

# SQS 12

**The service unit respects the service users' right to make informed choices of the service they received as far as practicable.**

- 12.1 The service unit has policy and procedures to provide service users with timely information about operations which affect the services received by them.
- 12.2 The service unit has policy and procedures for providing service users with opportunities, if appropriate, to make informed choices and decisions about the services they receive, and such policy and procedures are accessible to them.

## **A. INTRODUCTION TO SQS 12 – INFORMED CHOICE**

Service Quality Standard 12 focuses on respecting the service user's rights to make informed choices of the core services they receive, as far as practicable.

Right to make informed choices mean that with the provision of timely information, service users can determine the course of action they wish to take whenever possible, and make decisions about what happens to them.

In some cases, service users may need assistance in making these decisions, either from a family member, or in some cases a formally appointed guardian. This SQS focuses on the decision-making process and aims to ensure that service users are involved to the greatest degree possible in decisions about their life. It is important for a service provider to determine which decisions service users need assistance with and to work out who will assist them and how they will be involved in decision-making.

This SQS seeks to ensure that service users (or where appropriate their family or guardian) make informed decisions. To be informed, a service user must have adequate information available, they must understand the information that is provided and they must understand the consequences of different decisions.

Before service users (or in some cases their family or guardian) can make such decisions, they need to have information about the situation. In particular, this SQS requires that they are informed about the operation of the service they are receiving and any proposed changes to the operation of the service. Therefore, this SQS seeks to ensure that the service users and other important decision-makers are aware of the service's operations.

Service Quality Standard 12 focuses on decision-making about the specific services received by service users. There is another level of decision-making, and that relates to the overall way that a service operates. This aspect of decision-making about the service is not covered by this SQS, it is covered by SQS 6.

## **B. REQUIREMENTS FOR MEETING SQS 12**

In order to meet SQS 12, your service unit will need to:

### **1. Have policy and procedures for providing service users with timely information**

To ensure that service users are provided with timely information about the aspects of the unit's operations which affect the services received by them, the service unit should have an established mechanism specifying under what circumstances and the timing required and how to provide service users with such information.

**2. Have policy and procedures for providing service users with opportunities to make choices and decisions about the service they receive**

The service unit should demonstrate that it has a planned approach specifying how and when service users are provided with opportunities, if appropriate, to make informed choices and decisions about the services they receive.

**3. Make the policy and procedures mentioned in 2 above accessible to service users, staff and other interested parties.**

**4. Ensure that the relevant policies and procedures are implemented.**

**C. RESOURCES TO ASSIST YOUR SERVICE UNIT TO MEET SQS 12**

This SQS does not attempt to prescribe decision making about daily routine/life or about the important life events of the service users. Rather, this SQS focuses on whether the service users are provided with timely information about the aspects of the unit's operation which affect the services they receive, and appropriate opportunities to make informed choices and decision about the services they receive.

The supporting documentation provided explains informed decision-making with the aim of providing some concrete steps and guidance that a service unit can take to ensure service users have the opportunity to make informed decisions. This handbook contains the following documents:

- Sample policy on respecting service users' rights to make informed choices of the services they receive; and
- Guidelines for developing procedures for providing service users with appropriate opportunities to make informed choices.

## SAMPLE POLICY

### RESPECTING SERVICE USERS' RIGHTS TO MAKE INFORMED CHOICES

*[Insert name of service unit]*

1. *[Insert name of service unit]* is committed to *[insert mission of your service unit, for example "to ensure that children at risk are provided with the adequate level of care and protection."]*
2. In order to achieve this mission, *[Insert name of service unit]* is committed to provide timely information about the aspects of the unit's operations which affect the services received by the service users. *[Insert name of service unit]* will ensure that the service users and/or family members are aware of their rights to make informed decisions about the services they receive.
3. *[Insert name of service unit]* provides enough guidance to staff members on the procedures of respecting the rights of service users on making informed decisions about the services they receive.
4. This policy will be made accessible to service users, staff and other interested parties.

DATE: *[Insert date policy is created]*

DISTRIBUTION: *[Insert how and to whom policy will be distributed]*

REVIEW: *[Specify when and how the policy will be reviewed]*

# **GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING PROCEDURES FOR PROVIDING SERVICE USERS WITH APPROPRIATE OPPORTUNITIES TO MAKE INFORMED CHOICES**

## **1. Introduction**

These guidelines have been prepared to assist you to develop procedures appropriate to your service unit. The outline below may be used by you as:

- a reference document when reviewing existing policies and procedures; or
- a basis for developing your own documentation.

## **2. Purpose of guidelines**

The main purpose of these guidelines is to describe some of the key components of procedures for respecting the service users' rights to make informed choices of the services they receive.

## **3. Contents of your procedures**

The contents proposed below should be reviewed and amended to reflect your service unit's size, structure and focus.

- What choices on the services are available for the service users;
- What information will be required and provided to the service users for making choices on the services they receive (e.g. names and roles of key workers, hours of operation, locations of service delivery, forthcoming events);
- Under what circumstances will the timely information about the aspects of the unit's operations which affect the services be provided to service users ;
- Channels to keep service users informed of the established service operations;
- Channels to keep service users informed of the changes to service operations; and
- How and when the service users will be informed of the choices that are available and their decisions are sought.

## **4. Links**

You should consider how these procedures align with other service unit procedures and highlight the appropriate links. For example, these guidelines relate to those on information of the service provided

**5. Administration Issues relating to the policies and procedures**

In this section of the procedures, you will need to indicate:

- the date of the procedures;
- how and to whom the procedures will be distributed; and
- how and when the procedures will be reviewed.

- End -