

SWF Quality Assurance Tool

Communicating a decision

Quality Assurance is a process rather than a single activity. Robust QA will include a number of activities and management processes, all of which will contribute to ensuring that the service being assessed meets the required standard. It should also be used to drive improvements. This tool has been designed as a 'starter for 10' to help organisations design and implement their own QA process and drive up quality in complaint handling and management.

Built into this tool are the standards published in the Scottish Welfare Fund Statutory Guidance – April 2017. Each organisation will have its own additional standards, originating from their Customer Service Standards and their area and internal policies and guidance. These will need to be added into the tool (or existing categories amended to reflect your higher standard).

Each indicator has three descriptions; Best Practice (1), Standard Practice (2) and Sub-standard Practice(3), with a brief description of what the QA assessor should be looking for in making their assessment. The assessor can then assign a mark to reach an overall value but also to highlight individual areas of poor and excellent practice. Any matters for feedback to the individual or for MI use should be noted in the comments section.

Simple QA Process

1. Design a QA tool. Include:

- Customer Service Standards
- National Rules/Law (for example DPA, Human Rights, Disability and Equality Legislation)
- National Guidelines / policies such as the Scottish Welfare Fund Guidance
- Any relevant local policies / procedures / processes

2. Statistical Sampling. To test compliance, consistency and develop guidance as needed

- Determine a suitable sampling methodology; for example, select 10% of all cases closed that month
- Consider the need to divide into different teams and / or stages, for example original decision and 1st teir review
- Apply QA tool to the sample
- Feedback to individual case workers

3. Management Intelligence

- Feedback trends, patterns and analysis from statistical sampling (SS)

	Best Practice 1	Standard Practice 2	Sub-standard 3	Mark	Comments
1. Written Notice given	Written notice given (unless requested otherwise)	Written notice given (unless requested otherwise)	Information provided only by telephone without a specific request from the applicant		
2. Date of Application	Application date is stated accurately, clearly and easily identifiable	Application date given accurately and clearly	Date of application not given or inaccurate		
3. Date of Decision	Decision date is stated accurately, clearly and easily identifiable	Decision is stated accurately	Decision date not given or inaccurate		
4. Notice includes type of application and what was applied for and why	Includes type of application, a detailed list of items applied for and reference to the applicants circumstances. There is a clear understanding of the reason for the application ('what' and 'why')	Contains details of the type of application and a detailed list of items applied for and reference to the applicants circumstances	Contains little or no details of the type of application or the items applied for or no reference to the applicants circumstances		
5. Details of items awarded	A detailed list of the items awarded	A list of the items awarded	Incomplete or incorrect details of items awarded		
6. Reasons for the decision to make an award (qualifying criteria and eligibility)	A clear explanation of the reasons for an award providing sufficient detail for the applicant to understand the decision at first reading An explanation for how any evidence has been evaluated if there was doubt Demonstrate that all relevant matters have been considered (and do not include irrelevant ones) Clear reference to relevant sections of the guidance	A summary of the decision enough for the applicant to understand the reasons after careful reading An explanation for how any evidence has been evaluated if there was doubt Demonstrate that all relevant matters have been considered Reference to relevant sections of the guidance	Insufficient information for the applicant to understand the reasons for the decision Little or no explanation for how any evidence has been evaluated if there was doubt No indication that relevant matters have been considered (and / or include irrelevant matters) Little or no reference to relevant sections of the guidance		
7. Details of the priority awarded (if relevant)	For each item awarded the priority is clearly indicated	An indication of priority awarded but some detailed reading is required	Little or no indication of the priority awarded		
8. Details of how an item will be provided	Includes method and any timescales or options	Indicates how item will be provided	Little or no accurate information about how the item will be provided		
9. Reasons for a decision not to make an award	A clear explanation of the reasons for refusing an award providing sufficient detail for the applicant to understand the decision at first reading Explains how any evidence has been evaluated if it has not been accepted Shows all relevant matters have been considered (and no irrelevant ones) Clear reference to relevant sections of the guidance	A summary of the decision enough for the applicant to understand the reasons for refusing an award after careful reading An indication of any evidence that has not been accepted Demonstrates that all relevant matters have been considered Reference to relevant sections of the guidance	Insufficient information for the applicant to understand the reasons for refusing an award Little or no explanation for why any evidence has not been accepted No indication that relevant matters have been considered (and / or include irrelevant matters) Little or no reference to relevant sections of the guidance		
10. Notice includes information about seeking review	Detailed explanations of the review process including significant dates and other relevant sources of support or help	Details of the review process	No details or inaccurate details of the review process.		

DRAFT: This tool is still in development. We welcome your feedback on any aspect of this document.

Please send any comments to LIU@spsos.gsi.gov.uk