

# Scheme Requirements

Human Services Scheme (HSS)

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### Human Services Scheme

#### Name of Standards

The name of these standards is the Human Services Standards (formally referenced as: Department of Health & Human Services Standards).

The following is a summary of aspects of the Human Services Standards (HSS) assessment process as detailed in requirements set by the Department of Health and Human Services. Further detail is available from HDAA on request.

#### Process Requirements

The assessment includes an assessment of the HSS, and a management standard selected by the client that HDAA is authorised to assess.

To enable the certification assessment to occur the client will at a minimum provide access to the following information: (a) a copy of its documented policies and procedures relating to its services; (b) evidence of its self-assessment processes; (c) arrange the support needs of the participants selected for interview; (d) the complete and most up to date range of services (funded by DHHS and registered with the NDIA), any changes to sites, outlets, services, or the number of people using the services, to be included prior to planning the assessment or determining the size and composition of the team.

Where an existing management standard is to be recognised the client will supply evidence of compliance with this recognised governance standard. An assessment under another certification scheme must have been completed within 6 months prior to an assessment under the HSS and: (a) any non-conformity raised must be closed; and (b) a copy of the governance standard assessment report must be provided to HDAA.

Assessments shall be planned to allow enough time and resources for the assessment activities to fully comply with the assessment and reporting requirements in this scheme. HDAA shall (a) begin assessment planning; (b) communicating the support needs of the selected consumers with the client; and (c) will send the client the list for consumer participation as early as possible. HDAA will aim to provide the client with adequate time to arrange for consumer participation, consents to access files, and prepare for the assessment. As part of the assessment planning, HDAA shall inform the client of the names of the members of the assessment team who will carry out the assessment, with enough notice to appeal against the appointment of any team member.

HDAA shall take into consideration any information provided by the Department prior to and during an assessment, including any concerns of the Department that may require special attention during the assessment. HDAA will also notify the Department in writing within twenty working days of contracting to provide certification services to the client and notify the Department twenty working days prior to the assessment of the assessment date. HDAA will also immediately notify the Department if a client puts a person accessing its services at risk of significant harm or if it suspects, has evidence of, or receives a complaint or allegation about a Notifiable Issue. HDAA is required to share with the Department any information acquired about the client in order to assist the Department to assess the performance of the client under its service agreement and against the standards.

In completing assessments HDAA will reference the “*Departmental Standards Evidence Guide*” and “*File Assessment Tools*”.

The assessment includes an initial assessment which is completed in two stages as well as periodic maintenance and recertification assessments of the client’s policies, procedures, and practices relating to its services. At the stage 1 assessment or initial certification assessment, HDAA shall confirm that the service provider has conducted a self-assessment covering relevant activities.

The stage 1 assessment will generally occur on-site but may occur as a documentation review off-site. The stage 2 assessment shall take place at the client's site(s) and or outlet(s) as applicable. During the stage 2 assessment, HDAA shall evaluate information and evidence of conformity with the requirements of the standards.

At on-site assessments the assessment team shall hold a closing meeting with the client's management and any people who wish to be involved, prior to concluding the on-site assessment.

Reports will have (at a minimum) the following content: (a) the number of sites and a list of the sites sampled; (b) the number of staff and effective full-time positions as advised by the client; (c) the number of people accessing the service; (d) a summary of evidence to assess the HSS and the governance standards; (e) the number of staff, client and volunteer files assessed; (f) a table outlining attainment with the HSS and the governance standards; (g) a separate summary of key findings for residential services or out of home care services; (h) a summary of strengths for each of the HSS and governance standards; (i) any continuous improvement opportunities; (j) aggregate file assessment data for staff and people accessing services; (k) aggregate feedback from any stakeholder consultation; (l) a comparison of performance across different sites and geographic locations where this is relevant; and (m) the client's certification status. Where applicable, reports of maintenance, recertification, or follow-up assessments shall also document close out of each improvement action revealed previously.

A client must have met all four HSS service delivery standards and the governance standards before HSS certification can be granted. In the instance of a major non-conformity that does not place a person accessing services at risk of significant harm the client is required to take immediate action: (a) provide evidence of a corrective action plan within 5 working days of the date of issue of the major non-conformity, and close out shall normally require a follow-up visit by HDAA within three months. For a certified service provider, failure to close out a major non-conformity within six months shall result in automatic suspension of certification and continued non-compliance can result in the withdrawal of funding or revocation of registration under the applicable Act. In the instance of a non-conformity: (a) the non-conformity must be closed out before certification or recertification; or (b) for a certified client, the non-conformity must be closed out within six months of the date of issue.

