

bild



THE QUALITY NETWORK

CHECKING QUALITY IN PERSON CENTRED WAYS

Background to The Quality Network

In 1997, a project called '*Quality is our business too*' was set up to develop a person-centred approach to the audit of services for people with learning disabilities, based on evaluating outcomes for individuals. The project ended and from it The Quality Network was launched in 1998. The information contained in this booklet will explain:

- **What The Quality Network is**
- **The Quality Network Principles**
- **How The Quality Network operates – the review process**
- **What kinds of services can be reviewed**
- **What makes for a successful review**
- **How to contact The Quality Network**

What is the Quality Network:

The Quality Network (TQN) works with people with learning disabilities, family members, providers and commissioners and looks at what life is like for people with learning disabilities and seeking ways to improve services.

The Quality Network is a review not an inspection and allows your organisation to:

- Review your own service
- Find out what life is like for the people you support
- Make sure you use their ideas in your planning
- Find out what needs to change
- Decide what needs to be done
- Agree a way to keep on checking quality

The review process has five key features:

- Stakeholders (people who are directly involved with services either as users, family members, workers, managers or commissioners) work together in a small group to collect information and make improvements to the service
- People with learning disabilities are directly involved in the stakeholder group
- People in the group spend time directly with individual people who use services
- The review is not a one-off fact finding exercise but is part of an annual cycle of review and improvement
- The review has an impact for both the organisation and directly for the people they support

Quality Network Principles

- **Inclusion and the social model of disability**
The social model of disability says that people are excluded because of people's attitudes and the way they are treated by others – not because of their disability

Services should enable people to be fully included in society and have the same rights and benefits as others

- **Nothing about us without us**

People are experts in their own lives so are the best people to say whether services are doing a good job and should take part as fully as possible in any work to measure quality

- **One person at a time**

We should look at people as individuals and not assume that all people with a certain disability are the same and want the same things

- **Look at the whole person**

Looking at people as individuals makes it possible to look at the whole of someone's life – not just the parts that are affected by the services they use. This is important as some people may get good services but still have a poor quality of life, or things might be better in some part of their life than in others.

- **Listen to what people tell us**

A person might be happy with conditions that an outside observer thinks are poor, or vice versa. It is important to pay attention to what people say about their lives and to think about what is important to them as an individual

- **Learn from the results and make sure something actually happens**

Quality monitoring must lead to real change and people need to be committed to work together, learn from the results and use these to bring about change in how the organisation operates and for people who use services

How The Quality Network Operates

- The Quality Network is managed by BILD.
- A bank of consultants, known as Quality Coaches, facilitate the reviews on behalf of The Quality Network.
- Each member organisation identifies the service they wish to review.
- The service then identifies a person to be responsible for getting the review team together. This person is called a Quality Leader.
- The Quality Leader organises a team of stakeholders including people with learning disabilities (self advocates), family members, frontline staff, managers and senior people as well as people from outside the organisation (e.g. Advocates) to act as reviewers. These people are known as the review team.
- The Quality Leader identifies who will be visited as part of the review

The following diagram gives details of what the review process entails:



The Quality Network Review Process

Workshop 1

The review team is brought together to workshop one, facilitated by a Quality Coach who trains the team in how to conduct the review. The idea is to get alongside people who use the service to find out what their life is really like. The review is based on spending a lot of time with people to look at their lives in relation to the following 10 outcome statements:

- 1. I make everyday choices**
- 2. I make important decisions about my life**
- 3. I take part in everyday activities**
- 4. People treat me with respect**
- 5. I have friendships and relationships**
- 6. I am part of my local community**
- 7. I get the chance to work**
- 8. I am safe from bullying and abuse**
- 9. I get help to stay healthy**
- 10. People listen to my family's views**

After workshop one, each review team member is linked to a service user who they visit four times over the next two weeks (ideally) to find out what life is really like for them.

Workshop 2

This workshop takes place after team members have completed all four visits.

The review team meet up for a second workshop. Each review team member feedbacks what they have found out about the person's life in relation to the ten outcomes. At this workshop, themes begin to emerge about where the organisation is delivering the outcomes and where improvement is needed.

Workshop 3

A third workshop then takes place to formulate an action plan based on what has emerged at the second workshop. You should allow two to four weeks between the second and third workshops.

Workshop 4 – The follow up

A fourth workshop takes place six months after workshop 3. This gives the review team the chance to monitor progress of the action plan. People who were visited after workshop one are revisited to see what impact the action plan has had on their lives.

