

THE EUROPEAN FAMILY SUPPORT NETWORK

Training School
Family support and research for
social impact

Quality Assurance Across Europe
A policy & practice view



Quality Assurance Across Europe

A policy & practice view

5 July 2024, **Faro, Portugal**

Martin Lichte, Senior Policy
Officer, European Social Network



Content

- 1. ESN – our Work on Quality**
- 2. How we can define Quality in Social Services**
- 3. EU Frameworks and Policies for Quality in Social Services**
- 4. Trends in Quality Assurance in Social Services**
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 - 1. Key Principles** (Basis)
 - 2. Standards** (Work in Progress)
- 6. ESN work on child & family support** (in short)
- 7. How to engage within ESN as researcher**

Who we are?

A Growing Community of Public Authorities at local, regional and national level and Organisations responsible for social services representing more than one million professionals across Europe and beyond.



180+
Member
Organisations



35
Countries

Our Mission

**We Inspire Social Services Leaders to Improve
the Lives of People in the Community**



What type of organisations are part of ESN?

- Social Services Departments in Public Authorities
- Association of Social Services Directors
- Professional Associations
- Providers, NGOs
- Inspection & Regulatory bodies
- Applied research organisations & universities



Our Work on Quality

2010



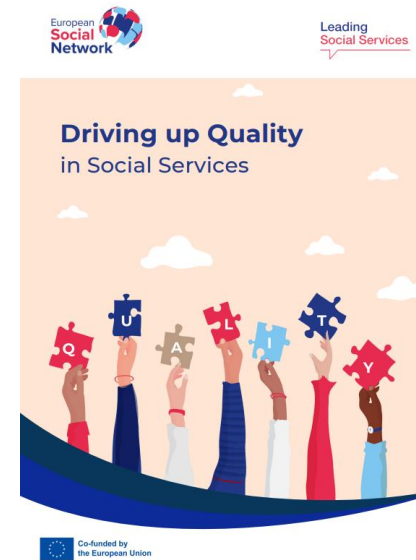
2019



2020



2023



2024



Building On Our Expertise

Year	Activity	Output
2022-2025	Quality WG	4 Policy Briefs & 1 Quality Framework Proposal
2021	European Parliament Roundtable on Quality in Social Services	Article: Promoting access to Quality Social Care in Europe
2020	Research & Seminar on Quality & Procurement in Long-Term Care	Report: Putting Quality First - Contracting for Long-Term Care
2019	European Social Services Conference Striving for Quality Co-Production Forum	Briefing: Striving for Quality
2016	Comparative Study on Key Principles on access to Quality Services for Children	Report: Investing in Children – Improving Outcomes
2014-2016	“4 Quality” - Project on Personal Care & Household Services	Toolkit: Quality services in the Personal care and Household Services (PHS) sector
2011-2013	Leadership, Performance and Innovation WG	Series of Papers: Crisis, Performance, Service Integration, Leadership approaches
2008-2010	Series of Expert Seminars on Quality in LTC	Report: Contracting for Quality



Current Projects

Malta

Review of quality in the services managed by the Foundation of Social Welfare Services

Albania

Support to Albanian government with the development of their standards framework (TAIEX)

Spain

Support to Gipuzkoa Province in their development of a care quality agency

Peer-learning Visits

Support to members to visit each other and transfer quality practice

Quality Working Group

Develop EU Framework

Defining Quality in Social Services



How do you understand Quality?

“What is important for me in terms of quality of care is that I decide who, what, where and when provides the personal assistance that I need.”

Eva Liz Moen, self-advocate, Norway

“Quality should not be about maintenance of people at a given level of dependency, but about working with them to move from dependency to rehabilitation, recovery and reablement.”

John Bolton, former social services director in the UK

“For us, quality means ‘organising care in small groups in a community setting, with person-centred services provided by a known small team, and not being confined to a nursing home’

Eloy van Hal, founder, Hogeweyk services for people with dementia, The Netherlands

“I need to assess that the individual is able to say: ‘I am experiencing high-quality care that is right for me’.”

Peter Macleod, former chief executive of Scotland’s Care Inspectorate

Defining & Measuring Quality

Definition: “the appropriate delivery of a mutually agreed service or product”
(ISO 2010)

How do we measure quality?

..... At least we can think of **TWO** large areas to explore in Social Care & Social Service quality assessment

