

National Occupational Standards

Sensory Services:

Standard 6 - Work with individuals and key people to enable them to make informed decisions related to their sensory needs

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STANDARD 6 - WORK WITH INDIVIDUALS AND KEY PEOPLE TO ENABLE THEM TO MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS RELATED TO THEIR SENSORY NEEDS

ELEMENTS OF COMPETENCE

1. Inform individuals and key people about your own and your organisation's duties and responsibilities and those of other relevant organisations
2. Plan with individuals and key people to identify, gather, analyse and understand information in relation to their sensory needs
3. Work with individuals and key people to enable them to identify, analyse, clarify and express their strengths, wishes and aspirations
4. Work in collaboration with individuals and key people to enable them to assess and make informed decisions about their needs, circumstances, risks, preferred options and resources and evaluate outcomes.

ABOUT THIS STANDARD

For this standard you need to promote the values and principles underpinning best practice in working with and empowering individuals and key people to enable them to make informed decisions about their lives. 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, plan, take action and evaluate activities related to making informed decisions about their lives.

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.

You will ensure this by keeping up to date with changes in legislation, policy and procedures, developing your own competence and skills in line with changes in knowledge and practice and responding appropriately to instances of poor, bad or dangerous practice. The standard will require you to be able to signpost individuals to other relevant organisations.

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

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.

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.

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.

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

Constructive feedback

Feedback that is a two-way process that is communicated in the most appropriate way to the person giving and receiving it to inform their personal development and growth. The standard requires you to seek constructive feedback to inform your own development. In the case of those working with children and young people, there will be opportunities for feedback directly to or from children and young people and their representatives.

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.

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.

Guidance

Guidance can be national, local or organisational.

Holistically

Refers to considering all aspects of the person's life.

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.

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, communicator guides, intervenors, Deafblind workers, friends, carers, social worker, support worker, role model, befriender, advocates, habilitation/ rehabilitation workers and others with whom the individual has a supportive relationship including job coaches, careers advisors, Connexions, Careers Wales, Careers Scotland, etc.

Knowledge and evidence based practice

Current best practice based upon a number of sources including: research, the expertise and experience of children, young people, adults, families, groups, communities, practitioners and managers and evidence from regulation and inspection.

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.

Response to poor practice

Your response to poor practice may involve: offering constructive feedback, offering information and advice to enable the individual(s) concerned to access appropriate guidance and support and/ or reporting incidents of bad or dangerous practice to the appropriate authority.

Responsibilities and duties

Refers to professional areas of responsibilities and the duties that are required to be performed.

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.

Significant others

Is used here to mean any people whom the individual wishes to involve in their care programme. This may include partner, relative and/ or friend, but also includes other members of the community or other workers such as volunteers, other care practitioners, an advocate, an interpreter and a police or prison officer. For regulatory reasons, in the case of children, significant others are likely to be family members unless the child is subject to a care order.

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 - Inform individuals and key people about your own and your organisation's duties and responsibilities and those of other relevant organisations

Performance Criteria

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

- a) Prepare and provide relevant and accessible information about your own and your organisation's duties and responsibilities and those of other relevant organisations
- b) Provide information at an appropriate time and in a manner that will maximise understanding and ensure an open and honest communication about your role, responsibilities and duties
- c) Examine the information given, and answer questions, to ensure that your own and your organisation's roles, responsibilities and duties and those of other relevant organisations, including any regulatory requirements, are fully understood by individuals
- d) Ensure that expectations are discussed in order that false or unrealistic expectations are not raised
- e) Provide (or signpost the individual to) additional information in the most appropriate format when it is required.