The aims of this workshop are to:

- Celebrate the progress you have made since the review
- Assess progress towards the objectives and find out what has changed so far for people who use your services
- Find out how well the action plan has been working and making changes to the plan if needed
- Decide when the next review will start

The Review Team

The review team includes people with learning disabilities, family members and people working in the service, senior managers and lay people. Team members will need to have a knowledge and understanding of learning disabilities.

Membership of the review team should reflect the diversity of the local area and may include people from minority ethnic communities and other community members.

Each review team member has to commit to attend all four workshops and carry out four visits in between workshops one and two. Appropriate support must be offered to people who need it and supporters trained to carry out their role.

Quality Leader

Each review team has someone from the service to lead them through the review process, to co-ordinate the review team and the individual service users who are to be visited. This person was known as the Quality Leader and is usually a senior person from within the service.

Quality Coach

The Quality Network's Quality Coach is someone who has a background in working with people with learning disabilities. The bank of Quality Coaches includes parents of people with learning disabilities, managers, commissioners of services and people who have a learning disability. One or two Quality Coaches facilitate each review. The Coach offers support and guidance to the Quality Leader and the review team.

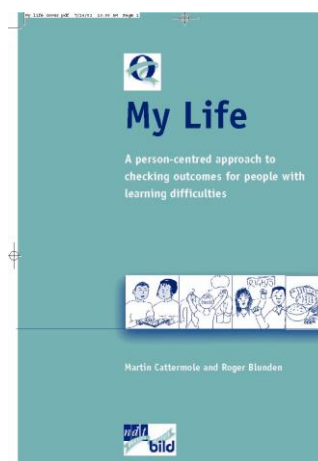
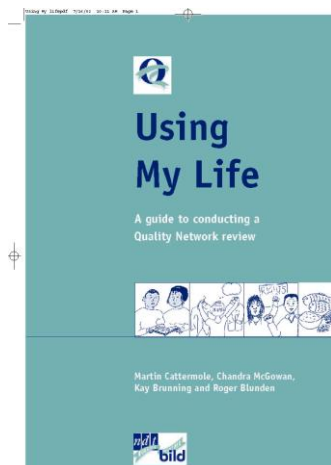
Using My Life and My Life

Support materials are supplied as part of the review process:

- 'Using My Life' is the comprehensive guide to conducting a Quality Network review.
- 'My Life' is the handbook which is used by each review team member whilst carrying out their visits to service users.

Quality Leaders receive all the materials prior to workshop one and have Using My Life in plenty of time to help them through the review planning stage. (The books are also available for sale through Bild's publication catalogue contact Bild on 01562 723010 to obtain a catalogue or online via the BILD website)

www.bild.org.uk



Service Review

A service review may cover one site, for example a day service or may cover more than one site for example, three residential homes managed by the same organisation. Organisations can join The Quality Network for one year or enter a longer term arrangement. This allows them to start reviewing the same services on a cyclical basis and see the real extent of change year on year. Other organisations review different sites each year giving them a flavour for what life is really like for service users across the organisation.

Continuous Quality Improvement

The review process is helpful to providers and commissioners in helping to address the Government's objective in *Valuing People* of '*ensuring all agencies commission and provide high quality, evidence-based and continuously improving services which promote good outcomes and best value*' (chapter 8).

The review process encourages organisations to engage in a process of continuous quality improvement. Once the first review has been completed it is important to keep using the review process. The review process has evolved and changed in response to feedback from member organisations. The Quality Network engages with member organisations regularly to find out how the process can be improved.

Membership

We are currently re-looking at membership status, however all organisations who undertake a Quality Network review, automatically become members of the QN.

Action Planning

The action plan which results from each review is used by the organisation to bring about real change. The plan is informed by the service users who have been visited by the review team members. This may be the first time the organisation has included service users in the decision making process.

The service users visited are often people who have been excluded from the decision making process previously because the organisation has not been able to find a process which does not rely on good communication skills. However, this process is fully inclusive because despite communication difficulties or the risk of behaviours becoming escalated, anyone can be visited as part of the review process.

The review process is about getting alongside the person with learning disabilities or asd and getting a real feel for what their life is like. The people visited do not need words to communicate to their visiting team member about their life. Merely by spending such a long period of time with the person over several visits, the review team member gets a clear message about whether the outcomes are being met.

