

National Quality Standards for Psychological Services and Psychological Therapies

Background

- Currently, there are no national standards for psychological services and therapies in Scotland. Both those with lived experience of using services and those who work in services have identified this as a barrier in the provision of quality services.
- Stakeholders have voiced concern that the current Health and Social Care Standards (published in 2017, which set out what people should expect when using health, social care or social work services in Scotland) cannot be measured or assured against.
- Through developing standards, we want to establish what good looks like to support the best outcomes and experiences for people and to ensure they know what they should expect when accessing services.
- Developing clearly agreed and understood standards is crucial to strengthening scrutiny and assurance of mental health services.

Scope

- These standards would be one of a suite of standards.
- We have already developed service specifications for CAMHS and the Neurodevelopmental Services for Children and Young People and are developing one for Secondary Care Mental Health Services.
- All of these standards would be informed by principles based on the Health and Social Care Standards. We are working across Government and with partners to ensure the different standards align and in turn, provide the multi-disciplinary professional workforce, those who access services and their families with a comprehensive overview of 'what good looks like' in the delivery of psychological services and psychological therapies.
- The Quality and Safety Board has agreed the scope of standards should be Psychological Services and in agreement with the Heads of Psychology Scotland (HOPS) the definition of this scope will include psychological services, psychological interventions and therapies delivered across primary and community care, secondary care and the acute sector, in services to support both physical health and mental health across the lifespan and for all specialist services.
- Discussions with stakeholders have emphasised the importance of a partnership approach to the standards development with the voices of those with lived experience of using services being central. A partnership approach will enable a broader range of expertise and buy in than one organisation alone. This will ensure the standards are more comprehensive and impactful.

Next step

- We see the process for the development of the standards as iterative. Based on engagement with stakeholders between March and June, we are aiming to have drafted a first version of the standards by July 2022.

- After July 2022, we would anticipate a period of further local and national consultation. This may lead to amendments and adjustments to the original draft based on feedback from stakeholders.
- During this period we would also look to work with partners to develop appropriate measurement of the standards. This would be part of a broader package of work to improve wider data collection in psychological services and therapies and wider mental health data collection. Minimising the impact on workforce would be a key consideration.
- Throughout 2022 and 2023, we will work with partners to ensure that we can measure success against the new standards and that we can ensure improvement and scrutiny against them. This will be central to the wider national review of scrutiny and assurance, as recommended by David Strang in the Independent Inquiry of Mental Health Services in Tayside (February 2020). We will carry out this work in co-ordination with the development of the Mental Health Workforce Strategy and well as work surrounding the National Care Service.

Further Questions

- If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact the Scottish Government team working on this: Kay.Dunn@gov.scot