

The Information & Advice Quality Framework for Wales (IAQF Wales)

Second Edition, July 2018

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This document has been refreshed by MBARC following a series of engagement seminars with information and advice providers and Standard Owners in Spring 2018. It is based on an original document produced by MBARC for the Welsh Government which was produced following extensive consultation with the information and advice sector in Wales and related stakeholders.

The development of the original document was supported by an expert panel serving as the project Steering Group. MBARC would like to acknowledge the contribution of the Steering Group, comprising of:

- Bob Chapman (Chair National Advice Network)
- Linda Cropley (Citizens Advice)
- Heather Giles (Welsh Government)
- Christopher Gittins (Welsh Government)
- Dave Harrison (Centre for Assessment)
- Erika Helps (Welsh Government)
- Tiana Pathmanathan (Money Advice Service)
- Lindsey Poole (Advice Services Alliance)
- Hazel Thoms (Scottish Legal Aid Board)
- Sharon West (Welsh Government)
- Steve Williams (SSIA)
- Katie Wilson (Welsh Government)
- Mathew Xerri (Welsh Government)

MBARC would like to acknowledge the contribution of these individuals and organisations to the development of this Guidance and Good Practice Report.

MBARC

For further information please contact:

Name: Paul Neave

Department: Financial Inclusion Unit

Welsh Government

Cathays Park

Cardiff, CF10 3NQ

Email: Paul.Neave@gov.wales



All content is available under the Open Government Licence v3.0, except where otherwise stated.

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/>

Welsh Government, July 2018

© Crown Copyright 2018

The IAQF Wales

Contents

Acknowledgements.....	2
Introduction	4
Overview.....	4
For Local Authorities	4
Accountabilities.....	5
Freedom of Information.....	6
The Development of the IAQF Wales.....	6
A Dynamic Framework	6
The Benefits of the Framework	7
For the Public	7
For Funders	7
For Information and/or Advice Providers	7
For Standard Owners.....	8
The Assurance Process	9
Definitions.....	11
What does Good Information & Advice Look like?.....	11
Types of Advice	11
Advice Topics	13
Quality Areas.....	14
Quality Area 1: Well Managed.....	14
Quality Area 2: Well Planned	19
Quality Area 3: Accessible, Caring and Safe	24
Quality Area 4: Information & Advice Provision.....	30
Quality Area 5: Competent Information & Advice Staff	34
Quality Area 6: A Bilingual Service	38
Quality Area 7: Delivering Outcomes.....	42

INTRODUCTION

Overview

The provision of information, advice and guidance services in Wales is a key component of both the Welsh Government's Tackling Poverty Action Plan 2012-2016, and the Strategic Equality Plan 2012-2016 and will contribute to the goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 into the future and the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. Access to these services is seen as central in giving everyone a fair and equal chance in life. As such, the Welsh Government is committed to strengthening information and advice services, with the aim of helping people to understand and exercise their rights and make informed decisions about their lives. The Framework is in the first instance to relate to information and advice for social welfare law but over time it is anticipated that this Framework will be extended to information and advice provision on a wider range of topics.

As a funder of organisations providing free and independent information and advice services, the Welsh Government has a particular interest in ensuring that the organisations it funds are effectively managed; that the information and advice provided by them is up to date and that staff providing front-line advice services have the necessary skills and competencies to provide the best advice possible to clients.

The Welsh Government's Advice Services Review confirmed both the importance of advice and a growing need for services. This review found a rich range of services across Wales delivered by both statutory bodies and third sector organisations providing vital services within their communities. However, the review found there was a lack of consistency and understanding of what constitutes quality advice and information, within and between agencies that could facilitate better referral and clearer pathways for services users. To this end it recommended the development of "a Framework of Standards for Advice and Information".

The Information & Advice Quality Framework (IAQF Wales) has been developed to provide a consistent approach to ensuring and assuring quality information and advice for the people of Wales.

