisation or other agencies.

Signpost

Means to assist individuals to access the most appropriate information about other services and groups that will support their identified needs.

Social Model of disability

The Social Model of disability says that disability is caused **by the way society is organised**, rather than by a person's impairment or difference.

The Social Model of disability looks at ways of **removing barriers which restrict life choices** for people with impairments* or differences.

When barriers are removed, disabled people can be independent and equal in society, with choice and control over their own lives.

Disabled people developed the Social Model of disability because the traditional medical model did not explain their personal experience of disability or help to develop more inclusive ways of living.

(* Impairment is defined as the limitation of a person's physical, mental or sensory function on a long-term basis.) Extract from *children in the picture* www.childreninthepicture.org.uk/au_socialmodel

Sources of information

Will include a wide variety of current information. For example from:

- Professional organisations, e.g. professional bodies, trade associations and trade unions
- Professional contacts, e.g. colleagues, mentor, supervisor, tutors/lecturers and researchers
- Written sources, e.g. professional journals, research reports and policy documents
- Networks such as black and minority ethnic groups to consider cultural issues, e.g. fasting, festivals and priorities

Support

Refers to the support you provide. It includes: verbal explanation, written information, accompanying the individual or arranging for this to happen.

Transitions

Transitions are daily and intermittent changes in a person's life that may affect their well-being, the way they behave and develop and their ability to continue to learn and cope with other changes.

There are two major types of transitions: the first includes transitions within daily life, for example with adults moving from and to home/ the provision to a day centre, and for children going from and to home/ the provision to school. They also involve changing activities and routines within the day where there are differing expectations and requirements from the child, young person or adult.

The second is intermittent and involves a significant change for the person. These transitions can be divided into three categories. First, those that are common to most people; for example, when people move from one form of accommodation and living environment to another. Second, those that are shared by a significant number of peers, such as families separating. Third, those that are personal and may not be shared or understood by others.

For children and young people, the first will include transferring between years in the same school, or college or transferring from one school to another. It could also include transitional experiences such as physical changes, e.g. the onset of puberty. The second may be their parents divorcing. The third being in foster or residential care, having a parent or carer who abuses drugs or alcohol, or being a young carer.

(Source: Leadership and management NOS Ref: LMC B3)

Values and principles

Are those specified by: professional bodies, government, your employer, service users and their carers and by relevant national bodies.

1 Element 1 - Work with individuals with sensory needs to identify their training, employment and career development needs and preferences

Performance Criteria

You need to show that according to your level of experience and seniority you:

- a) Examine relevant documents, records and information that can help you support, explain and advise individuals about how their short, medium and long-term goals, needs and circumstances might affect their training, employment and career development opportunities
- b) Provide active support to enable individuals to identify the training, employment and career development opportunities open to them, taking account of their:
 - Aspirations, strengths and talents
 - Support needs
 - Abilities
 - Experience
 - Knowledge
 - Language/ communication needs
 - Qualifications
 - Training needs related to each opportunity
 - Own expectations and assumptions
 - Transitions issues (to adulthood or other life situations)
- c) Ensure that the service operates in a manner which encourages, empowers and enables individuals and their carers to participate fully in the planning of support and the subsequent arrangements

- d) Support individuals to explore and communicate the range of training, employment and career development options that:
- They are interested in
 - Are appropriate to their aspirations, talents, support needs, abilities, experience, knowledge and qualifications
 - Will provide career pathways for them
- e) Support individuals to examine the changes that working would make to all aspects of their lives when selecting an appropriate option
- f) Seek and acquire the relevant support through effective signposting where individuals need additional support in making their choice, e.g. to most effective sources of information and to knowledgeable people such as a careers advisor, a job coach or a mentor
- g) Work in a team context, forging and sustaining relationships across agencies and respecting the contribution of others working with children, young people, adults and families
- h) Share experience through formal and informal exchanges and work with adults who are parents and carers.

2 Element 2 - Enable individuals with sensory needs to identify, seek, prepare for and access training, employment and career development opportunities

Performance Criteria

You need to show that according to your level of experience and seniority you:

- a) Support individuals to identify the places where information about the training, employment and career development opportunities they are interested in can be found
- b) Support individuals to visit places where appropriate vacancies for training, employment and career development of the type they want will be available
- c) Judge effectively when you should provide the support yourself and when you should refer the situation to another practitioner or professional or signpost the individual to appropriate support
- d) Support individuals and, where appropriate, acquire additional support to enable individuals to communicate their needs to the people involved in advertising training, job vacancies and career development opportunities
- e) Support individuals to overcome a range of social and environmental barriers which impact on functional ability and advise on the use of assistive technology
- f) Work with individuals to seek and acquire information and advice about the work, career and training opportunities they are interested in
- g) Support individuals to understand the information about and the requirements for the jobs they are interested in
- h) Support individuals to:
 - Identify experiences, interests and qualifications to include in curriculum vitae and applications for employment
 - Acquire and complete applications and other requirements for employment