Assessing **the actual service**

Process: Int & national norms

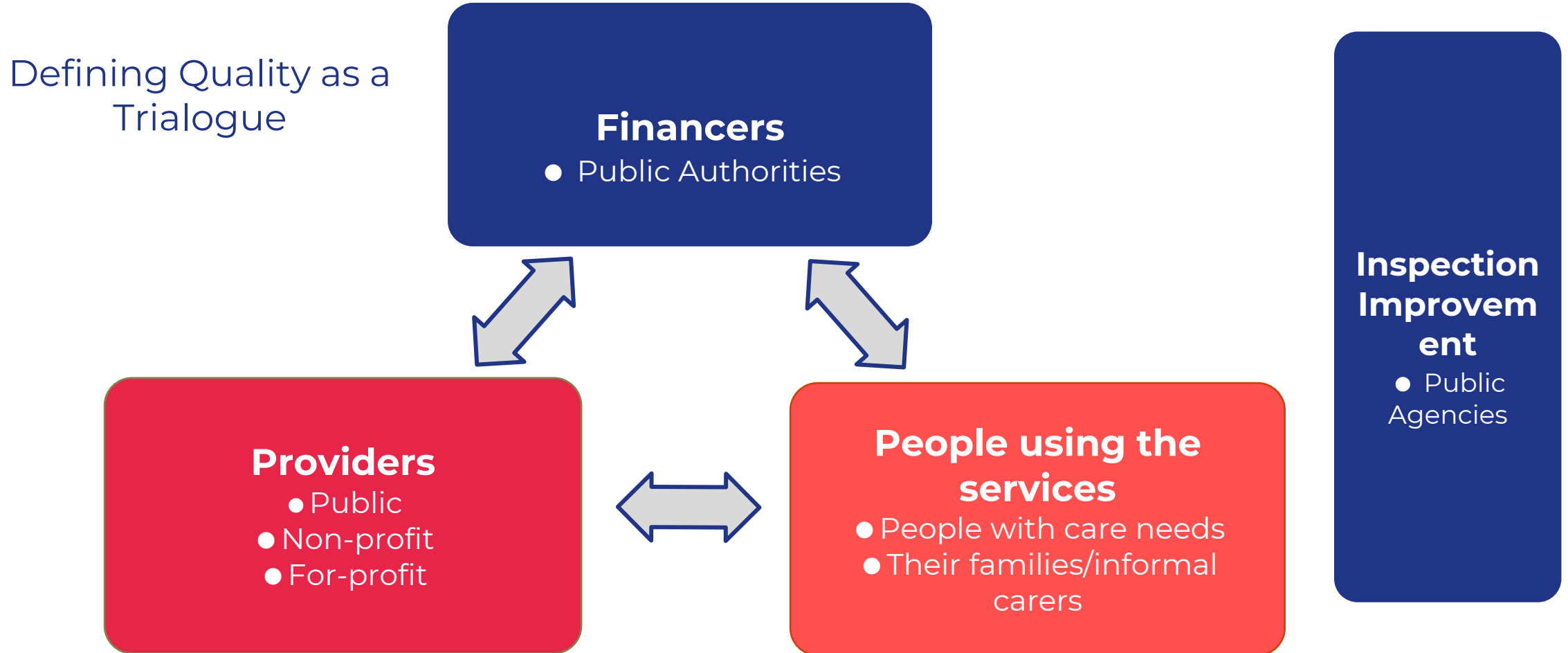
Assessing **the system**; e.g. assess SS development
in a locality, region, country

Outcomes: H&SC Standards

-> Application field (service?, system?)

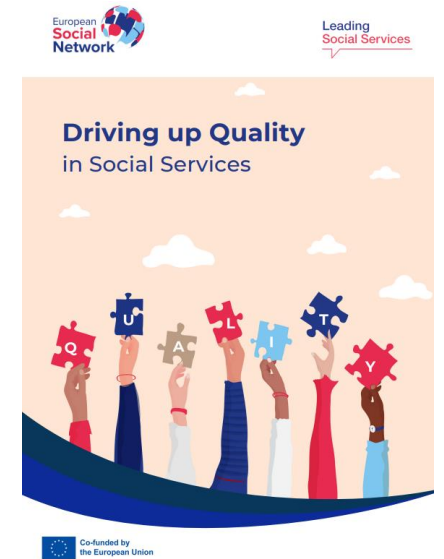
Defining Quality Social Services

- What is the **appropriate delivery of a mutually agreed service**? (ISO definition)



How can it be ensured?

- 1) **Legislation** (minimum standards)
- 2) **Quality Frameworks & Standards** (getting to a higher level)
- 3) **Quality Inspection**
- 4) **Procurement/ Commissioning**
- 5) **External Evaluation Quality Inspection / Certificates** (ISO)
- 6) **Guidance on Good Practice** (Continuous Improvement)
- 7) **Workforce Support & Training**



EU Frameworks and Policies promoting Quality in Social Services



Quality Policies at European Level

European Pillar of Social Rights

Principle 11: “Children have the right to affordable **early childhood** education and **care** of good quality.”

Principle 18: “Everyone has the right to affordable **long-term care** services of good quality”

Principle 19: “Access to **social housing or housing assistance** of good quality shall be provided for those in need”.

Right to Quality Social Care is cross-cutting in the EPSR

Voluntary Quality Framework for Social Services, (SPC 2010)

EU Public Procurement Directive, 2014 Price-Quality Ratio

Guidance on Integrated Child Protection (2024)

Specific frameworks e.g. ECEC (2019), LTC (2022)

Upcoming Proposals

- Social Services of Excellence (2024) for people with disabilities
- Review of VQF ?

