

The Information & Advice Quality Framework for Wales (IAQF Wales)

Guidance & Good Practice Report

Second Edition, July 2018

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MBARC

For further information please contact:

Name: Paul Neave

Department: Financial Inclusion Unit

Welsh Government

Cathays Park

Cardiff, CF10 3NQ

Email: Paul.Neave@gov.wales



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IAQF Wales: Guidance & Good Practice

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INTRODUCTION

Overview

This Report has been produced to complement the Information & Advice Quality Framework for Wales (IAQF Wales). Based upon extensive consultation, this document is designed to provide guidance to auditors and assessors operating within the IAQF Wales. It captures examples of current and best practice within Wales and other home countries to inform the assessment process.

Whilst primarily designed as a resource for Standard Owners who have secured *IAQF Wales Approved Accrediting Body* status and those undertaking quality audits on their behalf we hope that it will be useful for those organisations preparing for audit or seeking to improve the management and operation of their service.

Compliance & Improvement

Central to the IAQF Wales is the aspiration that the framework not only seeks to ensure that all information and/or providers meet minimum standards in relation to safety, responsiveness and effectiveness, but also that the IAQF Wales will embed a culture of continuous improvement within individual providers and across the sector as a whole.

For this reason Welsh Government requires IAQF Wales Approved Accrediting Bodies to not only provide a binary pass/fail compliance non-compliance assessment but a report which also identifies areas where the service, although compliant, may seek to make improvements and where there are areas of good or outstanding practice that could be of use to other information and/or advice providers or the sector more generally.

Auditors should seek to ensure that external assessment is viewed as an opportunity by services to celebrate their achievements and to identify ways in which they may improve and develop their service. Services undergoing external assessment should be encouraged to identify areas of good practice and areas of challenge with auditors. These should inform the content of the services Improvement Plan.

Within the IAQF Wales under each *quality area* and against *quality criteria* we have identified the “Evidence” that we would expect auditors to assess. There are two further columns for quality criteria “Satisfactory/Good” and “Outstanding”. The more features services can evidence under the Satisfactory/Good” column may lead an auditor to assess that part of the service as “good”, the absence of some of these features, whilst still assessing the service as “satisfactory may provide areas for inclusion in that service’s Improvement Plan. Welsh Government also requires Standard Owners to identify and report on “outstanding” practice. The column entitled “outstanding” provides examples of practice that auditors may seek to identify during the assessment process. Again, these are areas for potential inclusion within a service’s Improvement Plan where the auditor has assessed them as good.

For Local Authorities

If the service being accredited is part of a local authority providing an information, advice and assistance (IAA) service, as required by the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, there will be specific duties and requirements under the Act, Regulations, codes of practice and guidance relating to aspects which are included in this framework. Examples include needs assessments (quality criteria 2.2), safeguarding (3.6), the awareness framework (including safeguarding training, 5.1) and case requirements for IAA (4.3). Should the legal requirements relating to IAA services differ from the requirements of the IAQF Wales the legal requirements will take precedence.

Other Frameworks and Regulatory Requirements

Where an organisation is required to be registered with a regulatory body, such as the FCA or OISC, auditors should seek evidence of registration under quality criteria 1.6.

Organisations may also be covered by other quality assurance frameworks such as the Money Advice Service Quality Framework. These schemes may provide substantial evidence of compliance with aspects of the IAQF Wales.

Freedom of Information

Although the Welsh Government does not intend to publish IAQF Wales audit reports, providers are advised that reports may be subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) unless any relevant exemptions apply.

In all cases, the auditors and the agencies should be aware that their correspondence, notes and reports shared with the Welsh Government are potentially subject to FOIA.

A Dynamic Framework

We anticipate that this will be a dynamic document. All IAQF Wales Approved Accrediting Bodies will capture examples of good and outstanding practice and report these to the Welsh Government. **Over time we expect this document to be increasingly populated with examples from IAQF Wales accredited services in Wales.**

QUALITY AREAS

Quality Area 1: Well Managed	
<p>Overview</p> <p>Robust General Management Standards should provide for effective and sustainable management of the service and its resources.</p>	
1.1	<p>The service has a clear remit based on need.</p> <p>The effective delivery of information and/or advice service and its ability to prioritise and assess its work depends on that organisation establishing clear objectives. These do not need to be complex but must provide clear answers to the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do we do? • How do we do it? • Who is it for? • Why do we do it? • What do we hope to achieve? <p>The IAQF Wales requires all services to have written and published remit detailing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The information and/or advice topics covered by the service • The information and/or advice “types” of advice offered • Any restrictions which apply to service delivery e.g. we are unable to assist businesses) • The methods for delivering the service (e.g. face to face, telephone etc.) • The target population for the service (e.g. by geographical area and/or community of interest such as young people only etc.) <p>Auditors should reflect back to this organisational remit when they are looking at the appropriateness of evidence under other linked elements within the framework.</p> <p>Auditors should seek assurance that the general management of service ensures that all paid/unpaid staff understand and adhere to the remit of the service at all times and do not exceed the roles they are trained, supported and resourced to do. Delivering the service as per the remit makes best use of resources and avoids duplication. Auditors can determine how the service complies with its remit by examining policies, procedures, supervision arrangements and management and staff interviews.</p> <p>Alongside the remit for a service these criteria are linked to 2.1 below. Auditors should seek assurance that the remit has been reviewed in the light of the needs assessment and that as far as possible the service has sought to align its remit to the findings of the needs assessment. The capacity of a service to fully align its remit with the needs assessment may be constrained by resources or the commissioning specification that they are working to.</p>

	<p>For Information and/or advice providers there are many benefits in undertaking regular reviews of their remit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It can refocus staff attention on the service’s priorities • Ensure the efficient application of resources • Respond rapidly to new and emerging needs • Identify gaps in service that may support fund-raising efforts • Provide an opportunity to work collaboratively with other organisations in responding to needs <p>The IAQF Wales is not prescriptive in determining who should be involved in developing the remit of the service. However, auditors may seek to identify good or outstanding practice in those services involving a wider group of stake-holders in its development; particularly partner organisations, other information and/or advice providers and members of the public or target client groups.</p> <p>Key sources of evidence of compliance with these quality criteria for auditors include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Published remit • Minutes evidencing discussion of the remit • Copy of needs assessment informing that discussion • Correspondence or meeting notes with other organisations relating to the development of the remit.
1.2	Clear management structure with defined roles and responsibilities
	<p>A well-managed service will have clear lines of management and accountability with all paid and unpaid staff being clear about their duties, the limits of their authority and who they are accountable to.</p> <p>The IAQF Wales requires information and/or advice providers to have clear management structures with defined roles and responsibilities for all individuals within that service whether paid or unpaid. As a minimum, the information and/or advice service should be able to provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An organogram with a review date within the last 12 months identifying all of those involved in the planning, management and delivery of the service • Dated job descriptions for all paid and unpaid roles involved in the planning, management and delivery of the service • A written document detailing responsibilities, terms of reference and decision making authority (scheme of delegation) • Evidence that the management structure, roles and responsibilities are included within the induction of any new paid or unpaid staff involved in the planning, management or delivery of the service. <p>Auditors should seek assurance that all paid and unpaid staff are able to describe the scope of their role and, where appropriate, identify to whom, when and how they could refer matters for decision. For those involved in working directly with</p>

	<p>the public this should include who they would report any safeguarding concerns.</p> <p>People can be enabled to operate more effectively if they know who does what. Auditors should seek assurance that the service can demonstrate clearly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The structure of the service, its governing body, committees and sub-committees and how they interrelate and • Its staffing structure and how this relates to the governing structure including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Who reports to whom ○ Who has what delegated authorities and ○ How decisions can be made and implemented <p>Areas of good or outstanding practice that auditors may wish to scrutinise include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robust processes for ensuring effective succession planning for managers and those involved in service governance • Clear development routes for management and potential management staff • For third sector organisation’s detailed role descriptions and person specifications for governing body members. <p>Key sources of evidence of compliance with these quality criteria for auditors include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organogram • Inclusion of written description of management structure within Office Manual • Equalities monitoring data on staff and recruitment • Staff training records on equality, diversity and discrimination.
1.3	All staff involved in the planning, management and delivery of information and advice services has an induction, regular supervision, annual appraisal and access to staff development opportunities
	<p>Paid and unpaid staff are the key resource for any information and/or advice service. Supporting them to deliver quality services and fulfil their potential is a key management responsibility for any service.</p> <p>The IAQF Wales requires information and/or advice providers to have robust systems that ensure all paid or unpaid staff involved in the planning, management and delivery of information and/or advice services have an induction, regular supervision, annual appraisal and access to staff development opportunities.</p> <p>Auditors should seek assurance that all paid and unpaid staff have access to appropriate professional and pastoral support including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An induction when they join the service or change substantive roles – this induction should ensure that the staff member is provided with a planned and staged introduction which covers information about their premises, colleagues, health and safety and other legislative requirements, their role, who they report to etc. • Regular supervision – which reflect the professional and pastoral needs of

that individual.