Real Stories – Real People

One good example of this was when a man visited as part of one review had very limited verbal communication. When he went to the supermarket with his staff team, the cloth he wore when eating to protect his clothes was not removed. He indicated to his visiting review team member that he was not happy with this. It was also observed that he was not included in choosing anything from the shelves. The review team member asked staff what normally happened about shopping. He was told that the man he was visiting did not choose anything because he couldn't. After the review, things changed for this individual and the staff have now implemented a system of photographs to aid this man in choosing food from the supermarket and he regularly shops, choosing food of his liking and his 'bib' is no longer worn.

Another example is of a man who was visited as part of the review was not able to go to the pub on his own as there were issues about his behaviour when he was told he did not have enough money for drinks. Staff decided to review this risk assessment and talk to the staff at his local pub about how to work together to support him. His key-worker talked to the landlord about different types of communication and how his staff should inform the man firmly and clearly when he had no money left for more drinks and made sure they had contact numbers for his home. As a result of this working well they decided to review risk assessments for all their residents and see where they could promote community involvement by working with local shops and services to support people

The Quality Network review process is a very powerful but simple tool. There are no questionnaires, no tick boxes and no pressure on the person being visited to be positive about the service they are using. Once all the information about the service user's lives is collated at the second workshop, this invaluable and powerful information is used to inform the action plan at workshop 3.

Celebrate Good Practice

The review process provides organisations with the opportunity to highlight areas of good practice. It is vital for organisations to celebrate outcome areas which are going well in order to remain positive and optimistic in areas where improvements need to be made. These areas are celebrated within the public statement which is posted on The Quality Network's area of the BILD website.

Public Commitment to Making Changes

Each member organisation has clearly joined The Quality Network and embarked upon a review to bring about better outcomes for the people who use their services. Service providers are often aware of areas where they feel improvements are needed, but reviews tend to throw up areas which have not been considered before. Developing an action plan pins the organisation down to making changes within the service and this commitment to change is made public on The Quality Network's website.

What kinds of services can be reviewed:

The review process looks at outcomes for individuals, and looks at the whole of a person's life. The process can be used to learn about the outcomes of many different kinds of services including:

- day services
- residential services
- supported living
- supported employment
- short term breaks

Commissioner-led service reviews will look at services provided by a number of agencies and look across different types of service – for example supported living and residential care. These reviews will normally involve commissioners and providers working together in a single review team.

What makes for a successful review?

You will need to pay attention to a number of important factors which will influence the success of the review:

- Clear aims and objectives
- People with learning disabilities must be fully included
- Leadership from senior management
- Ownership among service staff and managers
- Willingness to challenge current practice
- Good practical organisation and communication

What organisations say about The Quality Network

One overarching feature of The Quality Network Review Process is the fact that people involved find it thoroughly enjoyable and enlightening. The workshops are set up to hold people's attention and learning about the outcomes is vital. Frontline staff find this aspect useful to take forward in their day to day work.

Each review team member provides feedback to help the Quality Network with monitoring and improving the service offered. The following comments have been taken from feedback sheets:

'The training day for the review team was excellent – clear and easy to understand'

'The poster idea was great and put you in the life of the person'

'Improvements to our service were identified and discussed as a team'

'An excellent exercise done with care and consideration to observers and people using the service enabling us to understand quality and care needs'

'A way of ensuring that a service for people who have an autistic spectrum disorder received recognition of its area of excellence as well as those where there may be room for improvement'

Validated Review Status

In 2002 'Validated Review Status' was introduced for member organisations. Validated Review Status ensures members are recognised by The Quality Network for the level of time and commitment they dedicate to the review.

This is currently being reviewed

Quality Network Schools Pilot

To date, the Quality Network has focused on adult services, but the outcomes used are echoed in the Green Paper 'Every Child Matters'. The Quality Network feels that it has a real role to play in supporting reviews and the development of services of children and young people.

The QN is working with a number of services (within the education sector) to pilot the process and set up an advisory group to take the work forward.

This will be reported on in July 2007.

Flexible approach

The Quality Network is co-ordinated from the BILD offices based in Kidderminster, supporting organisations on all aspects of the Quality Network

As this is your review, it is important that you get exactly the package of support you need. Do please contact us to discuss:

- A presentation to tell you more about the Quality Network
- A site visit to discuss your needs in more detail

The Quality Network values are central to the flexible approaches we offer and we are happy to discuss any ways of working that focus on:

- Inclusion
- Seeing people who use services as individuals and the experts on their own lives
- Looking at the whole person and learning from what they tell us so that something actually happens

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