Voluntary European Quality Framework for Social Services

Aim: Common understanding on the quality of social services

- **Set of Quality principles** for social services (no common standards)
- Guidelines for authorities to develop tools for **defining, measuring and evaluating** of social services' quality
- Put together by the Social Protection Committee (SPC) in 2010

Quality Principles as per Voluntary Framework

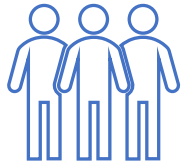
General Principles:

1. Availability, 2. Accessibility, 3. Affordability, 4. Person-centred approach, 5. Comprehensiveness, 6. Continuity, 7. Orientation towards outcomes

Specific Dimensions of service provision:

Relationship between service providers and users :

1. Respect for users' rights, 2. Participation and empowerment



Relationship between service providers, public authorities, and other stakeholders:

1. Partnership, 2. Good governance



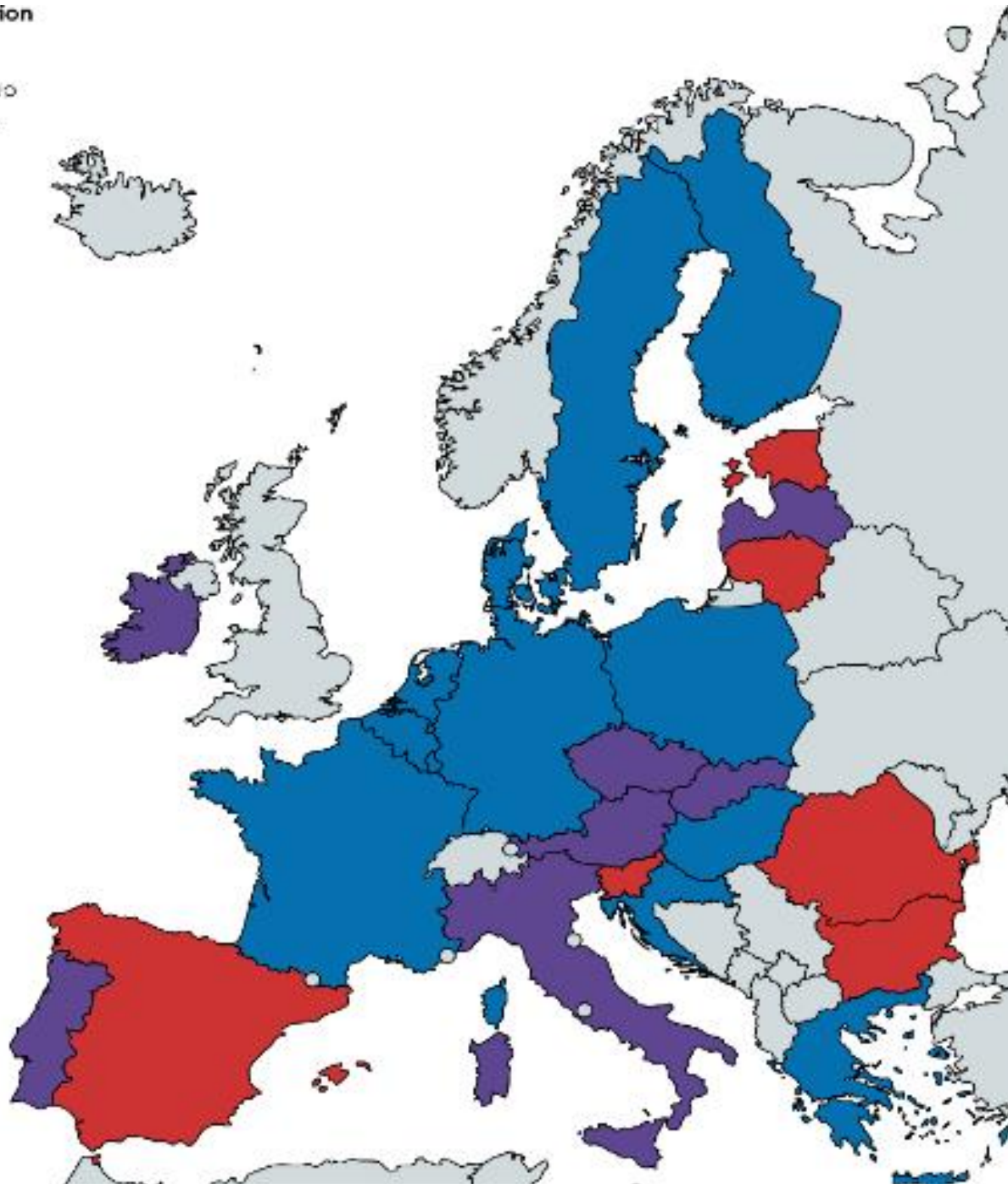
Human and physical capital:

1. Good working conditions and working environment, 2. Investment in human capital, 3. Adequate physical infrastructure



Level of VEQF implementation across the EU

- High level of VEQF take-up
- Medium level of take-up
- Limited to no take-up



Impact Evaluation 2021

- Limited direct take-up of the VEQF in the Member States' SS legislations (BG, EE, RO)
- Some MS do (IE), and some don't consider it relevant (PL, HU)
- Relevance varies among sectors (i.e. stronger in LTC, Homeless support)
- Awareness gap between national, regional & local levels
- General Principles still relevant

Trends in Quality Assurance



Trends in Quality Assurance

Inspection

Paternalistic welfare state

- Quality assurance
- Structures (processes)
- Check-lists
- External inspection



Quality management

New Public Management

- Quality development
- Processes and structures (what about results?)
- Self-assessment
- Third-party certification