- **Annual Appraisal** –should include an assessment of performance in the past year, establishing objectives for the year ahead and consideration of any support needs including those relating to their awareness, knowledge and skills competencies; and includes areas for development to support workforce planning. Annual appraisals should be recorded in writing and therefore available to auditors for inspection.
- **Staff development opportunities** – all paid and unpaid staff should be supported to develop their potential. Evidence that this is undertaken by services may include Continuing Professional Development records or staff training records.

Auditors should be aware that delivering information and/or advice can often be stressful and isolating. Whilst many services operate on the goodwill and enthusiasm of individuals, the long-term viability of a service requires robust systems and structures to support paid and unpaid staff. Auditors should seek assurance that information and/or advice have adequate support mechanisms to address these issues. For example, by ensuring that advice staff have the requisite time and resources to manage time-sensitive work without undue or prolonged stress. Evidence of collation and consideration of staff data such as sickness absence should be sought.

Auditors should seek assurance that the service has adequate policies and procedures in place covering all aspects of health and safety compliance in relation to the service provider's remit (e.g. lone working policies etc. if appropriate).

Auditors should also seek assurances that any Councillors/Trustees/governing body members have received an induction, training and support commensurate with their role.

Areas of good or outstanding practice within an organisation which auditors may wish to explore include

- Succession Planning for staff in service critical roles (e.g. some specialist advisers)
- Development programme which demonstrates developing capacity including service critical roles.
- Development opportunities provided to paid and unpaid staff.
- Evidence of individuals taking up development opportunities (internally and externally).
- The service demonstrates a proactive policy for promoting staff wellbeing.
- The service demonstrates a proactive policy for dignity at work.

Key sources of evidence of compliance with these quality criteria for auditors include:

- Staffing and induction policies within the Office Manual
- Health & Safety of staff included in the Office Manual
- Staff training records

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget report on staff training • Written records of annual appraisals
1.4	Robust system of financial management
	<p>People using advice services, those funding them and, indeed those working within them need to be confident that a service is financially viable. To meet its obligations they need to be assured that all monies are properly accounted for and that the service is financially well managed.</p> <p>The IAQF Wales requires information and/or advice providers to be able to demonstrate that they have robust systems of financial management. As a minimum information and/or advice providers must demonstrate that they have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear documentation on financial management systems with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Documented lines of delegated authority for all budget holders ○ A named individual responsible for overall financial management ○ Arrangements of external scrutiny of finances by a senior person not involved in the day to day financial management of the service (e.g. for Third Sector organisations a treasurer, for a local authority the departmental head to whom the finance manager reports) • Arrangements for external financial audit / independent examination • Management reports on performance against budget at least four times per year. <p>Auditors should seek assurance that the service has clear arrangements for establishing and monitoring its annual budget and that key financial risks are identified and that mitigating actions are identified.</p> <p>Areas of good or outstanding practice within an organisation which auditors may wish to explore include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular management accounts show budgets vs. actual by project and explain variances and the quality of financial risk management and mitigations • The development of indicative service budgets over three to five year periods which include best case, base case and worse case scenarios with impact assessments and mitigations. • Process in place to reduce potential non-attendance of clients. • Evidence that financial prudence is observed with organisation management (e.g. procurement procedures). <p>Key sources of evidence of compliance with these quality criteria for auditors include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly documented financial management system • Scheme of financial delegation • Annual budgets and evidence of review (at operational level and by senior managers/governing body).
1.5	Clear lines of internal communication

Good internal communication within information and/or advice providers is important to ensure the efficient and effective operation of that service. It provides a mechanism for ensuring consistency in service delivery by updating all staff on the policies, procedures and priorities of the service and to keep staff informed of changes in legislation, case law and practice and other issues that may arise in advice work among the different advisers in a service.

The IAQF Wales requires information and/or advice providers to have clear lines of internal communication. There are a wide variety of ways in which good internal communication can be facilitated. Auditors may wish to consider whether the service has any guidelines to ensure that internal communication mechanisms are effective. These may include documentation on:

- Team meetings held and the frequency of these meetings
- Service intranet
- Memos
- Staff notice boards and
- Supervision sessions
- Agendas for meetings
- Length of meetings
- When and where meetings will be held to maximise participation of appropriate paid and unpaid staff
- Any requirements upon paid and unpaid staff to attend meetings
- Records of paid and unpaid staff participation in meetings
- The input expected from participants and any limits to their input
- Whether meetings are intended to make decisions or are for information only
- Circulation lists of publications and updating materials
- Procedures for ensuring notice is properly given and
- Responsibility for taking and distributing meeting notes

In assessing this evidence it will be important for auditors to consider the extent to which the presence or absence of the above factors contributes to or militates against the achievement of the service's remit and outcomes.

For third sector organisations auditors should seek assurance that governing body meetings are held in line with the constitutional requirements of that body and that relevant information from these meetings are communicated to staff Similarly, Local Authority staff should receive regular communications from management regarding committee decisions which affect them.

Communication should be two way and all paid and unpaid staff have should have the opportunity to escalate concerns about the service or its management to an appropriate body. Auditors should seek assurance that the service has an effective "whistle-blowing" policy in place.

Auditors may seek to identify good or outstanding practice in the area of two way

	<p>communication, for example back to the floor days for managers, systematic approaches to gathering and acting upon staff feedback etc.</p> <p>Key sources of evidence of compliance with these quality criteria for auditors include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications Plan • Evidence of meetings taking place (agendas, minutes/action notes, diary entries) • Levels of staff engagement.
1.6	Compliance with all relevant general legislation
	<p>All services must operate within the law to protect those responsible for the planning, management and delivery of the service from the risk of prosecution and to maintain public confidence in the service delivered.</p> <p>The IAQF Wales requires information and/or advice providers to be able to demonstrate that they have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of the legislation relevant to the corporate body of the service (e.g. Company Law, Charity law) • Knowledge of the legislation relevant to its general role as a service provider (e.g. Public Liability law, Equalities legislation, Data Protection etc.) • Knowledge of the legislation and regulation relevant to any requirements on the service as a result of the work it undertakes in specific topic areas (e.g. those advising around debt advice where authorisation by the Financial Conduct Authority is mandatory) • Knowledge of the legislation relevant to its role as an employer and as an employer (e.g. Health and Safety, Equalities legislation, disclosure of criminal records in regulated activities etc.). <p>Auditors should seek assurance that these items are included in the services Office Manual. There should be evidence that the contents of the Office Manual have been reviewed within the last 12 months and that the Office Manual is included in the induction plan for all new staff.</p> <p>Additional areas that should auditors should seek assurance are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence that current insurance provides the necessary protection, for example, Public Liability, employer’s insurance, professional indemnity insurance. • That the service complies with any registration /authorisation requirements such as Data Protection, Financial Conduct Authority. <p>This is a pass/fail requirement and we are not expecting to identify areas of good or outstanding practice against this quality criterion.</p> <p>Key sources of evidence of compliance with these quality criteria for auditors include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office manual detailing legal requirements with evidence of compliance

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Protection/FCA/OISC (where appropriate) certificates of registration • Staff induction plans • Discussions with staff on awareness of relevant legislation.
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Quality Area 2: Well Planned	
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Overview

The planning of services is a key component of developing a quality service. Standards for planning should ensure that information and advice interventions are evidence based, reflect the needs of the community, subject to periodic review and with robust governance arrangements to ensure effective accountability. Service Planning should include consideration of evidence from Quality Area Seven: Delivering Outcomes.

2.1	Service Governance
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Good governance systems are designed to ensure that services have:

The right people with the right information making the right decisions at the right time

To achieve this, services need to have clear lines of responsibility, authority and accountability. Good service governance has a particular role in reviewing and evaluating the effectiveness of a service and in using this intelligence to inform future planning.