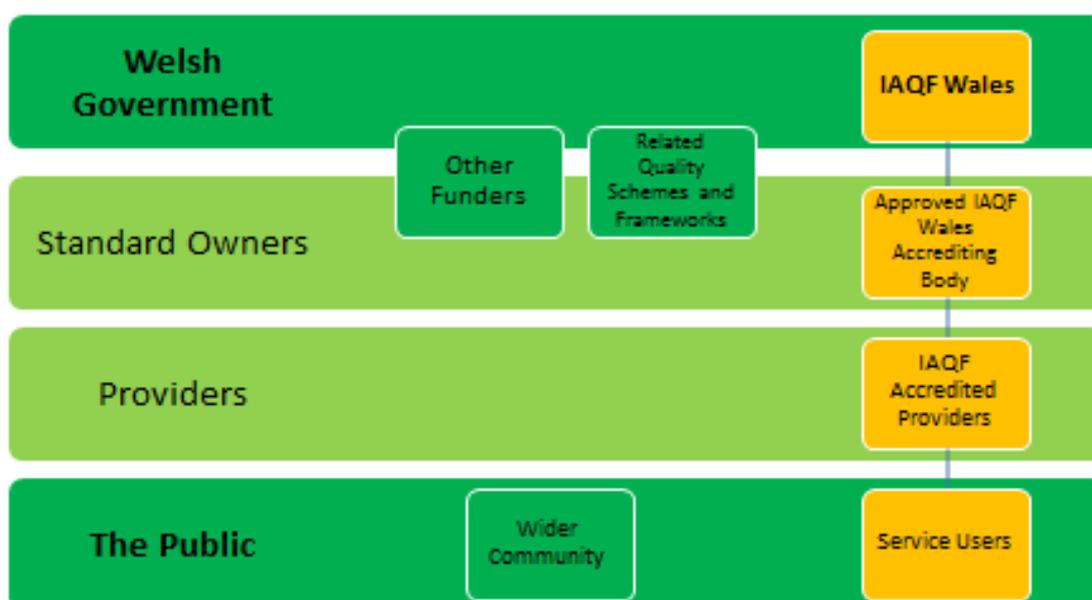
For Local Authorities

If the service being accredited is part of a local authority providing an information, advice and assistance (IAA) service, as required by the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, there will be specific duties and requirements under the Act, Regulations, codes of practice and guidance relating to aspects which are included in this framework. Examples include needs assessments (quality criteria 2.2), safeguarding (3.6), the awareness framework (including safeguarding training, 5.1) and case requirements for IAA (4.3). Should the legal requirements relating to IAA services differ from the requirements of the IAQF Wales the legal requirements will take precedence.

Accountabilities

The IAQF Wales is owned by the Welsh Government and both the content of the IAQF Wales and the associated assurance processes will be reviewed by Welsh Government periodically. The IAQF Wales builds upon the range of existing quality assurance schemes used by some information and/or advice providers in Wales. It does not establish a new set of standards but requires existing standards to address and meet the *quality criteria* within the seven *quality areas*. Similarly, the IAQF Wales does not establish a separate assurance process for individual providers but works with existing assurance processes undertaken by Standard Owners where these are compliant with the requirements of the IAQF Wales.

IAQF Accountabilities



It is anticipated that Standard Owners providing quality assurance services to individual information and/or advice providers in Wales will adapt both the content of their standards and their assurance processes to comply with the requirements of the IAQF Wales. The opportunity to develop standards and assurance processes compliant with the IAQF Wales and seek IAQF Wales Approved Accrediting Body status is open to any organisation.

IAQF Wales Approved Accrediting Bodies will provide assurance that information and/or advice providers accredited against the IAQF Wales, meet the requirements of the framework. IAQF Wales accredited providers will be responsible for ensuring that their services meet the needs of their service users and delivered in line with the requirements of IAQF Wales.

Welsh Government will maintain a register of IAQF Wales Approved Accrediting Bodies whose standards and processes have been assessed as meeting and continuing to meet the

requirements of the IAQF Wales to ensure the integrity of the Framework. The accompanying document *“The IAQF Wales: Becoming an IAQF Wales Approved Accrediting Body”* provides further information on the removal of IAQF Wales Approved Accrediting Body status where there are concerns that changes to that body’s scheme or that body’s operation of the scheme may undermine the integrity of the IAQF Wales. The IAQF Wales will also be subject to review and revision, changes to the IAQF Wales may require IAQF Wales Approved Accrediting Bodies to be reassessed against any new requirements arising from such reviews.

Freedom of Information

In all cases, the auditors and the agencies should be aware that correspondence, notes and reports shared with the Welsh Government are potentially subject to FOIA.

The Development of the IAQF Wales

IAQF Wales has been developed as part of a programme of work which included the Welsh Government’s 2013 Advice Services Review and the 2014/15 Options Report. Following on from these publications Welsh Government commissioned an extensive process of engagement with the information and advice sector, representatives of service users, funders of advice, current Standard Owners and related stakeholders. This process included:

- Four engagement events across Wales attended by 91 individuals
- A Call for Evidence to which 17 written submissions were received
- A series of 1-2-1 interviews

The Welsh Government recognises the pioneering work that the Money Advice Service (MAS) has undertaken through its Debt Advice Quality Framework, which has established common standards across the debt advice sector in the UK. Framework owners are well placed to drive the agenda for continuous improvement. During the first phase of development for the IAQF Wales, Welsh Government has worked closely both standard and framework owners to align an approach to raising standards. As IAQF Wales moves into the next phase, Welsh Government will continue to work alongside MAS and others to maintain a complementary approach and to explore further opportunities for linking relevant quality frameworks to drive consistent quality outcomes for clients accessing advice services in Wales.

A Dynamic Framework

The IAQF Wales is designed to be an evolving document and will be subject to regular review and development. We welcome your comments on the IAQF Wales and these should be sent FinancialInclusion@wales.gsi.gov.uk.