Continuous improvement

Value-oriented welfare state

- Results-oriented
- Evidence-based guidance
- Self-assessment
- Third party certification
- Links to new trends and incentives

Trends in Quality Assurance

Paradigm Shift

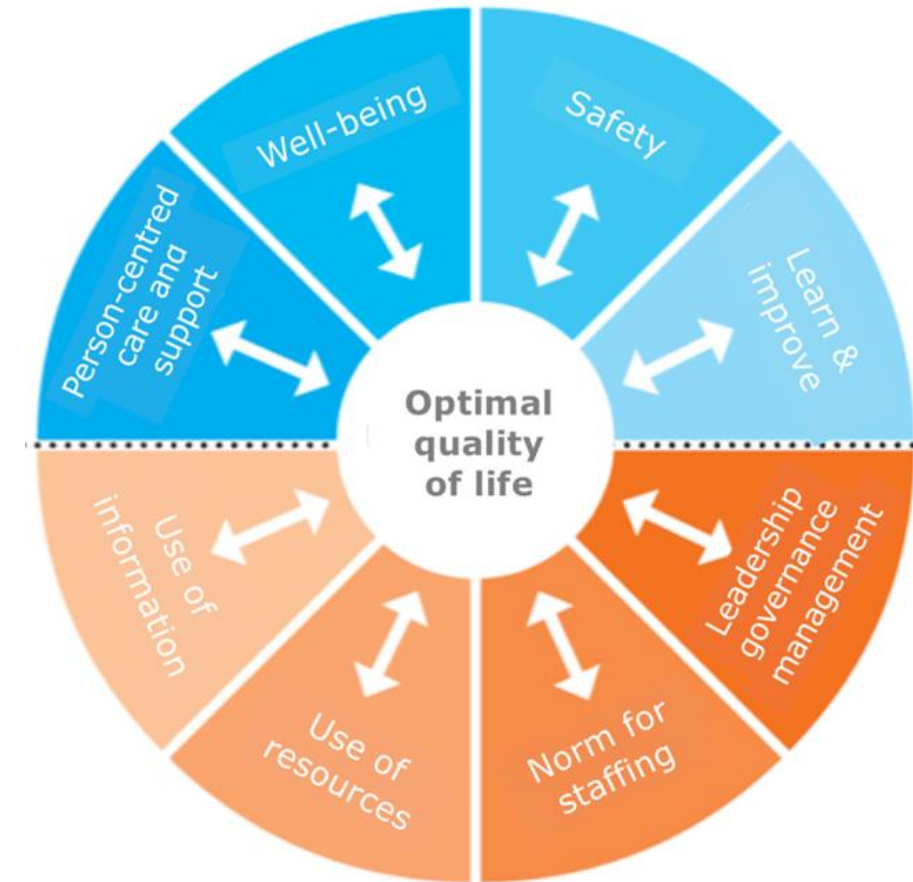
1. From assessing **input** to **outcomes**
2. From Ensuring **Quality of Care** (input) to **Quality of Life of the person** (outcome)
3. The outcome is **centered on** the **person's** (and carer's) **needs**

Goal of Care = ensure the person has a **good quality of life**



What is a Good Quality of Life?

- What a 'good' life is depends on the **person's perspective** (person-centeredness)
- It is about self-direction, being connected to the community, living a **meaningful life**
- It has multiple forms and reflects **multiple** perspectives and interests
- It's a mix of preconditions (**orange**) and dialogue on how the care is provided (**blue**) (i.e. culture of improvement) – (Dutch Care Institute 2017)
- It's **contextual** in settings and time
- Requires a **dialogue** between authorities, providers, people using care & carers (formal/informal)
- Only care that also ensures good quality of life for **carers** is sustainable (work-life balance, respite care and training)



Trends in Quality Assurance

Paradigm Shift **to co-production**

from **caring for the person** to **co-producing the necessary care and support with** the person

involving the person in **planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluation** of care

Example:

- **Jointly developing individual care plans including support and goals** (i.e. My Life my Plan, Randers Municipality, Denmark)
- **Joint inspections: inspectors joined by people with experience of care** (Young Inspectors Programme, Care Inspectorate Scotland)



Self-assessment framework for support services, Scottish Care Inspectorate, UK – Promoting Co-produced care planning

1. How well do we support people's wellbeing?	2. How good is our leadership?	3. How good is our staff team?	4. How good is our setting?	5. How well is our care and support planned?
1.1. People experience compassion, dignity and respect	2.1. Vision and values positively inform practice	3.1. Staff have been recruited well	Not currently assessed for this service type	5.1. Assessment and care planning reflects peoples' needs and wishes
1.2. People get the most out of life	2.2. Quality assurance and improvement is led well	3.2. Staff have the right knowledge, competence and development to care for and support people		5.2. Carers, friends and family members are encouraged to be involved
1.3. People's health benefits from their care and support	2.3. Leaders collaborate to support people	3.3. Staffing arrangements are right and staff work well together		
1.4. People are getting the right service for them	2.4. Staff are led well			
1.5. People's health and well-being benefits from safe infection prevention and control practice and procedures				

Key question 6: What is the overall capacity for improvement?

