

Single Shared Assessment

Practical Advice - Training Framework

This paper

- Identifies the information and training requirements for single shared assessment
- Suggests a framework for meeting training and staff development needs.

Introduction

Implementation of single shared assessment will require changes to systems, culture and practice in social work, health and housing services. The focus will be on better results for people who need care in all community care groups. This will mean

- developing a culture in which the needs of the person are paramount
- making arrangements for an efficient, effective, integrated system for assessment
- broadening the range of assessors – professionals in social work, health, housing, and in other agencies, where appropriate
- extending and supporting joint working
- securing collective ownership of the new arrangements.

Such major change will affect the work of a wide range of staff who will require training and support for new roles and responsibilities in single shared assessment. Other groups will need to understand what these changes mean for the provision of community care. In addition people will need information about plans and progress in implementation.

Principles for training and staff development

The Guidance on Single Shared Assessment notes that preparations for implementation should include the development of a plan for staff training and development. We suggest that the following principles be applied:

- Recognise that complex change needs to be managed and involve change leaders.
- Base training on the agreed underpinning values for single shared assessment.
- Identify the different groups who will have an interest as stakeholders and differentiate the information and training and development needs of different groups.
- Set priorities for training and for ongoing staff support and development.
- Build on existing knowledge and skills in assessment and joint working.
- Plan and provide training on a joint and multi-disciplinary basis.

Targeting training

Training should meet the needs of different groups who will be involved in or who need to know about single shared assessment. These fall into three categories:

1. Professional and trained staff who will be
 - undertaking single shared assessment as the ‘lead professional’
 - contributing to single shared assessment, e.g. with specialist assessment
 - managing or supervising staff who are assessors

These will be staff in social work, health and housing in the main. They may also be staff in independent agencies where arrangements are in place for them to carry out these roles. We would expect that these staff have an understanding of needs in community care and skills in assessing needs. Where this is not the case such training or re-training should be provided.

2. Staff who will be supporting assessors or the assessment process but who are not directly involved in single shared assessment. These may be
 - administrative staff
 - finance staff
 - planning staff
 - service and senior managers.

3. Others who are not involved in the provision of single shared assessment but who 'need to know' about the changes it will bring to the provision of care. This group will include
 - service providers who will be acting on the outcomes of single shared assessment to meet care needs
 - other staff and agencies who will be referring people for community care
 - elected members
 - people who use services and their carers
 - the public (and potential service users/carers).

For this group information rather than training will be needed but we suggest that this is included in the plan for training and staff development because of the overlap and possibility of developing information sources useful for a wide range of people.

Table 1 Suggests the areas of information and training appropriate to different groups.

Staff development

Training in specific aspects of single shared assessment will be essential before it can be implemented, in particular training on the use of the tool, the process and understanding professional roles and accountability. Other aspects are necessary for successful implementation but should be seen also as priorities for ongoing staff development. The cultural changes that will be required to support effective joint working and put people who use services at the heart of single shared assessment will take place over time, as opportunities for people to share views and experiences are provided. Staff will need ongoing professional and management advice and support as they become accustomed to new roles and practices

Informed Consent and The Adults With Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000

The sharing of information in single shared assessment is founded on the principle of informed consent. All relevant staff in social work, health and housing will have to understand what this means and how to respond to the question of incapacity. Impairment or loss of capacity may concern people with dementia, learning disability or mental disorder and people affected by strokes or acquired brain injuries.

This has to be seen in the context of the Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000 and measures in relation to personal welfare, property and finances:

- Local authorities have new statutory duties to take forward welfare and financial intervention and Guardianship orders to protect vulnerable individuals, where necessary and where no-one else is doing so
- Individuals and families will find it easier to make arrangements for personal welfare, property and finances in the event of impairment or loss of capacity.

As well as making judgements about individuals' capacity to consent, staff involved in single shared assessment may have to advise people of how they can use the legislation to help in the event of incapacity or may have to invoke procedures to meet statutory obligations.

This is an area in which training for staff is essential and a comprehensive set of guidance and workbook materials for different groups in local authority and health, with trainers' guides, is available to support the implementation of the Adults with Incapacity Act. These materials are available on

www.scotland.gov.uk/socialwork/SWSI/ and
www.scotland.gov.uk/justice/incapacity

Involving and informing people who use services and their carers

Training for single shared assessment will provide opportunities for people who use services and their carers to contribute to the implementation and we encourage their involvement. This can be a powerful means of shaping values and practice and it is one way in which agencies can demonstrate commitment to a person-centred approach.

Agencies will need to inform people who use services and their carers and the public at large about the changes that will take place with single shared assessment and we expect that agencies will address this at an early stage in the implementation.

Table 1 Information and Training for Single Shared Assessment