The IAQF Wales recognises that there will be different governance requirements upon organisations depending on their organisational and corporate structure. However, regardless of this structure the IAQF Wales requires information and/or advice providers to have a documented governance structure:

- To ensure that the activities of the service are both within the law and within its constitutional remit
- To determine the mission and purpose of the service
- To develop and agree policies
- To develop and agree strategic plans
- To agree the budget and monitor financial performance, including accountability to funders
- To ensure the service has adequate resources and that these are effectively managed
- To monitor service provision and delivery, ensuring accountability to other stakeholders such as funders
- To ensure legal and regulatory accountability
- To act as employer – reviewing staff performance as required, reviewing the performance of the most senior member of staff, setting salary levels, acting as the appeal body in personnel matters, and so on
- To regularly review the service’s performance through monitoring and evaluation
- To manage the service’s public relations and represent the views of the

	<p>service and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To review its own performance as a governing body <p>This governing structure is also responsible for ensuring effective risk management (although this may be operationalised by other staff). Auditors should seek assurance that there is effective identification of risks and development of mitigating actions to ensure the protection of service users, funders and staff (usually in the form of a risk register) and that this process is “owned” by the governing body.</p> <p>Areas of good or outstanding practice auditors may seek to explore include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public engagement in governance and assurance processes • Arrangements (particularly within third sector organisations) to support and develop people from socially excluded communities to participate in the governance of the service. • Robust business continuity plans. • The quality of systems to support good engagement between governance leads and strategic and operational managers. <p>Key sources of evidence of compliance with these quality criteria for auditors include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Governance clearly documented within the Office Manual • Monitoring and evaluation plans and reports • Minutes and agendas of relevant governance meetings • Risk Register in place including review dates evidenced
2.2	Needs assessments
	<p>Services should be relevant to the needs of the community that they serve.</p> <p>The IAQF Wales requires information and/or advice providers to undertake or participate in regular needs assessments to identify the needs of their community. Such needs assessments need to be mapped against existing service delivery to ensure that the service plan avoids duplication, i.e. where different agencies are serving the same community it may make sense to share community profiling information or to pool resources to create a community profile.</p> <p>The needs assessment should include basic demographic details of their target population such as gender, ethnicity, age and welsh language speakers along with deprivation factors relevant to their service such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income deprivation • Work deprivation • Housing deprivation • Health outcomes/inequality • Levels of educational attainment • Rural spread and impact on access to services

	<p>The nature of the needs assessment may be adjusted depending upon the community that the service aims to target. For example, a Young Persons project would not be expected to gather data on the number of people over 60, but may be expected to gather more detailed information on the profile of young people in its area.</p> <p>In planning a wholly new service, an extension of existing services, or any change in provision that relates to the overall objectives of a service, providers should conduct research into the profile of the community it serves, levels of need, existing service provision and likely future demand.</p> <p>Auditors may seek to identify areas of good or outstanding practice in relation to the quality of the needs assessment, such as the range of methodologies deployed, depth of analysis, the extent to which this has been developed with other stakeholders and its contribution to the early identification or prevention of advice needs.</p> <p>Key sources of evidence of compliance with these quality criteria for auditors include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs Assessment report • Mapping of other relevant services • Client feedback system and reports
2.3	Business planning
	<p>The maintenance of a quality service requires that service to plan the application of resources to effectively respond to local needs.</p> <p>The IAQF Wales requires information and/or advice providers to have costed business plans that, as a minimum cover the year ahead:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly states the services aims, objectives and targets • How this responds to needs • Details the service to be provided • Is fully costed with resource implications identified • Includes key performance indicators • Identifies the outcomes that the service seeks to achieve <p>Auditors should seek evidence that the needs assessment has been used to inform the development of the business plan and that the service is tailored to the needs of the community it seeks to serve. They should also seek assurance that the plan includes realistic performance targets aligned with the financial and human resources available to it.</p> <p>Area of good or outstanding practice that auditors may seek to examine include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence that impact assessments have been built into business planning • That there is a strong focus on either early intervention/prevention or building the capacity, resilience and independence of its service users.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong evidence of partnership work in shaping the business plan and ongoing commitment to work with partners to deliver services • That wider social benefits are recognised and captured, for example identification of Social Return on Investment. <p>Key sources of evidence of compliance with these quality criteria for auditors include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Plan that aligns with the service remit and the needs assessment.
2.4	Service Review
	<p>A well planned service still requires effective review to ensure that the service meets its performance targets, that these continue to meet needs and that the interventions lead to effective outcomes for the individuals and communities served.</p> <p>The IAQF Wales requires information and/or advice providers to have robust processes for service review built into their business plan and clear evidence that these reviews are undertaken. All reviews should include consideration of the views of clients, staff and other stakeholders. Auditors should seek evidence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • collation of service statistics, analysis and consideration by those responsible for planning the service and • Public accessibility of this information (for example, inclusion in Annual Report, Service Review etc.) <p>An annual review should look at the work of the past year and evaluate it, to enable the work for future years to be planned, building on the successes and remedying the shortcomings of the past year. The review should look at both service delivery and the administrative and management systems which facilitate service delivery.</p> <p>This review should include the methods of delivery of the service and the tools or resources used to support that method of delivery. For example, for face-to-face information and advice providers this may include an assessment of the premises from which the service is provided, for telephone services this may include the adequacy of the telecommunications system (e.g. call waiting and call queuing capacity).</p> <p>Auditors may seek to identify good or outstanding practice in this area including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The levels of internal and external engagement in the review process. • Benchmarking performance and or outcomes against other appropriate services. • Review takes account of targets relating to early intervention/prevention in the context of local and national landscape. • Active participation in local/national initiatives to identify meaningful outcomes for service delivery and how these can inform planning and review. <p>Key sources of evidence of compliance with this quality criterion for auditors</p>

include:

- Service review methodology is included in the Office Manual, business plan or other relevant document
- Outcomes are clearly identified in the business plan or individual project plans
- Process in place to ensure feedback from staff, service users and partner organisations is captured.
- Equalities monitoring forms part of the review methodology

Quality Area 3: Accessible, Caring and Safe
<p>Overview</p> <p>Services operating to the IAQF Wales should be accessible to all members of the community, provide the highest standards of customer care and place the safety of the individual at the centre of their work.</p>

3.1	Equality, Diversity and Accessibility
	<p>A quality service is dependent upon services being available to those members of the community most in need without discrimination. This does not preclude providers from identifying particular client groups or ensuring their services are targeted at those in greatest need.</p> <p>The IAQF Wales requires information and/or advice providers to have clear policies and procedures to ensure the accessibility of services. This should include consideration what, when, how and where services are delivered. It should include consideration of service accessibility against the “protected characteristics” under the Equality Act 2010:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age • Disability • Gender reassignment • Marriage and civil partnership • Pregnancy and maternity • Race • Religion and belief • Sex • Sexual orientation <p>In addition all services must also address accessibility for Welsh Language speakers.</p> <p>Auditors should seek evidence of the service having:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear statement of intent with regard to meeting the needs of all. This applies except where the aims and objectives clearly define them as a specialist service for a defined sector of the population. The statement should explain how the service intends to implement this policy and how it intends to measure its effectiveness in meeting this policy. • The service’s statement of equality and diversity is reviewed at least once every two years and where appropriate produces an action plan for implementation. • Appropriate training available to develop awareness in paid and unpaid staff and ensure that services provided are sensitive to the needs of all service users with staff training records demonstrating uptake of training and staff are aware of cultural issues which impact on service delivery and take account of these when delivering service

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff have access to translation facilities, directly or via partnership arrangements. • Accommodation and facilities (main office and surgeries) regularly reviewed to ensure accessibility requirements are met. • Methods of delivery are reviewed to ensure accessibility. • All of those involved in the planning, management and delivery of the services should be able to explain the service’s policy and how this impacts upon their role. • Access to appropriate services to facilitate access such as translation services • Service review including the impact of different service models on different communities of interest • A robust plan to ensure that the service moves towards a workforce that is representative of the community it seeks to serve. <p>Auditors seeking to identify good or outstanding practice may seek evidence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equalities impact assessments • Service statistics against protected characteristics • Availability of materials in accessible formats. • Service seeks out and consults with non-service users • Ways in which the service has secured a paid and unpaid staff profile that reflects the diversity of the community it seeks to serve. <p>Key sources of evidence of compliance with these quality criteria for auditors include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public statement of intent available • Policy documents including equality impact assessments where appropriate • Staff training records • Staff interviews
3.2	Codes of behaviour are in place for both staff and service users
	<p>All services have a duty to provide safe and courteous services to their clients and in return should be able to expect clients to respond in non-threatening and courteous ways.</p> <p>The IAQF Wales requires information and/or advice providers to have codes of behaviour in place for both staff and service users. Auditors should seek assurance that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written codes of behaviour are in place for both paid and unpaid staff and for service users. • These are clearly displayed in public places, websites etc. for service users including how to raise concerns if they do not feel that they have been treated courteously • These are included in induction training for paid and unpaid staff and this includes how to raise concerns if a client’s behaviour breaches the code of conduct • Staff working with the public have training in dealing with challenging