Trends in Quality Assurance

Defining and measuring outcomes (indicators)

Children



Outcomes:

- **Emotional:** Nurturing relationships
- **Legal:** legally secured permanent home
- **Physical:** maximum number of placements

Measurement Indicators:

- Children taken into alternative care get a recommendation for a **permanent** home after X weeks

Older People



Outcomes:

- **Full or partial recovery:** when older people can do more for themselves (less care delivered)
- **Not increasing care:** people can better manage their long-term conditions with less deterioration
- **Preventing move to residential care:** people can remain in their own home

Measurement Indicators:

- % of older people helped to live at **home & remain in their home** long-term.
- % of older people **discharged from hospital** who recover in their community

Trends in Quality Assurance

A growing number of national quality (improvement) agencies

- Ireland: **HIQA** (2007), **TUSLA** (2014),
- UK: **CQC** (2009), **Scottish Care Inspectorate** (2011),
- Finland: **VALVIRA** (2009)
- Sweden: **IVO** (2013)
- Malta: **SCSA** (2018)
- France: **HAS** (2018)



Role:

registration, inspection, monitoring and **improvement** of health and social care providers ensuring their compliance with rules and regulation

Trends in Quality Assurance

An emerging shift from...

quality control to continuous improvement

Inspection agencies are increasingly shifting from **regulation and inspection** towards **providing guidance and support** on compliance/accompanying to improve

- Online courses
- Guidance for providers and professionals
- Self-evaluation tools
- Proposals for improvements after inspections
- Programmes helping providers to improve
- Improvement strategies required for providers to keep in business



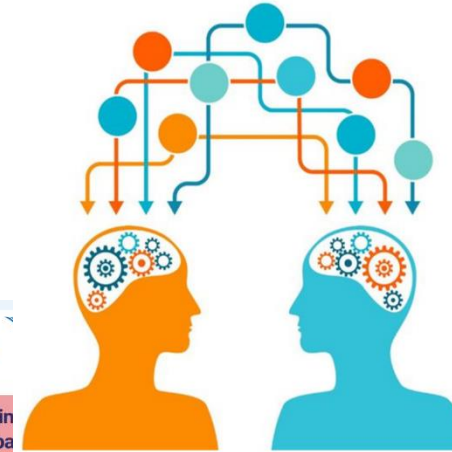
Guidance on effective conversations with children and parents

How to have effective everyday conversations

- View the communication toolkit, 'Fundamentals of good communication: How to have effective everyday conversations', which aims to support Tusla staff to communicate effectively with children, families and foster carers when they are using children's social services.
- View the Questions to help with everyday communication tool which is designed to prompt Tusla staff to stop and think before, during and after they communicate with children, families or foster carers. This tool covers the fundamentals of good communication.
- View the framework and full guide here.

Fundamentals of good communication: Questions to help with everyday communication

Getting ready to communicate	Purpose of the communication	During communication	Checking understanding	Seeking feedback
<p>Am I ready to communicate with this child, family or foster carer?</p> <p>How am I feeling? Am I attuned to how the person is feeling and what is happening in their life?</p> <p>What is my relationship with this person? Do I know their story or family history?</p> <p>How can I best prepare for this meeting? Who could help me to prepare?</p> <p>What is the best way to meet this person? Should it be face-to-face or by phone?</p> <p>Is the person expecting this meeting or conversation? When was I last in contact with them and how was it left?</p> <p>Does the person need support when I am communicating with them?</p>	<p>What is the purpose of this meeting or conversation?</p> <p>Am I clear on why this meeting or conversation is taking place?</p> <p>Am I clear on what I am hoping to achieve from this meeting or conversation?</p> <p>Have I thought about what the potential impact of this conversation will be on the person?</p> <p>Have I thought about what a good outcome from this meeting or conversation would be for the person that I am communicating with?</p>	<p>Am I aware of my verbal and non-verbal communication?</p> <p>Have I clearly explained the purpose of the meeting or conversation to the person?</p> <p>Am I respectful of the person and their needs? For example, if I was late, did I apologise?</p> <p>Am I fully present and actively listening? If I am taking notes, have I explained why?</p> <p>How is the information landing with the person? How are they reacting?</p> <p>Am I aware of my tone of voice and do I ensure that it is open?</p> <p>Do I have strategies to respond to the situation if it becomes challenging?</p>	<p>Has my message been understood?</p> <p>Have I given the person opportunities to ask questions during the meeting or conversation?</p> <p>Have I checked in with the person to see if they are fully understanding the message?</p> <p>Have I reflected back the points raised by the person to ensure that I have understood them as they intended?</p> <p>Have I documented the points raised by the person during our meeting or conversation?</p> <p>Have I arranged a date and a time for a follow-up meeting or conversation?</p>	<p>Have I looked for feedback on the meeting or conversation?</p> <p>Have I supported the person to provide their feedback after the meeting and documented this feedback?</p> <p>Have I addressed any questions, concerns or complaints in a timely way?</p> <p>Have I clearly outlined the next steps, who is responsible for them and expected timelines?</p> <p>Have I agreed to maintain regular contact with the person, even when there are no updates to give?</p> <p>If the person needs support from other services, have I explained how I will follow-up with this?</p> <p>Can I discuss any learning from this situation in my supervision?</p>