2 Element 2 - Plan with individuals and key people to identify, gather, analyse and understand information in relation to their sensory needs

Performance Criteria

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

- a) Support people to plan, identify, gather, analyse and understand information about:
 - The individual's needs, circumstances, associated risks and the implications of these to themselves and others
 - Resources which are relevant to the individual's needs, circumstances and associated risks
 - A wider source which may include the extended family and other key people
- b) Ensure that the information provided:
 - Is accurate
 - Is socially inclusive
 - Addresses cultural linguistic, religious and other needs
 - Is not discriminatory and is in an appropriate language and format for the individual child, young person or adult
- c) Identify gaps in the information and feed them back to the appropriate sources and do your best to close the gaps
- d) Agree and record the decisions and concerns raised with/ by the individual and record how these have been actioned/ resolved
- e) In the case of children and young people include their parents in the information gathering and evaluation process where appropriate, as they often have excellent skills and knowledge.

3 Element 3 - Work with individuals and key people to enable them to identify, analyse, clarify and express their strengths, wishes and aspirations

Performance Criteria

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

- a) Work holistically with individuals and key people to help them to identify:
 - Their strengths, expectations, rights and responsibilities
 - Their wishes and aspirations
 - Any potential conflicts between their own and other people's expectations and perceptions
 - The implications of any regulatory requirements on their expectations
- b) Assist people to identify and address:
 - How to maximise their strengths, abilities and achievements including using resources such as assistive technology
 - Their developmental needs and any associated risks
 - How they can communicate and use their strengths and abilities to promote independent living
- c) Work with individuals to help them to recognise their own potential in terms of their sensory needs, wishes and aspirations
- d) Record outcomes agreed and discuss them with the individual
- e) In the case of children and young people include their parents in the information gathering and evaluation process where appropriate, as they often have excellent skills and knowledge.

4 Element 4 - Work in collaboration with individuals and key people to enable them to assess and make informed decisions about their needs, circumstances, risks, preferred options and resources and evaluate outcomes

Performance Criteria

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

- a) Work with individuals and key people collaboratively to:
- Identify and assess the individual's needs, circumstances and any associated risks
 - Identify and assess the individual's options and the range of resources that could meet their needs and circumstances, taking account of any risks and regulatory requirements
 - Identify the degree of risk involved in using or in not using different options including assistive technology
 - Support decisions about the individual's preferred options and resources, taking account of any risk(s) and regulatory requirements
 - Identify any risk(s) that may arise from the individual's needs not being met
- b) Identify, with individuals and key people, ways in which they can communicate:
- Their strengths and their needs
 - Their circumstances
 - Other transitions within life
 - Their preferred options
 - Any associated risks

- c) Explain to the individual that you will, with their agreement, signpost them to another agency, or agencies that will be able to give advice on their specific needs or requirements such as:
- Housing departments/ associations
 - A financial advisor
 - A benefits advisor
 - Counselling services
- d) Discuss and evaluate the collaborative work undertaken and identify any gaps or areas that could be improved to aid better decision-making
- e) In the case of children and young people include their parents in the information gathering and evaluation process where appropriate, as they often have excellent skills and knowledge.

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 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. Country, UK, EU legislation, statutory codes, standards, frameworks and guidance relevant to sensory support and related fields, including multi-disciplinary and multi-organisational practice, data protection and confidentiality of information
2. International law and social policy, in broad terms, for the purpose of comparison
3. Social policy, including policy on social care and children, education, health, housing and welfare rights
4. Demographic and social trends
5. Policies on diversity, discrimination and on promoting the independence and autonomy of children, young people, adults, families, groups and communities and research on their effectiveness
6. Organisational structures, policies and procedures for referral.

C. THEORY AND GOOD PRACTICE

In relation to self

1. Standards within your own work and the sector
2. Learning theories, teaching methods and learning styles for your own use
3. Theories about reflective practice and methods that are effective in monitoring your own performance
4. Approaches to knowledge and evidence based practice
5. Know how to seek support and critically evaluate your own involvement
6. Know how to challenge poor practice effectively.