	<p>behaviour and that training records are maintained.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For services offering home-visiting services or delivering services on an outreach basis there should be written guidance on the application of this code of behaviour, particularly with regard to the safety of staff and clients. <p>This is a pass/fail requirement and we are not expecting to identify areas of good or outstanding practice against this criterion.</p> <p>Key sources of evidence of compliance with these quality criteria for auditors include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Published statement • Staff training records • Staff interviews
3.3	Information Governance
	<p>Every service user has the right to expect that the service they receive is provided in confidence and that any records about them kept by the service are fair and accurate.</p> <p>The IAQF Wales requires information and/or advice providers to have policies that specify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The way in which information and/or advice is provided by the service (for example, private interviewing space) • Details of any information that may be held about the service user by the service provider • The circumstances in which this information may be passed on and how consent forms are used (if appropriate) • How the service user may access any information held about them • The extent of the policy and any limitations to it • Forms of authority enabling the service to speak or act on behalf of the service user • Breaches of confidentiality and how these will be dealt with <p>Auditors should seek assurance that the service is aware of the legal limits to confidentiality affecting the service they deliver in, for example, cases of criminal activity, safeguarding concerns, terrorism etc.</p> <p>Auditors should seek assurance that the service is compliant with data protection and Freedom of information legislation.</p> <p>Auditors should seek assurance that client information is stored securely and that their policy includes provision to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep case notes and other case documentation stored in a safe and secure place. Where data and case notes are kept on computer, services must ensure that their systems are secure and that the data is 'backed up' on a regular basis.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a policy for the length of time case notes are stored which details how and when these notes will be destroyed (for services maintaining case notes) <p>Examples of good or outstanding practice that auditors may seek to explore include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which the service has secured other forms of assurance in relation to information governance (e.g. internal audit or securing ISO27001 Information Assurance). • The work the service has undertaken with other providers to develop information sharing protocols where these are in the best interests of clients. <p>Key sources of evidence of compliance with these quality criteria for auditors include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office Manual • Induction plans • Staff training records • Registration certificates
3.4	Complaints and compliments
	<p>Complaints and compliments provide a valuable means of service user feedback on the service provided.</p> <p>The IAQF Wales requires information and/or advice providers to have written complaints procedures that are accessible to all service users. This policy must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain to clients: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ who to complain to ○ how the complaint will be dealt with and by whom ○ how quickly these will be responded to ○ how they will be kept informed ○ What general action to change the service is taken as a result of complaints • Be publicised • Be monitored by those responsible for managing and planning the service • Be reflected in the business plan and • That changes that have been made as a result of complaints are publicised • Specify that adjustment will be made to allow everybody to access the complaints procedure (e.g., complaints do not need to be mad in writing) <p>Some services will be covered by industry-wide schemes where their membership of a professional body will be designed to provide additional protection to service users. Other services will be covered by various Ombudsman schemes. These should be referenced in the complaints procedures if relevant.</p> <p>To demonstrate good or outstanding practice auditors may seek to identify services that have introduced significant changes as a result of responding to complaints.</p> <p>Key sources of evidence of compliance with these quality criteria for auditors</p>

	<p>include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office Manual • Published complaints process • Induction plans • Staff training records • Registration certificates
3.5	Redress for clients in the event of service errors
	<p>Services exist to provide appropriate information and advice to people in need. For this reason, when things go wrong, they must make every effort to ensure that clients do not pay for the service’s mistakes. Clients should feel confident that if mistakes are made by a service they can be dealt with promptly and that there is adequate provision for redress. In many cases adequate redress may be a simple verbal or written apology. However, where a client has been financially disadvantaged by the action or inaction of the service, the service will need to provide some financial compensation, for example by a claim against professional indemnity insurance.</p> <p>The IAQF Wales requires information and/or advice providers to have robust procedures to ensure redress for clients in the event of service errors that are accessible to all service users. Services should therefore also evidence that they have adequate Professional Indemnity Insurance to ensure that the client is not financially disadvantaged by any mistakes the service may make in the delivery of its services.</p> <p>Auditors should seek assurance that the governing body reviews the level of risk to individuals using the service at least once every year and has ensured that professional indemnity insurance is sufficient to address this risk.</p> <p>Auditors seeking to identify outstanding practice may seek evidence of systems to embed rights of redress such as a “Duty of Candour” policy which is reflected in job descriptions and induction training. This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A duty of candour on individual information or advice workers to report errors to the service management • A duty of candour on those undertaking supervision or case file review to investigate suspected errors and report these to the service management • A duty of candour on the service to report any errors in the information or advice provided to the affected individual or individuals <p>Key sources of evidence of compliance with these quality criteria for auditors include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office Manual • Induction plans • Staff training records • Insurance certificate
3.6	Safeguarding

Many clients using information and advice services will be facing challenging times in their lives and as such could be subject to safeguarding concerns.

The IAQF Wales requires information and/or advice providers to have safeguarding policies. Auditors should seek assurance that each service has:

- A Children and Young People’s Safeguarding policy that includes:
 - A named responsible officer for safeguarding concerns
 - A clear escalation policy in the event of safeguarding concerns
 - A clear reporting process where those safeguarding concern relate to a paid or unpaid member or former member of staff.
- An Adults at Risk Safeguarding policy that includes:
 - A named responsible officer for safeguarding concerns
 - A clear escalation policy in the event of safeguarding concerns
 - A clear reporting process where those safeguarding concern relate to a paid or unpaid member or former member of staff.

Auditors should seek assurance that all staff are trained in identifying safeguarding issues and means of escalating concerns (see competence section below) and the service has robust arrangements for the referral of safeguarding concerns. This requirement includes not only client facing staff but *all* staff as safeguarding procedures may include concerns relating to current or former paid or unpaid members of staff.

Auditors seeking evidence of good or outstanding practice may seek evidence of the service’s engagement with or provision of information to appropriate safeguarding boards or participation in local or national initiatives relating to safeguarding.

Key sources of evidence of compliance with these quality criteria for auditors include:

- Safeguarding policy
- Induction plans
- Staff training records

Quality Area 4: Information & Advice Provision

Overview

Regardless of the medium through which information and advice is delivered (e.g. face to face, telephone, digital), services operating to the IAQF Wales for Wales must have processes that ensure safe, effective and efficient services for their users.

4.1	Ensuring information and/or advice is provided “in the best interests of service users”
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Clients should have confidence that the service is acting in their best interests and not for the advantage of the service itself or for another third party. Where this is not possible, for example, where the service provider is a local authority and unable to support the service user to make a formal appeal against the local authority or where a conflict of interest has arisen where different family members require advice, the service user should be advised of the boundaries of the service and of alternative sources of help.

The IAQF Wales requires information and/or advice providers to have policies detailing any boundaries to the independence of their service and procedures detailing the arrangements the service will make to ensure the best interests of service users.

Auditors should seek assurance that the service:

- Makes sufficient information available to the public relating to the independence of the service from the outset of the case
- Has robust procedures to identify conflicts of interest and alert the client as soon as they arise
- Can demonstrate that they always act in the best interest of the client or refer when this is not the case and
- Is aware of the need to always declare real or perceived conflicts of interest in relation to the service being provided.

Auditors should also seek assurance that this arrangement to comply with these criteria are aligned with criteria relating to Information Governance (3.3) and Redress (3.5).

Auditors seeking to identify good or outstanding practice may seek evidence of the quality of referral arrangements (4.3) and the ways in which these operate in relation to the best interests of clients.

Key sources of evidence of compliance with these quality criteria for auditors include:

- Office Manual
- Leaflets/materials provided to client
- Register of interests

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews to test understanding of conflict of interest for both client facing paid or unpaid staff and for those responsible for service governance (see 2.1 above).
4.2	Networking & Referral
	<p>Welsh Government believes that information and advice in Wales can be strengthened by provider organisations working closely together to plan services, identify common problems and co-ordinating service and policy responses.</p> <p>The IAQF Wales requires information and/or advice providers to participate in relevant local, regional and/or national networks. Auditors should seek evidence of active and consistent participation in relevant networks with each service able to provide examples of how this has contributed to local planning and/or problem solving. Evidence to be considered by auditors includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes of network meetings • Local, regional or national forum attendance records • Participation in online networks • Participation in consultations <p>The provision of good quality information and/or advice is not the sole responsibility of any single service. In any given locality there will be a range of providers meeting different needs. Liaison and regular contact are essential to ensure that all people within the community have access to good quality services.</p> <p>The IAQF Wales requires information and/or advice providers to be able to demonstrate a good knowledge of other relevant service providers in their locality. This may be evidenced by a directory with contact details of relevant service providers. This directory must be maintained on a regular basis, ideally as a ‘live’ resource but failing this at least annually. Induction and staff training records should provide evidence that paid and unpaid staff understand how to signpost or refer clients, when this is appropriate and how to accept referrals from other services. It is also important that paid and unpaid staff are able to identify barriers to a client taking up on a signposting/referral e.g. vulnerability, addiction issues etc. and where possible, the staff member should try and assist the client to access the appropriate service.</p> <p>Staff must also be fully aware of the boundaries of information to be passed to service receiving the referral and of the need to obtain the consent of the client for both the referral and the transmission of relevant information.</p> <p>For those services providing Type 4 or Type 5 services providers will also be required to have formal referral arrangements or protocols in place between relevant services to facilitate the smooth referral of clients between services. Such formal referral arrangements should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the referral will be made, including if it is to a named individual and the date of any appointment • Grounds for acceptance or rejection • Acceptable timescales for referral