Fundamentals of good communication: How to have effective everyday conversations

✔ Lets get started

Partnership approach

Trends in Quality Assurance

Promoting Quality through Public Procurement

EU Directive on **Public Procurement** (2014)

“Member States may (...) provide that the choice of the service provider shall be made on the basis of the tender presenting the **best price-quality** ratio, taking into account **quality and sustainability criteria** for social services”. (Article 76.2)

ESN (2021): Mixed picture: 50% of respondents said price-quality ratio is key criterion in procurement of SS



Trends in Quality Assurance

A shift from...

a **siloes** approach (health and social) to **integrated** care also in assessment

- New **single assessment framework** for health and social care (CQC, England)
- **Health and Social Care Standards** (Scotland)
- **Social and Medico-social Care Standards** (HAS, France)



A single assessment framework

This framework will assess health and social care providers, local authorities and integrated care systems with a consistent set of key themes, from registration through to ongoing assessment

Aligned with “I” statements, based on what people expect and need, to bring these questions to life and as a basis for gathering structured feedback

Expressed as “We” statements; the standards against which we hold providers, LAs and ICSs to account

People’s experience, feedback from staff and leaders, feedback from partners, observation, processes, outcomes

Data and information specific to the scope of assessment, delivery model or population group



- **Safe?**
- **Effective?**
- **Caring?**
- **Responsive?**
- **Well-Led?**

Trends in Quality Assurance

A shift ...

from large residential care provision to home, family and community-based care

Home and community-based social services and care, but:

*“Quality assurance is often **insufficient in home and community-based care**.” (European Council Recommendation on access to affordable high-quality long-term care)*

- Ireland: Upcoming National Standards for Homecare and Support Services (LTC)

Trends in Quality Assurance: Home Care

- **To inform the development of National Standards**
- Scotland
- England
- Northern Ireland*
- Wales
- The Netherlands
- New Zealand
- Australia.

EVIDENCE REVIEW

To inform the development of National
Standards for Homecare and Support
Services in Ireland

May 2022



Safer Better Care

- *Northern Ireland was the only country with dedicated mandatory standards specifically for homecare.

Trends in Quality Assurance

A shift from...

commissioning of care to procurement of personal budgets

With **personal budgets** individuals become 'commissioners' of their own social services.

- How to help them assess that the care they purchase is of quality?
- How can they have access to the necessary information about the quality of services available on the market to make informed decisions – often in a situation of urgency?

Our proposal for a renewed EU quality framework for social services

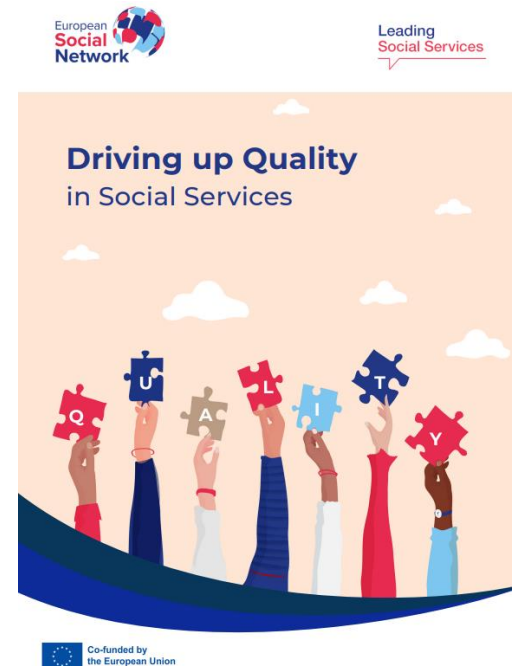


Why we need a reviewed EU framework?

- **EU Guidance on Quality** in Social Services **is outdated and mostly unknown** (last initiative dates from 2010)
- EU guidance should go **beyond principles** and have a better **defined field of application** (system vs provider)
- **New trends** in social care require new ways of ensuring quality

How we develop it?

- **1. Review existing EU and National Quality Frameworks & current Trends (2022)** (Meeting of Experts from Practice & Quality Assurance)
- **2. Agreeing on application field, goal and key principles (2023)** (Meeting of Experts from Practice & Quality Assurance)
- **3. Translating Principles into Standards and required Arrangements (2024)** (Experts from Practice & Quality Assurance)
- **4. Testing Standards and finalizing proposal (2024-2025)** (Frontline workers & people using services)



Application field & Goal (2022)

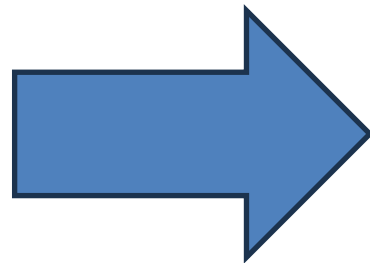
1. Application field: **Service Level**
2. Goal:
 1. Offer a **common language** across Europe for public authorities, service providers and people to describe what high-quality social services look like.
 2. Provide a framework and example for **public authorities to assess** the quality of services and develop own national frameworks.
 3. Help **people using** services and their caring families **understand and assess what they should expect** from a good quality service.
 4. Help **services self-evaluate** the quality of their service against quality standards.
 5. Ensure quality assurance is based on latest evidence and research i.e. **focuses on outcomes** for people who are using services, not (only) **structures** and **processes**.

