

Community Sector Relations Unit

Changes to Quality and Safety

Background

The *Quality and Safety Standards Framework for Tasmania's Agency Funded Community Sector 2009-2012* (qualityFutures) was implemented effective from 1 July 2009.

The aim of qualityFutures was for all Department of Health and Human Services (the Agency) funded community organisations to be compliant with a set of quality and safety standards.

As planned, the Agency reviewed qualityFutures in 2011. Riley & Riley was engaged to conduct the review, which occurred in the middle of last year. The final report was delivered to the Agency in November 2011, below is a basic summary of the report and accepted recommendations.

Overview of Recommendations

Feedback from the evaluation was generally very positive and highlights some major achievements. There were also a number of areas identified where the Agency can streamline and refine our processes.

The Departmental Executive has accepted all 18 Recommendations contained within the Evaluation Report. In fact, we have made the decision to enhance some recommendations to ensure the future sustainability and integrity of the Framework.

The Evaluation Report identifies the need for change in terms of the way we monitor the quality and safety of services provided by the funded community sector. It also identified the

need to strengthen the contract management relationship between the Agency and community sector organisations (CSOs).

In line with these recommendations, the Operational Units will be taking on a more holistic contract management role, while the Community Sector Quality and Safety Team will commence a regulatory role.

The implementation of the recommendations will be transitional from July 2012. Between now and June, the Community Sector Quality and Safety Team will be developing resources, tools and templates to support the changing roles. It is expected that Operational Units will be performing their new roles from October 2012.

We will continue with our initial commitments including ongoing communication, flexibility in application, reducing administrative burden as far as possible.

The qualityFutures 2009-2012 will continue for the 6th reporting period (i.e. January 2012 to June 2012). This means that the community sector organisations will still be required to provide their quality and safety submission to the Community Sector Quality and Safety Team.

Quality & Safety into the future

As a result of accepting these recommendations there will be quite a few changes to the Quality & Safety framework for DHHS. The most important things for community sector organisations to note are:

- You must continue to undertake quality and safety activities, against internationally/nationally/state recognised Standards.
- Quality and safety accountability requirements will continue to be within contractual arrangements.
- Resources/tools will be developed and made available to you.
- You can expect at least an annual visit from the Operational Unit (contract manager).
- A quality and safety audit will be undertaken by the Community Sector Quality and Safety Team at least once in every three year cycle.
- Operational Unit staff will provide support to prepare for quality and safety audit.
- A written outcome from the audit will be provided to both the organisation and the Operational Unit that provides the funding; the format of the report is yet to be determined.
- Operational Unit staff will monitor your quality and safety activity and progress between audits.
- There will no longer be a requirement to complete the Self Report Workbook. However it is expected that organisations will have a system to monitor continuous quality improvement.
- You are no longer required to submit de-identified data. However, DHHS expects organisations will have systems and processes to ensure that learnings from incidents and feedback contribute towards enhancing service delivery.

Funding Agreements

DHHS is developing an Electronic Grants Management System that will be the repository for organisational information, including documentation relating to the Framework.

The initial version of the system will be made available to staff during 2012, and it will be heavily utilised for the next round of Funding Agreement development.

The quality and safety references and reporting requirements, within the Funding Agreement template, are being updated to include some of these changes. For example, the date range of

2009-2012 is being removed, as is the requirement for the providing de-identified data.

Further information

The Community Sector Quality and Safety Team are also available to answer your questions. Call them on 6777 1982 or contact them via email at communitysector.quality@dhhs.tas.gov.au.