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The respective responsibilities of referrer and referee • Any information the referring body can expect at the end of a particular case and • The right of the individual to return to the service if they are not satisfied with the referral • Details of the service user including their preferred language <p>Services should have clear selection criteria for referrals to other services; the service should consult with the service user, keeping them fully informed, and, in complex cases provide written instructions to the referral body. The same is true in reverse, services accepting referrals from other services should also be clear about the case they will accept and what they expect the referrer to provide.</p> <p>Auditors seeking to identify good or outstanding practice against this criterion may seek evidence of the leading role played by the service in such networks, ways in which such networks have influenced practice or policy. In addition, networks may provide opportunities to deliver targeted training or to develop staff through placements and staff exchanges. Other areas include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides training to other services in area. • Captures detailed data on referrals and uses this to improve referral arrangements, networks and protocols. <p>Key sources of evidence of compliance with these quality criteria for auditors include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written referral procedures • Monitoring data on referrals in and out of the service • Understanding whether client experience and take up is different for signposting of referrals • Directory of relevant services • Minutes/notes of networking meetings
4.3	Service recording and case management
	<p>The recording of service use and activity provides essential management information to inform the review of service and assist the planner of the service to assess how far the service objectives are being met.</p> <p>The IAQF Wales requires information and/or advice providers to gather data on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The volume and type of activity • The information and advice topics covered • The profile of the people using the service (this may be based upon samples for non-face-to-face methods of service delivery) <p>For Type 4 and Type 5 services auditors should seek evidence that the service is gathering, collating and analysing data on clients by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A range of protected characteristics (e.g. disability, gender, ethnicity, age etc.) • Place of residency

- Welsh language
- Channel used to access the service (e.g. online, telephone, email, face-to face)

Type 4 & Type 5 services also require robust case management procedures to ensure a consistent service to all users and ensure that the service user is kept involved and informed during the progress of their case. This should include:

- At the *outset* of a case, procedures should identify:
 - The requirements of the client
 - What action is to be taken
 - If someone is to be responsible for the case who this will be
 - Key dates in the matter
 - Any expectations of the service on the service user (for example, any fees that may be charged including disbursements, commissions, and so on) and
 - Management information relevant to the service (for example, clients' ethnic origin, housing tenure)
- And will ensure that in *progressing* casework that
 - If the case is complex a case plan will be evidenced
 - Information on progress is passed to the service user at appropriate intervals and
 - Information on any changes is communicated promptly to the service user
- And at the *end of a case* will
 - Report and confirm in writing to the service user on the outcome explaining any action the service user should now take and
 - Return to the service user any original documentation except where the service user has agreed that the service should maintain this information. In this case, the service user should be informed of storage arrangements and how they can access this information
 - The service user must also be made aware that their case is closed

Auditors should seek evidence that the case management system operated by Type 4 and Type 5 services:

- Case details relevant background; options discussed; action plan; timescales; client notifications; roles and responsibilities; outcomes and closure.
- All documentation relating to a case is easily traced.
- Client documentation is returned to them within set timescales.
- Key dates are recorded and are easily accessible for succession purposes.
- Case recording is succinct and contains all relevant detail. Can be easily followed by other case workers, management and auditors.
- Details of how cases are to be reviewed and responsibility for this

Auditors should seek assurance that services delivering Type 4 or Type 5 advice have adequate arrangements for case files to be reviewed by a supervisor or other adviser under the control of the supervisor who has not been involved in the day-to-day conduct of the case. For very small services file review may be undertaken

	<p>by a suitably qualified external supervisor. These procedures should ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Samples of work are reviewed to ensure quality of advice and adherence to the service’s procedures and • The number of cases, time spent and type of case undertaken by each adviser are within their capacity <p>The case file review policy should be written as a plan for undertaking internal reviews and must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibility for undertaking file reviews • The frequency of such reviews, taking into account the knowledge and experience of the caseworker • A record of the outcomes of reviews and • A record of any corrective action taken <p>Auditors seeking to identify good or outstanding practice under these criteria may seek evidence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the service has used activity data to improve service efficiency or access • How issues identified in casework feed into staff training and development • How the service promotes the opportunity for the client to have full access to their case records. <p>Key sources of evidence of compliance with these quality criteria for auditors include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case recording and case management system documentation • Case management system • Case work supervision notes
4.4	Information
	<p>Good information and advice is based upon the adviser’s ability to readily access up-to-date and accurate information. Without adequate information resources, the quality of the information and advice that can be given to the service user is going to be reduced. The interrelationship of a service’s access to information and the service user’s consequent access to information needs to be recognised by all services.</p> <p>The IAQF Wales requires information and/or advice providers to have access to up to date information sources (either digitally or paper based) including up-to date reference materials and journals relevant to the service that they provide. The service should be able to evidence that it maintains a separate and adequate budget for this purpose and that paid and unpaid staff training records demonstrate that staff are appropriately skilled to make use of these information resources (see section 6 below).</p> <p>Relevant links with expert sources of information are also important, for example the availability of specialist 2nd tier support where applicable.</p>

Auditors seeking to identify good or outstanding practice may seek evidence of involvement in developing information resources across local or regional networks.

Key sources of evidence of compliance with these quality criteria for auditors include:

- Reference library or documented procedure for use of internet resources.
- Staff interviews

Quality Area 5: Competent Information & Advice Staff

Competent staff are central to the delivery of a quality information and/or advice service. The competence requirements of individual staff within a service should relate to that services remit in terms of both types of advice and topics of advice. The IAQF Wales defines competence under three headings:

- **Awareness** – resolution of a client’s presenting issue may be impacted by a wide range of other social issues. Advice and information providers are not expected to be experts in all areas but staff dealing with the public do require a basic understanding of the IAQF Wales specified areas in order to best support their clients.
- **Knowledge** – the degree of knowledge required by individual advisers in specific area of social welfare law will be dependent upon their service’s remit (1.1) and the advice topics they cover.
- **Skills** – these are the skills needed to apply the awareness or knowledge to support and assist the client and will reflect the “types” of advice undertaken by the service.

Services operating to the IAQF Wales must ensure that all paid and unpaid staff gain, maintain and develop the awareness, knowledge and skills necessary to meet the needs of their service users. For this Quality Area IAQF Wales specifies the level of awareness and the range of skills required by information and advice providers. In addition we have identified the Framework against which the advice topic specific areas will need to be assessed by Standard Owners. In developing their response to these quality area auditors will need to consider the evidence requirements in order that they can the assess the extent to which service providers:

- Have systems to identify the skills and knowledge required to meet users’ needs and the procedures to match these requirements with paid and unpaid staff delivering the service
- Ensure that all staff are provided with adequate training and development
- Ensure that all staff involved in delivering the service have core competencies before they advise the public
- Ensure that all staff undertake sufficient information and advice work and update training to maintain their competence
- Ensure that all cases are dealt with by an adviser competent in that area of law
- Ensure that all information and advice work is supervised by a suitably qualified individual, either from within or outside the service
- Ensure that they understand the work of other relevant services in their localities

5.1 Awareness Framework

The IAQF Wales requires all paid and unpaid staff engaging with the public should be able to demonstrate that they have a basic awareness in the following areas regardless of the topics of advice provided by their service:

- Benefits System
- Debt & Financial Capability
- Housing Rights
- Employment Rights
- Equalities/Human Rights/Data Protection
- Health and Social Care
- Safeguarding (see 3.6 above, includes *all* staff)

The IAQF Wales specifies different levels of understanding or awareness for staff in the different types of services.

Auditors should seek evidence that paid and unpaid staff's induction plans (where they deal with the public) provide basic awareness training at the appropriate level in all of these areas. Training records should provide evidence that all staff receive refresher training in these areas at least once every two years.

5.2 Knowledge Framework

The IAQF Wales requires that all paid and unpaid staff can demonstrate that they have the appropriate level of knowledge in the advice topic for the type of information or advice delivered by them within their service. This should include evidence that training of sufficiently high quality is undertaken by all relevant staff.

Auditors should seek evidence that training plans are in place and up to date for all paid and unpaid staff, that the knowledge requirements required by that individual in relation to advice topics and the type of information and advice are in place and that these individual training plans are informed by regular supervision, annual appraisal and, for advisers delivering type 4 or type 5 services findings from the file reviews of their cases.