Developing Key Principles (2023)

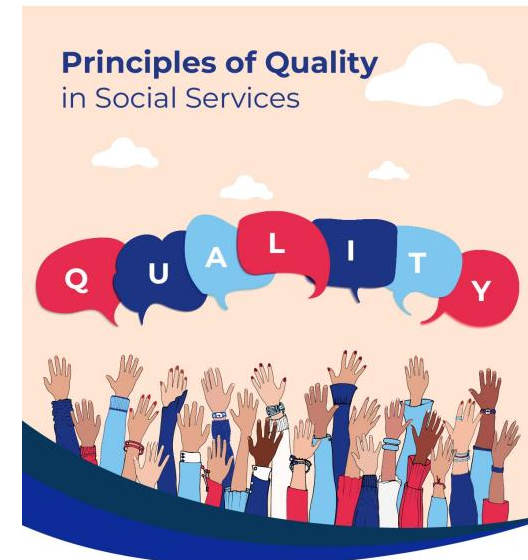
1. Human-rights-based (new)
2. Person-centred (VF)
3. Outcomes-oriented (VF)
4. Safe (new)
5. Community-Based (new)
6. Accessible (VF)
7. Responsive (new*)
8. Empowering (VF)
9. Respectful (VF)
10. Trust-based (new)

11. Choice (new)
12. Partnership (VF)
13. Transparent (new)
14. Integrated & Comprehensive (VF)
15. Well-Resourced / Well-funded (new – principle or input?)

16. Accountable (new)
17. Well-led (Management) (new)
18. Permanent Improvement (new*)
19. Workforce (VF)



1. Human rights-based
2. Person-centered
3. Safe
4. Community-based
5. **Outcome based**
6. Well managed



Translating Principles into Standards (2024)

Six Principles: 1. Human rights-based, 2. Person-centered, 3. Safe, 4. Community-based, 5. Outcome based, 6. Well managed

The outcome a person should expect 'I statement'	What a service provider should aspire to 'We statement'	Arrangements a service provider should have in place to meet peoples' expectations and own aspiration
My service is...	We provide...	We have in place...

Example of Standards for Person-Centred

The outcome a person should expect 'I statement'	What a service provider should aspire to 'We statement'	Arrangements a service provider should have in place to meet peoples' expectations and own aspiration
<p>I can easily access the type of support I require when I need it.</p>	<p>We ensure that people can easily access the type of support they need when they need it.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Our services are physically accessible. No physical barriers prevent access to our facilities or services. 2. Our services are digitally accessible. No digital barriers prevent access to our digital services. 3. Our service is situated in a location that is accessible by public transportation or there are other arrangements in place so that people can reach our service. 4. We ensure information about our services are accessible, including information about contacts, access to our service, details about its operations and goals. 5. We provide information that is easy to understand, and published through channels accessible to our community. 6. We provide our service at times that accommodate all people who are eligible for them. 7. Languages: the service is provided in multiple languages to accommodate diverse linguistic needs, both in terms of information and staff communication. 8. We collaborate with other relevant entities to reduce bureaucratic obstacles for individuals seeking care, ensuring seamless transitions between services.

Example of Standards for Safe

The outcome a person should expect 'I statement'	What a service provider should aspire to 'We statement'	Arrangements a service provider should have in place to meet peoples' expectations and own aspiration
<p>I feel safe and supported to live life to my full potential, by staff who know and understand my support needs.</p>	<p>People using our services feel safe and supported to live their lives to their full potential, by staff who know and understand their support needs.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We have sufficient numbers of competent staff to meet clients' support needs and to enable them to remain as independent as possible. 2. Our staff has a mix of skills that meet the needs of the people using our service. 3. We recruit staff that has the skills to be aware of and support the needs of the people using our services. 4. We have robust recruitment procedures. 5. We provide our staff with appropriate and regular training including induction training. 6. We ensure people using our services have access to and are supported to understand information concerning their safety . 7. We have clear reporting procedures in case clients feel unsafe,