HDAA will use its best endeavour to provide the client with a written report, including agreed proposed corrective action (if applicable) within 20 working days of the completion of the assessment, even if the decision is not to certify. This draft report will also be forwarded to the Department pursuant with our Deed of Agreement with DHHS. In addition, HDAA must notify the Department as early as possible where a Service Provider is unlikely to achieve certification within the six (6) month timeframe and notify the Department within 5 (five) Business Days if the accreditation and/or certification status of a client changes.

Where the client does not meet the requirements of HSS, HDAA will provide a description of the improvement action and confirm that the improvement action must be resolved within 6 months of written notification of the improvement action (usually the draft report). HDAA must notify the Department as early as possible where a client is unlikely to achieve certification within the six (6) month timeframe. HDAA must give the Department prior notice of the likely withdrawal or suspension of certification, as early as possible and immediately notify the Department where a certificate is withdrawn or suspended and provide all relevant correspondence and reasons for withdrawal or suspension.

HDAA will always share with the Department, within any timelines specified, any information acquired about the client in order to assist the Department to assess the performance of the client under its Service Agreement and against the Standards and the Governance Requirements. Where a client has failed to demonstrate compliance with the Standards or the Governance Requirements, HDAA will when the client is notified also provide the Department with information, about the client that relates to the client's non-compliance with the Standards and the Governance Requirements. Within 120 days of receiving any report the Department may request that HDAA provide an updated version of the Report containing further information or clarification on any issue in the Report. HDAA must provide the requested updated Report within 10 Business Days of the request by the Department.

Clients that meet certification requirements will be certified to the HSS for three years and relevant governance standard as applicable. HDAA shall forward a copy of certificates to the department with the report of the initial certification and recertification assessments, and whenever certificates need to be reissued (e.g., in accordance with changes to certification scope).

HDAA shall conduct a detailed re-assessment of the HSS and governance standards before the end of the three-year certificate cycle. HDAA shall also conduct at least one mid-cycle maintenance assessment, to ensure that the client continues to meet the requirements of the HSS and governance standards during the service agreement cycle. HDAA may conduct an out of cycle assessment at the service providers cost, at any time if requested by the Department.

HDAA will reassess certification in relation to the HSS and governance standards every three years.

### **Assessment Planning and Sampling**

Sampling will include sites and or outlets representing service activities and the complexity of the activities undertaken. HDAA will consider the client's structure when determining the sample. The sample shall aim to represent urban, regional and rural remote locations.

The minimum number of non-central office sites and or outlets to be visited per assessment is: (a) initial assessment and recertification assessment: not less than the square root of the total number of full-time and part-time sites and/or outlets ( $y=\sqrt{x}$ ), rounded to the upper whole number; (b) maintenance assessment: not less than the square root of the total number of full-time and part-time sites and/or outlets with 0.6 as a coefficient ( $y=0.6\sqrt{x}$ ), rounded to the upper whole number.

In all assessments, the central office shall be visited at least once, in addition to the sites and/or outlets sampled.

The size of the sample shall be increased where there are special circumstances such as might apply to any of the site and/or outlet selection criteria.

For community residential care units or out of home care residential units HDAA shall apply sampling as follows: (a) 1 unit = 1 unit visited; (b) 2 to 5 units = 2 units visited; (c) 6 to 10 units = 4 units visited; and (d) over 10 units = 6 units visited. If the client has more than one office that manages community residential units, Supported Accommodation Units (disability) and or Out of Home Care residential units, HDAA shall apply the sampling formula separately to the different unit types.

Where foster care is provided, HDAA shall not sample or visit homes of individual foster carers. Where appropriate, HDAA will include foster carers in consultations with staff.

A certified client with multiple sites and or outlets, who wishes to include new sites and or outlets in the scope of its certification, shall be required to provide enough information to demonstrate that its policies, procedures and practices have been fully implemented at the new sites and or outlets to meet the requirements of the standards. Each new group of sites and/or outlets should be considered as an independent set to determine the sample size, with those chosen for assessment to be included during the next scheduled assessment activity. HDAA need not conduct additional assessments, or move forward the next scheduled assessment, solely due to the operation of additional sites and/or outlets by a client.