- i) Support individuals who have any specific needs to access, understand and complete applications for training, employment and career development opportunities. The applications should be in a media that is appropriate to the individual's communication preferences
- j) Work with individuals to prepare them for interviews. This includes rehearsing individuals for interviews, where this is appropriate
- k) Support individuals to attend interviews and ensure that reasonable adjustments have been made to meet any additional needs they may have, e.g. access to work assessments
- l) Help individuals prepare for work, examining any additional needs they may have when getting to, during and getting home from work, e.g. journey planning
- m) Support individuals who may be able to access additional resources such as assistive technology or a workstation assessment by helping them to access the resources.

3 Element 3 - Support individuals to sustain training and employment and to evaluate the effectiveness of the work opportunities

Performance Criteria

You need to show that according to your level of experience and seniority you:

- a) Support individuals to progress agreed development plans
- b) Work with individuals, employers and the supporting organisation(s) to review development plans and identify progress made or any changes arising
- c) Work with individuals to assist with evaluating the benefits of the training, employment and career development including the impact upon personal finances
- d) Manage the process of transition in a timely way and help the child, young person or adult to reach a positive outcome
- e) Identify opportunities to discuss the effects and results of transition on development, training and work opportunities
- f) Work with employers and individuals to identify any ongoing needs including training needs, health and safety and access needs and take the agreed actions that address each need
- g) Support individuals to evaluate any additional resources accessed and their effectiveness, e.g. assistive technology
- h) Support individuals to evaluate actions taken to overcome social and environmental barriers that hinder their access to development, training and work opportunities
- i) Operate an effective cross-agency referral process.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

Competent practice is a combination of the application of skills and knowledge informed by values and ethics. This specification details the knowledge and understanding required to carry out competent practice for the performance described in this standard.

When using this specification **it is important to read the knowledge requirements in relation to the expectations and requirements of your job role.**

You need to show that you know, understand and can apply in practice according to your level of experience and seniority:

A. CORE VALUES

Use and develop methods and systems to communicate, record and report

1. Legal and organisational requirements on equality, diversity, discrimination, rights, confidentiality and sharing of information when communicating, recording and reporting with individuals, key people and others
2. Knowledge and practice that underpin the holistic person-centred approach which enables you to work in ways that:
 - Place the individual's preferences and best interests at the centre of everything you do
 - Provide active support for the individuals
 - Recognise the uniqueness of individuals and their circumstances
 - Empower individuals to take responsibility (as far as they are able and within any restrictions placed upon them), and make and communicate their own decisions about their lives, actions and risks
3. Methods and ways of communicating that:
 - Support equality and diversity
 - Support the rights of people to communicate in their preferred way, media and language
 - Are ethical and adhere to any codes of practice relevant to your work

- Respect other people's ideas, values and principles
 - Ensure people's dignity and rights when identifying and overcoming barriers to communication
4. How to manage ethical dilemmas and conflicts for individuals, those who use services and staff/ colleagues, about communication, recording and reporting
 5. How to challenge information, documents, systems, structures, procedures and practices that are discriminatory, especially in relation to individuals' communication and information needs.

Contribute to the development and maintenance of healthy and safe practices in the working environment

6. Legal and organisational requirements on equality, diversity, discrimination, rights, confidentiality and sharing of information when contributing to the development and maintenance of healthy and safe practices in the working environment
7. Methods and ways of working that:
 - Support equality and diversity when contributing to the development and maintenance of healthy and safe practices in the working environment
 - Are effective when dealing with, and challenging information, documents, systems, structures, procedures and practices that are discriminatory
 - Are ethical and adhere to any codes of practice relevant to your work
 - Respect other people's ideas, values and principles when contributing to the development and maintenance of healthy and safe practices in the working environment.

Take responsibility for the continuing professional development of self and others

8. Up-to-date knowledge and practice of legal and organisational requirements for equality, diversity, discrimination, rights, confidentiality and sharing of information and how to update and develop your own, and the practice of other staff on these
9. How to access training and development to enable you to manage ethical dilemmas and conflicts for individuals, those who use services and staff.