Auditors may identify other forms of evidence to support assessment of a service's compliance with the requirements of the knowledge framework, such as the MAS debt advisers' individual framework or requirements relating to maintaining professional registrations (e.g. the Law Society).

Skills Framework

The IAQF Wales requires all paid and unpaid staff engaging with the public have appropriate skills regardless of the topics of advice provided by their service. These are:

- Customer care and dealing with challenging clients
- Listening Skills
- Effective interviewing
- Diagnosing problems
- Effective research into local agencies to signpost appropriately

- Effective legal research (knowing where to find up to date information on the client’s problems)
- Communication skills (speaking and listening) at an appropriate level
- Writing skills including form filling and letter writing
- Internal monitoring and recording of enquiries
- Recording casework
- Managing casework (i.e. understanding the timeliness of interventions etc.)
- Making and receiving referrals
- Negotiation and advocacy
- Representation (e.g. in courts or tribunals)
- Self-reflection and self-assessment
- Understanding your limitations

The IAQF Wales specifies different levels of skills for staff in delivering the different “types” of information or advice.

Auditors should seek evidence that training plans are in place and up to date for all paid and unpaid staff, that the skills requirements required by that individual in relation to the type of information and advice they provide are in place and that these individual training plans are informed by regular supervision, annual appraisal and, for advisers delivering type 4 or type 5 services findings from the file reviews of their cases.

The awareness, knowledge and skills of an information and advice worker are maintained by regular application. Auditors seeking to identify good or outstanding practice may seek evidence that the service ensures that different types of staff undertake information and/or advice work on a regular basis to maintain competence.

Some services deploying volunteers, who are, for example, practising solicitors, may consider more flexible arrangements around minimum hours.

Quality Area 6: A Bilingual Service	
<p>Welsh Government is committed to the maintenance and development of Welsh Language and to build Wales as a place of thriving and vibrant Welsh language. The IAQF Wales seeks not only to ensure that Welsh language speakers have equal access to information and advice services but that the IAQF Wales supports the drive to a fully bi-lingual culture within the sector.</p> <p>Where organisations are already subject to the Welsh Language Standards they will have a statutory duty which exceeds the requirements of the IAQF Wales. Their compliance, or otherwise, will be a matter for the Welsh Language Commissioner rather than the IAQF Wales. Exemption from audit against this quality area should be ascertained by the auditing standard holder at the earliest possible stage.</p>	
6.1	Well Managed services moving towards fully bilingual management of the service
	<p>For all other providers the IAQF Wales seeks to ensure that the service is working towards the bilingual management of the service over a 10-year period.</p> <p>To comply with this quality criteria auditors should seek assurance that the organisation currently:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translates internal document for staff on request • Provides training and development opportunities for staff in the Welsh Language for those seeking to learn or improve their Welsh language skills. <p>Auditors seeking to identify good or outstanding practice may seek evidence that the service has developed innovative means of promoting the Welsh Language amongst its paid and unpaid staff, such as the appointment of Welsh language champion or ambassador.</p> <p>Key sources of evidence of compliance with these quality criteria for auditors include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welsh Language Progress Plan • Support accessed (e.g. WCVA, Welsh Language Commissioner)
6.2	Well Planned service with clear accountabilities for developing Welsh Language capacity
	<p>The IAQF Wales requires information and/or advice providers to ensure that they have arrangements in place to move towards incorporation of the Welsh language in service governance, planning and review.</p> <p>Auditors should seek assurance that the organisation has an adequate action plan in place.</p> <p>In addition, auditors should seek assurance that the organisation currently:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes Welsh speakers in its needs assessments

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responds to their needs in its business plan • Captures service data on Welsh language speakers (including service outcomes) • Has a named senior person for promoting Welsh Language in service planning and review. <p>Auditors seeking to identify good or outstanding practice may seek evidence that the service has developed innovative means for systematic review of the service and Welsh language capacity with senior leadership.</p> <p>Key sources of evidence of compliance with these quality criteria for auditors include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welsh Language Progress Plan • Use of WLC Hybu website self-assessment diagnostic tool that produces a draft action plan that organisations can take forward with support from WLC staff. • Support accessed (e.g. WLC ‘Hybu’ website would provide useful advice and resources (www.welshlanguagecommissioner.cymru/hybu)
6.3	Accessible, Safe and Caring services available in Welsh Language
	<p>The IAQF Wales requires information and/or advice providers to ensure that they have arrangements in place to meet the needs of individuals whose preferred language is Welsh.</p> <p>For services covered by the Welsh Language Standards for Public Bodies, these must demonstrate compliance. For those service not covered by the Welsh Language Standards, they must have an effective action plan to ensure they move towards providing their service in the client’s preferred language in line with the requirements below within 10 years.</p> <p>In addition, auditors should seek assurance that the organisation currently:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translates leaflets on request • Provides referral to other services or makes use of translation services where a client indicates a preference for the service to be delivered in Welsh. • Undertakes effective monitoring of requests for Welsh language services and their satisfaction with the service provided. <p>Auditors seeking to identify good or outstanding practice may seek evidence that the service has visible Welsh speakers, provides training customer care training for staff in Welsh has moved to full bi-lingual provision of all information resources (paper and digital).</p> <p>Key sources of evidence of compliance with these quality criteria for auditors include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welsh Language Progress Plan • Support accessed (e.g. WLC ‘Hybu’ website would provide useful advice and resources (www.welshlanguagecommissioner.cymru/hybu)

Quality Area 7: Delivering Outcomes

The provision of information, advice and guidance services in Wales is a key component of both the Welsh Government's *Tackling Poverty Action Plan 2012-2016*, and the *Strategic Equality Plan 2012-2016*. Access to these services is seen as central in giving everyone a fair and equal chance in life. With the passing of the *Well being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015* the Welsh Government is committed to ensuring that all publicly funded services contribute to improved outcomes under the following headings:

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A Wales of vibrant and thriving Welsh Language
- A globally responsible Wales

Information and advice services should also promote the national well-being outcomes set out in the Well-being statement for people who need care and support and carers who need support, issued under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

The IAQF Wales requires information and/or advice providers to gather and report the outcomes from their services. At this stage the IAQF Wales does not prescribe the outcome measures that information and advice providers must report on but over time it is expected that the IAQF Wales, with other stakeholders, will develop common outcome measures for use by IAQF Wales accredited services across Wales. Auditors should seek assurance that information and/or advice providers:

- Have identified at least four outcome measures to assess the impact of their service
- That these measures contribute to the understanding of the impact of advice on
 - Tackling poverty and/or financial exclusion
 - Promoting equality and/or community cohesion
- That the service outcomes are publicly available, usually in the service's Annual Report.

Auditors should also seek evidence that services, in conjunction with partners, are participating in the on-going development and collection of appropriate outcome measures which demonstrate the contribution their service is making in relation to any future local and national strategic outcomes (see also 4.2 above).

Auditors seeking evidence of good or outstanding practice may seek evidence of independent assessment or evaluation of service impact and/or the development of innovative outcome measures that relate to the *Future Generations* outcomes.

The sections below provide examples of how information and/or advice providers may wish to apply or develop measures that address the *Future Generations* outcomes.

7.1	A prosperous Wales
	<p>For this objective information and/or advice services may consider the contribution they make to tackling poverty and/or financial exclusion. Many services across Wales already routinely report outcomes on a number of these areas. Additional examples of good practice in this area are available from the Money Advice Service in their Debt Advice Evaluation Framework and Toolkit. Potential outcomes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Gains – for example, the additional value of welfare benefits secured for clients. • Economic wellbeing – for example, reducing the numbers of people in debt, better management of debt etc. • Securing rights and entitlements – this could capture much of the work of advice services. • Education and training – for example, supporting individuals to access grants relating to education and training or work within schools and colleges building the financial capability of students. • Employment – for example, training and volunteering programmes for paid and unpaid staff within the service or supporting clients to maintain or enter employment through securing in-work benefits.
7.2	A resilient Wales
	<p>For this objective information and/or advice services may wish to consider the contribution that they make to ensuring social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change. This could relate to the ways in which they manage their services with outcomes, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution made to reducing carbon emissions – through car sharing schemes for staff, recycling policies etc. • Amount of procurement locally sourced – through policies which promote local procurement of goods and services. <p>It may also relate to direct information and advice work for clients such as securing financial support to retro-fit their properties.</p>
7.3	A healthier Wales
	<p>For this objective information and/or advice services may consider the contribution that they make to ensuring improvements in people’s physical and mental health and well being is improved and that these improvements are sustainable. Outcomes could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced levels of stress - for example by tackling debt problems • Reduced fuel poverty – by securing alternative utility payment methods for those on very low incomes. • Reducing the numbers of people in temporary/inappropriate accommodation – through the provision of targeted housing advice services • Reducing health adverse housing disrepair – by supporting clients to secure funds to tackle damp or poor heating or tackling disrepair by supporting tenants