To ensure validity of the assessment, client files sampled shall be the square root of the total number of open and closed client files in the last twelve (12) months plus one/ rounded up. A minimum of five (5) files will be reviewed per site or service type and capped at 50 per service type/per geographical area. HDAA will aim to stratify the sample of files to represent a cross section of services delivered on a percentage basis across the organisation.

All file access shall be by written consent of the consumer and shall comply with the provisions of the *Privacy Act* and any relevant state or territory legislation.

Staff, volunteer and carer files sampled must be the square root of the total number of staff files plus one/rounded up. For maintenance Reviews, the file sample size is multiplied by 0.6, plus one/rounded up. Where a maintenance Review is split into two (2) visits to the same site, the sample may be split across those two maintenance activities. Where HDAA deems necessary the sample may be extended or reduced, and HDAA shall justify the sample size in the Review report.

HDAA may cap the number of Staff, volunteer and carer files and client files at Fifty (50) where it is apparent the systems are either sufficiently implemented or consistently failing per service type within each geographical area

HDAA is required to justify how we sample consumers for any assessment. Any reduction in the sample size shall be justified and documented in each case.

Sampling strategies shall be sufficiently documented for each assessment to be able to trace compliance with all the requirements.

HDAA shall sample people accessing each service stream delivered by the service provider. The sample will provide opportunity for people of different gender and who are Aboriginal, culturally and linguistically diverse, gay, bisexual, trans-gender diverse, intersex. The interview sample size for people accessing services is 25% of the square root of the number of people accessing services, plus 1 rounded up, for certification and recertification assessments.

For maintenance assessments, the interview sample size multiplied by 0.6, plus 1, rounded up. At least 2 people accessing services per site and per service stream.

Feedback provided by people accessing services shall remain anonymous and will be de-identified in the assessment report. An exception to this would be in the case where the feedback raises a concern with the assessor which becomes a notifiable issue, whereby the feedback shall be reported to the client, the Department and the person accessing the service identified.

HDAA will aim to have face to face individual contact or group interviews with 50% of the proposed sample of people accessing services. Where remote interviews are necessary, HDAA shall take steps to ensure confidentiality is maintained. If the 50% ratio cannot be achieved, HDAA shall document its justification for the sampling approaches used. Other sampling approaches may include: (a) a written survey; (b) casual or informal conversation based on a chance meeting, which may not require consent; or (c) other innovative ways to involve people accessing services. HDAA will also consider feedback to the Service Provider from people accessing services and how the Service Provider responded to the feedback (for example to complaints).

Assessors shall not interview children and young people unless it is part of a family interview.

HDAA shall stratify its sample of files on a percentage basis across the service streams delivered by the service provider. The size of the sample of files for a service provider is the rounded up square root of the total number of people accessing services who have individual files (i.e. across the service provider), with a minimum of 5 files per site reviewed by the CB and for maintenance the file sample size is multiplied by 0.6, rounded up. HDAA will select the files to ensure that the selection represents a cross section of services delivered by the service provider.

#### **Information and Communication Technology Auditing (MD4:2018)**

HDAA is authorised to complete assessments to MD4:2018 which enables a greater use of information and communication technologies (ICT) in the auditing activities. ICT is the use of technology for gathering, storing, retrieving, processing, analysing and transmitting information. It includes software and hardware such as smartphones, handheld devices, laptop computers, desktop computers, drones, video cameras, wearable technology, artificial intelligence, and others. The use of ICT may be appropriate for auditing both locally and remotely. The use of ICT during audits may include but is not limited to:

- a) Meetings; by means of teleconference facilities, including audio, video and data sharing,
- b) Audit of documents and records by means of remote access, either synchronously (in real time) or asynchronously (when applicable),

- c) Recording of information and evidence by means of still video, video or audio recordings,
- d) Providing visual/audio access to remote or potentially hazardous locations.

The use of ICT shall be mutually agreed upon with you by HDAA prior to the audit commencing. HDAA and the service provider shall ensure that security and confidentiality is maintained throughout audit activities and activity is in accordance with information security and data protection measures and regulations before ICT is used for audit purposes. In the event systems to be used, security and or data protection measures are not able to be fulfilled or agreed the assessment will be conducted on site.

**Assessment sample**

Sampling has been determined based on the Service Description provided to us by you and the Scheme sampling rules. In establishing this agreement for services, it is very important that the Service Description directly aligns with scope of services to be assessed. This is because services not included in the Service Description cannot be included in the scope of certification.