In relation to information

7. Knowledge of policies, procedures and regulatory requirements for the security and confidentiality of information
8. Know how to access and use information and communications technology (ICT) and other electronic systems that may help in the collection of information

9. Understanding of social care, social work, social services and structures
10. Lessons learned from both serious service and practice failures and from successful work practices and programmes
11. Systems for monitoring quality.

In relation to communication

12. Methods of consulting with different groups including children and young people and adults, their organisations or groups and actively listening to their feedback
13. Methods for collecting, analysing and interpreting feedback to enable decisions to be made about your support
14. 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
15. 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
16. Be resourceful when overcoming barriers to communication and barriers restricting the independence of the people you support
17. Know how to apply the most effective methods of communication to explain clearly to individuals and key people any outcomes
18. Use of communication in order to determine the subsequent actions which may be necessary depending on the outcomes from the assessment of an individual's physical health and sensory needs
19. Know how to interpret signs from the individual as to their wishes, although they may not make these explicit
20. Know how to encourage individuals and their significant others to describe their own needs and wishes
21. Recognising and facilitating each person's choice and use of the language and/or form of language/communication
22. Know how to be open and honest with those concerned
23. Know how to encourage significant others and key people to support the individual

24. Know how the nature of the relationship between the significant other(s) (or key people) and the individual may alter the extent to which you ask them to be involved, or the individual would wish for them to be involved
25. Having the skills to plan communication in advance and making sure either you have the necessary skills in place or have access to the specialist communication skills needed
26. Maintaining the trust and confidence of individuals and key people by communicating in an open, accurate and understandable way.

In relation to partnerships and collaboration with others

27. Theories and methods about working in collaboration with the main groups of people using services
28. Theories about the impact of discrimination and oppression and the methods of working with diversity
29. Knowledge of the range of local and appropriate national resources and services including those provided by representative groups
30. Knowledge of an appropriate range of assistive technology options and how to integrate them
31. Know how to compare the benefits of different options
32. Theories of organisations, group behaviour and organisational change
33. Methods for recognising, assessing and managing risk
34. Models and methods of dealing with loss and bereavement
35. Theories of poverty, unemployment, health needs and other sources of discrimination and disadvantage and their impact on social exclusion
36. 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 children and young people

37. Theories and methods of promoting personal, social and emotional well-being with children and young people
38. Theories and methods of good assessment practices for use with children and young people

39. Theories of pedagogy including strategies and instructional methods for use with children and young people
40. Managing risk and protecting children and young people from harm
41. The social, emotional and psychological impact of hearing loss sight loss, failing sight on the individual and the family, e.g. gender issues and parental role
42. The importance of involving key people, in particular parents (who often have extensive skills and knowledge), as well as other significant people in the child or young person's life
43. Methods of working across age ranges and differing needs
44. Understanding the role of habilitation work with children and young people
45. Psychological and sociological explanations of:
 - Human growth and development and the factors that impact on it including a full lifespan, i.e. child development to gerontology concept development
 - Mental health and well-being
 - Social interactions and relationships
 - Discrimination and oppression
 - Human behaviour
 - Self-determination and motivation.

In relation to transitions

46. Consider issues of identity, delayed effects of change and be aware of possible signs that someone is going through a particular life transition
47. 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
48. Understand patterns of transition from childhood to adulthood and appreciate that it may be different from your own past experiences
49. 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

50. Understand that children and young people with disabilities or additional educational needs may need extra support to manage transitions and know when to seek specialist advice
51. Know that children and young people can be influenced by their peer group.

In relation to habilitation/ rehabilitation

52. Historical perspectives of habilitation/ rehabilitation and habilitation and social welfare
53. Habilitation/ rehabilitation context and professional practice
54. Contemporary issues and trends in habilitation/ rehabilitation
55. Understanding of why people use habilitation/ rehabilitation, social care, children's and health services
56. Principles, theories and methods of habilitation/ rehabilitation practice
57. Theories about the impact of authority and power in the habilitation/ rehabilitation role.