	<p>to challenge their landlords.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reductions in people at risk of domestic violence – by providing information and advice to victims of domestic violence and removing them from risk.
7.4	A more equal Wales
	<p>For this objective information and advice services may consider the contribution that they make to ensuring that people are able to fulfil their potential regardless of their background or circumstances. Outcomes could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased numbers of people reporting that feel involved in decisions affecting their lives. • Improved access to training, development and support for clients and for paid and unpaid staff. • Supporting individuals to secure family reunions through immigration interventions allowing people to live fulfilled family lives.
7.5	A Wales of cohesive communities
	<p>For this objective information and/or advice services may consider the contribution that they make to ensuring that they are building attractive, viable, safe and well connected communities. Outcomes could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reductions in the number of people reporting that they feel isolated or lonely – for example, through supporting clients to secure resources that allow them to participate more fully in their communities. • Increased number of people feeling that they belong to their local area by providing opportunities for community engagement. • Increase numbers of people reporting that they have access to the right information and advice when they need it.
7.6	A Wales of vibrant and thriving Welsh Language
	<p>For this objective information and/or advice services may consider the contribution that they make to ensure a society that promotes culture, heritage and the Welsh language encouraging participation by people in cultural and recreational activities. Outcomes could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved access to information and advice in Welsh • Increased numbers of staff able to provide bi-lingual services • Equal outcomes for clients with Welsh language to those English speakers • Enhanced access to recreational facilities for service’s target community
7.7	A globally responsible Wales
	<p>This objective is an overarching consideration for all publicly funded services in Wales. Welsh Government would welcome examples from information and/or advice services of any outcomes achieved that support this goal.</p>

DEFINITIONS

What does Good Information & Advice Look like?

Good quality information and advice is:

- Factually accurate and up-to-date
- Impartial and in the best interest of the client
- Delivered by an appropriately trained and competent information worker or adviser
- Appropriate and relevant to the client’s needs and circumstances
- Provided in such a way as to enable the client to make informed and appropriate choices from options presented and take positive/beneficial action where possible
- Followed-up to assess the impact of the information or advice.

Types of Advice

The IAQF Wales for Wales recognises that information and advice may take many forms. We have defined these as “Types” of Advice. The existence of all of these types of advice is important in ensuring that all members of the community have access to the right support at the right time. Delivering good quality *Information* is just as important as delivering good quality *Specialist Casework*, perhaps more important – without good quality information the numbers who may require specialist support would be unsustainable and many would find their needs unmet.

The IAQF Wales for Wales has divided information and advice into five broad headings:

- Type One – Information
- Type Two – Guidance
- Type Three – Advice
- Type Four – Advice with Casework
- Type Five – Specialist Casework

In the sections below we provide a more detailed description of each “type” with an example of what that definition means in practice. We then provide further examples of the types by different advice topics.

Type One – Information

Describes a service which gives clients the information they need for them to know more and do more about their situation. It can include providing information about policies, rights and practices; and about local and national services and services that may be able to offer the client further help. Responsibility for any further action rests with the client.

A client asks whether he can get help with his council tax. You provide him with a leaflet “Help with Council Tax” and provide details of two local advice services which offer advice on welfare benefits.

Type Two - Guidance

Describes a service which may discuss the advantages and disadvantages of different options without making specific recommendations. It may include making and receiving referrals, identifying emergencies and prioritising issues.

A client wants to understand his finance options before choosing a new or used car. The money adviser explains the features of various purchasing options but does not recommend a particular finance option or provider.

Type Three – Advice

Describes services which diagnose the client’s legal problem and any related legal matters; identifies options and relevant legislation and decide how it applies to a client’s specific circumstances; includes identifying the implications and consequences of such action and grounds for taking action; includes form filling; provides information on matters relevant to the problem such as advising on next steps and identifying dates by which action must be taken to secure the client’s rights. Advice may take place on more than one occasion.

A client asks whether she can get help with caring for an elderly neighbour. You carry out a benefit check and identify she may be entitled to claim Carers Allowance depending on her neighbour’s benefits situation. You advise the client to obtain a claim form to protect her potential date of claim and offer details of services who can offer help to the client and her neighbour.

Type Four - Advice with casework

Includes all elements of an advice service and also involves taking action on behalf of the client to move the case on. It could include negotiating on behalf of the client with third parties on the telephone, by letter or face to face. It will involve the advice provider taking responsibility for follow-up work.

A student is having difficulty in negotiating the return of their damage deposit from local landlord. You contact the landlord and explain that you will be supporting the student to recover the maximum value of the deposit. The landlord claims there was damage to the property which the student later accepts. You negotiate a reasonable deduction for the damage.

Type Five - Specialist casework

Describes services where the adviser or the service as a whole undertakes advice and casework at a level where very detailed knowledge of the law and case law is required. Usually this means it is delivered by advisers who have the necessary depth of legal knowledge and expertise to undertake representation for clients through the court or tribunal.

The client has lost a first tier social security tribunal. Your adviser identifies an error of law in the tribunal’s decision which they will go on to argue before the Upper Tribunal. Their arguments will reference legislation and case law.

Advice Topics

The IAQF Wales for Wales has been developed in response to the Welsh Government's identification of the important role that information and advice services should play in supporting the delivery of two of its strategic goals:

- Tackling Poverty and promoting financial inclusion
- Promoting equality and building cohesive communities

Information and advice services should also promote the national well-being outcomes set out in the Well-being statement for people who need care and support and carers who need support, issued under the *Social Service and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014*.

It is also expected that information and advice services will play an important role in ensuring that Wales delivers against the aspirations contained within *Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015*. This overarching framework provides the opportunity to address the requirements of delivering outcomes that tackle poverty, promote equality and community cohesion and address the needs set out in the *Social Service and Well-being (Wales) Act* under the following headings:

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A Wales of vibrant and thriving Welsh Language
- A globally responsible Wales.

To this end the IAQF Wales is particularly focused on those social welfare advice topics that directly support these goals, most importantly:

- Welfare benefits
- Financial inclusion including debt and money advice
- Housing and homelessness
- Employment
- Immigration
- Discrimination

The Framework is in the first instance to relate to information and advice for social welfare law but over time it is anticipated that this Framework will be extended to information and advice provision on a wider range of topics. If the main focus of an information and/or advice service is in providing information and advice on other topics the IAQF Wales may still be relevant to your work. For example, if the service is focussed on advising the victims of domestic abuse an understanding of an individual's rights under housing law or means by which they may secure welfare benefits or tackle debt may still be relevant.

The IAQF Wales will be regularly reviewed and updated. The Welsh Government would like to hear from your organisation on ways in which the IAQF Wales could be adapted to better meet the needs of your service and its service users.

Types of Advice by Advice Topic

Debt

Type One – Information

A client asks for help about their payday loan. You provide them with a leaflet on payday loans and dealing with non-priority debts. You provide details of a local advice service and a national telephone provider who offer advice on debt matters.

Type Two – Guidance

A client is anticipating a reduction in income and is concerned about meeting all his commitments. An adviser provides the client with a budget planner, discusses ways to maximise income and prioritise spending, explaining the different types of priority and non-priority debts.

Type Three – Advice

A client asks for help as she has missed rent payment to her landlord. You discuss the client's circumstances which highlights that she has recently separated from her partner leaving a shortfall in her income. You complete a review of income and expenditure identifying a number of areas to reduce expenditure and advise the client to contact the local authority to obtain forms and apply for council tax discounts. You advise the client to update her landlord on her circumstances and to agree a period for repayment of arrears.

Type Four – Advice with Casework

A client seeks help to deal with letters from creditors who are chasing missed payments. You review the letters, undertake an income and expenditure exercise, considering options and possible courses of action. You identify that the client is potentially able to claim benefits and you provide contact details to progress an application and set up a follow up appointment to review the outcome. You contact each of the creditors to make a token offer pending a decision on the benefits claim.

Type Five – Specialist Casework

A client has a HP agreement for a van that was repayable over six years. The client missed three payments and the van company repossessed the van before selling it and issuing a claim for the balance under the agreement. Having established a full picture and sequence of events you identify that the client has a defence against the claim. You prepare and submit your client's defence.

Discrimination

Type One - Information

A client emails you to ask for information on discrimination in pregnancy. You reply and provide links to relevant trusted websites.

Type Two - Guidance

A client with a long term health condition has been charged a fee by his employer for missing an occupational health appointment due to a misunderstanding.