B. LEGISLATION AND ORGANISATIONAL POLICY AND PROCEDURES

1. Codes of practice and conduct, and standards and guidance relevant to your own and the roles, responsibilities, accountability and duties of others when supporting individuals to access training, employment and career development
2. Current local, UK and European legislation and organisational requirements, procedures and practices for:
 - Data protection including the recording, reporting, storage, security and sharing of information
 - Health and safety
 - Risk assessment and management
 - Protecting individuals from danger, harm and abuse
 - Enabling individuals to seek, apply for, gain and sustain employment
 - Employment law generally and specifically related to the needs and circumstances of the individuals with whom you are working
 - Key government initiatives that promote life chances and employment opportunities for individuals
3. Operating organisational procedures and relevant regulatory frameworks, as well as appropriate referral routes, within your own organisation and to other agencies.

C. THEORY AND GOOD PRACTICE

In relation to self

1. Your understanding of theories relevant to the individuals with whom you work, about issues you are likely to face when:
 - Individuals have to change, or have had to change, their job because of their needs and circumstances
 - Supporting individuals to apply for, gain and sustain employment and career development
 - Individuals fail to gain employment or when individuals are not able to cope with a job

- Individuals have unrealistic expectations about their own abilities

In relation to information

2. How and where to access information and support that can inform your practice when supporting individuals to seek, apply for and gain employment, training and career development opportunities
3. How you can access, review and evaluate information about training, employment and career development opportunities relevant to the needs and preferences of the individuals with whom you work
4. Identify Government reports, inquiries and research that are relevant to individuals seeking, applying for and gaining training and employment and career development opportunities
5. Know about local resources and how to access information including, where appropriate, a common/ single assessment of support needs
6. Paperwork that has to be completed when individuals seek, apply for, gain and sustain training, employment and career development opportunities.

In relation to communication

7. Methods of consulting with different groups including children, young people and adults, their organisations or groups and actively listening to their feedback
8. Methods for collecting, analysing and interpreting feedback to enable decisions to be made about your support
9. Understanding of the impact of multiple impairments. Be aware of the potential for miscommunication in these circumstances and therefore carefully plan how you will communicate with the individual and use or arrange the most effective communication methods
10. Be aware that individuals may prefer to express themselves using a different mode of communication compared with how they prefer to receive information and adapt how you communicate accordingly
11. Be resourceful when overcoming barriers to communication and barriers restricting the independence of the people you support

12. The key issues in responding appropriately to particular experiences are empathy, allowing individuals to move at their own pace, having space to adjust, ensuring privacy and enabling individuals the opportunity to express emotion in a safe environment and in their preferred language/ communication method
13. How to provide active support and place the preferences and best interests of individuals at the centre of everything you do, whilst enabling them to take responsibility (as far as they are able and within any restrictions placed upon them) and make and communicate their own decisions about their lives, actions and risks when accessing employment, training and career development opportunities.

In relation to partnerships and collaboration with others

14. How to work in partnership with individuals, key people and those within and outside your organisation to support individuals to seek, apply for and gain employment, training and career development opportunities
15. What is meant by employers making “reasonable adjustments” and how these would apply for the individuals with whom you are supporting
16. The differing reasons why employers may be apprehensive or anxious when employing people with sensory needs and the types of support available to employers
17. The importance of ensuring the individual understands the needs of employment and any support they are receiving, including who to contact if the support is not effective or sufficient
18. The availability of support systems for individuals experiencing specific kinds of change or loss, e.g. those associated with the needs of those with particular disabilities, carers or cultural groupings, addictions, offending behaviours, school or employment difficulties
19. Aspects of human growth and development and how these can affect, and be affected, when individuals access employment, training and career development opportunities
20. Chronological age and maturity being different aspects of development and having different implications (e.g. in the area of personal responsibility and independence training)

21. Employment and its benefits to self-esteem, self-image and the identity of individuals
22. Social, emotional, intellectual and language development that might enhance or inhibit an individual when seeking, applying for, gaining and retaining employment, training and career development opportunities
23. The effects of stress and distress caused by seeking, applying for, gaining and sustaining training, employment and career development
24. Awareness of power issues in various work settings and the impact these have on service outcomes, e.g. domiciliary settings, sheltered housing settings etc.

In relation to transitions

25. Consider issues of identity, delayed effects of change and be aware of possible signs that someone is going through a particular transition
26. Know about the likely impact of key transitions, such as divorce, bereavement, family break-up, puberty, move from primary to secondary school, unemployment and leaving home or care
27. Understand patterns of transition from childhood to adulthood and appreciate that it may be different from your own past experiences
28. Be aware that children and young people are often at a vulnerable stage of their development when transitions occur and be aware of the issues of dealing with people at these times in their lives. In particular know how to promote good mental health in children and young people who have a sensory impairment. This is often best achieved by good quality support services and networks so workers need to be aware of these services and able to offer or refer young people on to suitable support services that use their preferred language/ communication method
29. Understand that children and young people with disabilities or additional educational needs may need additional support to manage transitions, and know when to seek specialist advice
30. Know that children and young people can be influenced by their peer group.