



Quality of Life audits and standards

December 2013



- The Quality of Life Standards are based on people with disabilities being seen and respected as equal citizens in society

The Standards have been written by over 650 young people and adults with learning disabilities and autism in partnership with people with physical disabilities and sensory impairments, older people and people with mental health needs.



The Standards reflect what children, young people and adults with disabilities consider to be a good quality life in relation to these areas:

- My Voice (accessible communication, advocacy, complaints)
- Staying Safe
- Having a full life(independent travel, education, friendships and relationships, being part of the community)
- Employment
- My money and buying my own support
- My home
- Short breaks
- Personal care.

Quality of Life audits



- In Changing Our Lives we use the standards in Quality of Life audits.
- Quality of Life audits are a person centred way of checking quality of life.
- Each audit is led by a paid individual with disabilities.



A range of tools are used in each audit to gather evidence:

- spending time with the person, getting to know them and asking them a series of questions about their experiences and views; with permission telling their story
- meeting with the family or circle of support to explore their experiences and views
- interviewing staff
- observation
- checking activity plans, communication passports and other documents for best practice in line with the Quality of Life standards.

A national set of Quality of Life Standards



As a result of the Winterbourne abuse scandal, the Dept. of Health commissioned Changing Our Lives to produce:

- one set of Quality of Life Standards that can be used across England to drive up quality in relation to the lives of people with learning disabilities and autism

- good practice guidance which will explain how to embed the Standards in local contracts, develop audit teams led by people with disabilities, embed standards into commissioning processes and embed them into reviews

This work will be launched in the House of Commons in Feb 2014 by Norman Lamb, Care Minister.



A national set of Quality of Life Standards



We developed this set of Standards in Dudley. Here's what people said:



“these standards say everything I feel everyday.”

“these standards need to go from top to bottom and back up again.”

One older lady said the standards would be useful because this is how she feels:

“I long to say to them, ‘can’t you see me? I might have a few miles on the clock and grey hair but I know what I need.’”

Quality of Life audits in Dudley



- In Dudley we have used the audit process to check the quality of life of adults with learning disabilities and autism, older people, people with sensory and physical impairments.
- Here are some of the things we found out.
- All of these issues are being worked on by Council officers.

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My Voice



Advocacy needs to be further developed for vulnerable groups.
All advocacy provision needs to work to national standards.

Staying Safe

People we worked with felt unsafe in the community at times and vulnerable.

The Safe Places scheme needs to be developed widely across Dudley, along with other initiatives to make people safe in the borough.

Leading a full life



There needs to be a move away from a reliance on building based services to community supports, so people can be as active and included in the community as possible.

“I began using the Good Neighbour Scheme around 6-years ago following the death of my wife. My mobility had begun to deteriorate and getting out was getting harder, so social services had arranged for me to begin having meals on wheels delivered. One day a leaflet advertising the scheme was placed on the meal tray. I became curious about the scheme and decided to make contact. I never went out and have very few visitors so felt at a very low-ebb. I was introduced to Betty and we just “hit it off” straightaway. Betty might bring me a little bit of shopping, but I just appreciate her company. It is great to have something to look forward to, it really breaks my week up and I feel much safer knowing that someone is keeping an eye out for me. Life would be very grim indeed without the prospect of Betty visiting each week”.

Leading a full life



Improved support for young people with range of disabilities to gain meaningful employment.

“Well, when I left the secondary school I went to the careers, to see what I wanted to do and they passed me onto the disability advisor at the job centre, then she was with me for so many years but I found that she helped me with job placements but nothing else. I haven’t had a secure job if you know what I mean, it’s just been a trial there, it turns out there is never a position or a job at the end of it when they had said there may be a possibility of a job but then after six or how many weeks they turn round and say sorry but there is no job”.

Council employment services are supporting adults with learning disabilities to gain employment.

Choice and Control



People wanted to make choices about how their care was provided. They wanted more **CHOICE** and **CONTROL**. More creative options for using your personal budget need to be developed and traditional services that often limit independence need to be minimised.

“When I moved into my own home my social worker arranged for home care to come in. However this did not really meet my expectations. I felt that the care was not up to scratch and they did not really understand that I was a young woman who sometimes wanted a late night or a lie-in. After some time trying to convince my social worker that I was unhappy, we agreed to investigate using direct payments so that I could decide who supports me and how. My social worker and I talked about my interests, what was important to me and I told them in what areas I wanted the most support. At this time, I felt that I wanted to be in control of who entered my home and I wanted to tell my staff how to support me. I think direct payments are great, people are in control and get to choose who supports them and how. I think it means you can be you”.

What's happening next ?



- Changing Our Lives is working with Dudley Council to develop a programme of Quality of Life audits.
- Part of this work will involve training a team of local people as auditors so they can lead this work. This will be in partnership with Healthwatch and Voices for Choices.