The adviser explains that his employer has a duty under the Equality Act not to treat people with a disability unfairly. The adviser outlines unfair treatment, direct discrimination and the employer's duty to make reasonable adjustments and gives the client details of local services which could offer full advice.

Type Three - Advice

A client with hearing loss and deafness reports that her utility provider has changed their policy so that they are no longer prepared to allow her friend to answer security questions on her behalf over the phone. She believes that she is being discriminated against.

The adviser asks further questions before agreeing that she meets the Equality Act definition of disability and checks what outcome the client wants. He advises that she should write to the utility provider and provides a template letter. The adviser explains that EASS can help with an informal resolution and that she may be eligible for legal help if she needs legal advice on this issue. The adviser tells the client how to contact EASS and how to check online if she can get legal help.

Type Four - Advice with casework

A client with hearing loss and deafness reports that her utility provider has changed their policy so that they are no longer prepared to allow her friend to answer security questions on her behalf over the phone. She believes that she is being discriminated against.

The adviser asks further questions before agreeing that she meets the Equality Act definition of disability and checks what outcome the client wants. The adviser writes a letter to the utility provider on the client's behalf, reminding them of their duty to her under the Equality Act and outlining the adjustments she is seeking. The letter receives a positive response with the assurance for better service in future.

Type Five - Specialist Advice

The client with hearing loss and deafness returns for further help when the promised adjustments have not been honoured.

The adviser writes a formal letter to the utility provider reminding them of their obligations and their previous undertaking and explaining that court action could be taken if the matter is not resolved. The utility provider fails to respond and the adviser issues proceedings on the client's behalf. Shortly before the case is heard the utility provider indicates their preparedness to settle the claim and the adviser negotiates an acceptable settlement including an amount of compensation for the client's distress referencing case law to calculate the injury to feelings and secures the reinstatement of the original reasonable adjustment.

Employment

Type One - Information

A client has been offered a new job and wants to know how much holiday he is entitled to.

He is given an up to date leaflet on Holidays and Holiday Pay.

Type Two - Guidance

A client asks whether bank holidays are in addition to the statutory holidays. The adviser explains the rules around bank and public holiday.

Type Three - Advice

A client wants a week's holiday next month, but the employer has refused. She asks if her employer has to give her the time off work.

The adviser checks the client's employment status and explains the rules about asking for time off work and circumstances in which the employer can refuse. The client is given the contact details of ACAS.

Type Four - Advice with Casework

A client has been dismissed because she took a holiday when the employer said she could not. She has raised a grievance with the company but has not had any response. She wants to take her case to an Employment Tribunal.

The adviser writes to the employer on behalf of the client with grounds of an internal appeal and asks to be copied into any decision. The decision remains unchanged.

The adviser explains the role of ACAS and the early conciliation procedure and explains the time limits for action. The adviser helps the client to complete the ET1 claim form and explains the fee and fee remission scheme.

Type Five - Specialist Casework

The client is taking a case for unfair dismissal to an Employment Tribunal after being dismissed for a dispute over a holiday.

The adviser, acting as the client's representative, analyses the ET3 response from the employer and continues to correspond with the employer, ACAS and the Tribunal on the client's behalf. The adviser will negotiate an acceptable settlement for the client or prepare for and represent the client at the Tribunal hearing.

Housing

Type One - Information

A client telephones an advice line and informs the advice agency that he has received a section 21 notice and is worried about becoming homeless. The client is provided with a factsheet on section 21 notice's and homelessness and is signposted to his Local Authority Homelessness Service within the council.

Type Two - Guidance

A client has received a section 21 notice and is worried because he cannot find alternative accommodation. The adviser explains the housing options available and explains the processes involved in pursuing each.

Type Three - Advice

A client has decided to attend the Local Authority Homelessness Service after receiving a section 21 notice from his landlord but seeks independent advice first. The adviser explains the legal rights of the client and the legal duties of the council to provide assistance. The adviser also explains the processes and the likely outcomes of different scenarios depending on the council's decision. For example, if the council were to accept a 'help-to-secure' duty, the adviser would explain how the client could receive assistance through accessing a bond scheme. The adviser also outlined appeal rights and time-limits should the client not agree with the Local Authority's decision.

Type Four - Advice with Casework.

A client has sought assistance from the local authority and has been told that he is not in priority need and advised by the council to look for private rented accommodation. The client has given the advice agency information that raises the possibility that the client may be in priority need. The adviser obtains consent from the client to discuss the case with the Local Authority Homelessness Service and then contacts them to disclose the information from the client. The adviser asks the council to consider accepting an interim duty to accommodate pending investigations into priority need and the client is placed in temporary accommodation.

Type Five - Specialist Advice

A client was placed in temporary accommodation 3 weeks ago, while the local authority made enquiries into his case. A week later the client received a letter discharging their interim duty due to their view that the client was not in priority need, followed by 28 days' notice to leave the temporary accommodation. The adviser submits a request for a review of the council's decision and provides medical evidence supporting a priority need decision. This results in the client receiving a letter from the homelessness manager stating that the initial decision is overturned, and the council accept an s75 full duty to secure.

Immigration

Type One - Information

A client is in the UK as a student. He asks whether it is possible to stay longer in the UK. The information provider signposts the client to GOV.UK's Visa and immigration section on students and extending a stay.

Type Two - Guidance

The client is an overseas student who wants to remain in the UK and asks in what circumstances this may be possible. The adviser checks the information on changing immigration status and takes the client through the various ways a student might extend their stay.

Type Three - Advice

The client is an overseas student in the UK and wishes to marry his fiancée, a British Citizen. The adviser interprets the rules on marrying when already in the UK on a student visa and relates this to the client's circumstances, and explains what requirements he and his fiancée will need to meet.

Type Four - Advice with Casework.

The client, an overseas student, wishes to change his status as he has (with permission) married his British fiancée.

The adviser checks that the client meets the rules for entry clearance as a spouse and explains that the client will need to apply on a compulsory form, explains the fee and assists the client in completing the form.

Type Five - Specialist Advice

The client has applied to change from his student visa to a spouse visa and has been refused. He wants to appeal.

Unless the advice provider has a level 2 (or above) OISC adviser the client cannot be assisted and the client must be referred to a specialist immigration adviser.

Welfare Benefits

Type One - Information

A client is due to have an operation in the next few months – he thinks he may be off work for some time and wants to know about benefits for those who are sick and unable to work. The client is given a copy of a factsheet / information sheet on benefits for the sick and disabled and provided with details of two local advice services which offer advice on welfare benefits.

Type Two - Guidance

A client has claimed ESA; he has heard that he might have to have a medical assessment. Your adviser explains the stages of the ESA claims process.

Type Three - Advice

A client has been in receipt of ESA; he has been sent a Work Capacity Questionnaire to complete. The client is assisted with completion of the form. Your adviser explains what will happen next in the process, including the deadline for returning the form, where to send it and that the client will have to attend a medical assessment

Type Four - Advice with Casework.

A client had been turned down for ESA and wishes to appeal. The following activities may take place over several contacts with the client. Your adviser writes to the client's doctor asking for medical evidence to support the client's appeal. Your adviser prepares a submission and sends it to the DWP on the client's behalf. Your adviser explains to the client what will happen at the appeal hearing.

Type Five - Specialist Advice

A client is appealing against refusal of ESA. Your adviser prepares a submission quoting case law to support the case and represents the client at the Tribunal.

A client has lost an appeal for ESA. Your adviser identifies an error in law in the Tribunal's decision which they will go on to argue before an Upper Tribunal. Their arguments will contain references to case law and legislation.

Glossary

Quality assurance	The maintenance and systematic process of checking to see whether a service being developed / delivered is meeting specified requirements of a desired level of quality in a service, especially by means of attention to every stage of the process of delivery.
A set of Standards	Refers to a distinct scheme – e.g. Citizens’ Advice’s Membership Code, Advice Quality Standards and Scottish National Standards etc. It may include some form of passporting for all or part of any assessment and assurance process.
Standard Owners	Organisations managing or responsible for a quality assurance scheme.
A Framework	Refers to a set of minimum criteria against which other standards and assurance processes are assessed – e.g. the Money Advice Service Quality Framework.
Quality Area	The Framework is divided into seven “quality areas” or domains that capture the areas where a systematic approach to service management can improve the quality of service provided.
Quality Criteria	Each “Quality Area” comprises a number of Quality Criteria, the components that together contribute to the attainment of the Quality Area.
Peer Review	An evaluation of a service or work by others working in the same field.
Adviser Competence	Includes the basis awareness, specific knowledge and set of skills required by the adviser to undertake the work at the required level. For example, an adviser representing a client in a repossession case will require a basic of awareness of welfare benefit entitlement, the knowledge of relevant legislation relating to housing entitlements and the skills to represent the client in court.