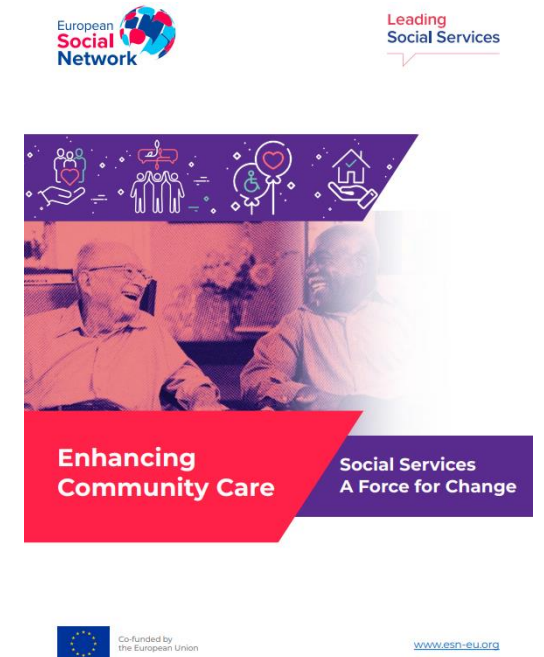
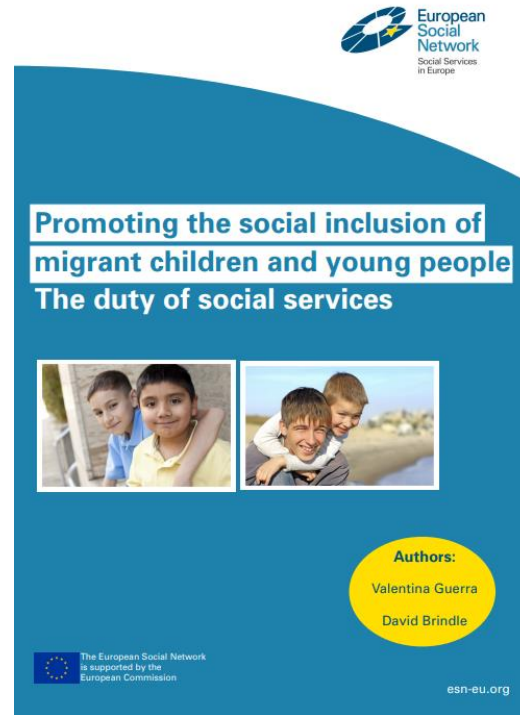
Example of Standards for Community-Based

The outcome a person should expect 'I statement'	What a service provider should aspire to 'We statement'	Arrangements a service provider should have in place to meet peoples' expectations and own aspiration
<p>I have the right to maintain and to live my own personal relationships and can define, build and keep my own personal network.</p>	<p>We enable people using our services to maintain and build their own personal relations and networks—face-to-face and digitally.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We are curious and learn about what's social contacts are important for the person. 2. We help people using our service getting in contact and maintain contact with support networks 3. We train our staff on communication tools and methods to be able to help the person be in contact with their relatives and social network in the local community. 4. We help the person to identify and overcome barriers that prevent the person from maintaining and building a social network. 5. We ensure the person using our services has access to different means of communication including digital devices to be in contact with their network.

ESN work on child protection and family support



Have a look at our reports



<https://www.esn-eu.org/publications>

Have a look at our Practices

- Domestic Violence in Families (MT)
- Integrated Support – Go Team (BE)
- **Home first – alternative to alternative care (SE)**
- One Family one Plan (BE)
- Through the Eyes of the Child: A Study of Tusla Child Protection (IT)
- Young Care Inspectors (UK)
- Indicators for Child Safety (ES)
- Support families in transitions (PT)
- Child Support Leavers (BG)

<https://www.esn-eu.org/practices>

The screenshot displays the 'Practices' page on the European Social Network website. At the top, there is a navigation menu with links for 'About', 'Membership', 'Policy', 'Lands', and 'E-Library'. A search bar is also visible. The main heading is 'Practices', with a sub-heading 'Find out more below how ESN members are devising effective solutions to support those in need of social services, meeting emerging needs and driving positive change in their communities.' Below this is a filter section with dropdown menus for 'Theme' (set to '- Any -'), 'Year' (set to '- Any -'), and 'Country' (set to '- Any -'), followed by an 'Apply' button. Two practice cards are shown: 'Addressing Domestic Violence in Families' (2021, Malta, Support for Children & Families) and 'Process Supervision: Professional and Personal Support' (2022, Romania, Disability, Workforce and Leadership).

Attend our seminar



European
Social
Network

Protecting Children

Working in Partnership across Children's Services

30 September - 1 October 2024
Bucharest, Romania

Leading
Social Services

The banner features a teal background with various colorful icons and illustrations. On the left, a hand holds a smartphone. In the center, there are icons of a woman holding a child, two people talking, and hands holding a heart. On the right, a hand holds a red crayon. The background is decorated with geometric shapes like triangles, diamonds, and circles, along with icons of buildings, puzzle pieces, and people.

Register here:





Apply for Research & Evaluation Award
Evidence-based community services, and projects.

2024 ✨
**European Social
Services Awards**

**Promoting Inclusive
Communities**

4-5 November, Lisbon, Portugal

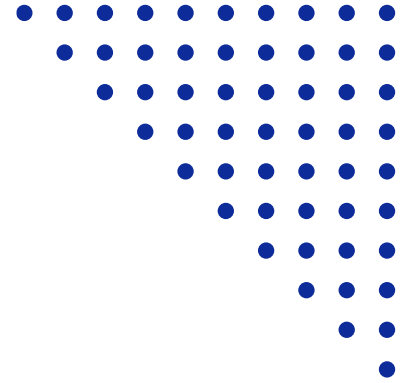
🌟 **APPLY NOW**

www.essa-eu.org

Deadline 12 July



Let's stay in touch!



 @ESNSocial

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Social Media


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 European Social Network

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