THE BENEFITS OF THE FRAMEWORK

In this section we highlight the key benefits for different groups from the introduction of the IAQF Wales.

For the Public

The IAQF Wales is designed to assist members of the public in the selection of sources of support by providing assurance that information and advice services offer high quality interventions. All organisations complying with the IAQF Wales will have been independently assessed as providing quality services.

IAQF Wales compliant services are easily identifiable. Each service displays the IAQF Wales quality mark on their premises, web-sites and other published materials.

For Funders

IAQF Wales is designed to provide assurance to funders of advice that the services they are supporting are providing quality services and that the service is committed to continually improving their service.

For Information and/or Advice Providers

For information and/or advice providers IAQF Wales is designed to provide a consistent means of demonstrating the quality of services that they provide. The IAQF Wales Quality Mark allows providers to demonstrate to the public and their funders that they are providing a quality service.

IAQF Wales compliance will also support efficient and effective service delivery as providers will have a robust framework of policies, procedures and processes to underpin information and advice work. Policies, procedures and processes are not an end in themselves but are essential to ensure the delivery of consistently high-quality information and advice. Alongside assurance that each service has all the necessary policies, procedures and processes, the IAQF Wales is focused on delivering good outcomes and will assess the quality of service provided.

Referral between information and advice providers is an important means of ensuring that individuals receive the best possible service to meet their needs. The IAQF Wales allows providers to make referrals to other organisations with the confidence to know that their client will receive a service of high and consistent quality.

The process for securing the IAQF Wales through existing Standard Owners who have secured IAQF Wales Approved Accrediting Body status allows providers to select the most appropriate service for external assessment and support.

For Standard Owners

Separate documentation, *“The IAQF Wales: Becoming an IAQF Wales Approved Accrediting Body”* has been prepared for Standard Owners to assist them to register their current quality assurance process as compliant with the IAQF Wales. Further information and guidance can be found at:

<https://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/communities/advice-services/information-advice-quality-framework/?lang=en>

THE ASSURANCE PROCESS

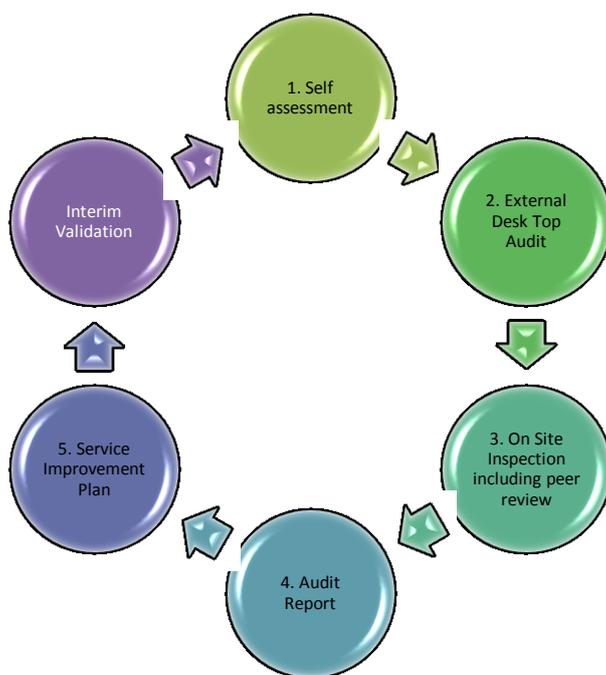
The approach to quality assurance in Wales not only seeks to ensure that all information and/or advice providers meet minimum standards in relation to safety, responsiveness and effectiveness, but also seeks to embed a culture of continuous improvement within individual providers and across the sector as whole.

The IAQF Wales builds upon the range of existing quality assurance schemes used by some information and/or advice providers in Wales. It does not establish a new set of standards but requires existing standards to address and meet the quality criteria within the individual quality areas. Similarly, the IAQF Wales does not establish a separate assurance process for individual providers but works with existing assurance processes undertaken by Standard Owners where these are compliant with the requirements of the IAQF Wales.

It is anticipated that Standard Owners providing quality assurance services to individual information and/or advice providers in Wales will adapt both the content of their standards and their assurance processes to comply with the requirements of the IAQF Wales. The opportunity to develop standards and assurance processes compliant with the IAQF Wales and seek IAQF Wales Approved Accrediting Body status is open to any organisation. A list of IAQF Wales Approved Accrediting Bodies can be found at:

<https://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/communities/advice-services/information-advice-quality-framework/?lang=en>.

The improvement cycle below illustrates the IAQF Wales approach to the different stages of assurance.



IAQF Wales accreditation issued by Standard Owners will cover a maximum period of three years from the issuing of an organisation's audit or assessment report (IAQF Wales Approved Accrediting Bodies may require more frequent assessments). Continued maintenance of this accreditation is dependent upon "Interim Validation" where accredited services must undertake an internal self-assessment indicating continued compliance with IAQF Wales at the mid point of that service's accreditation (or more frequently if required by that service's IAQF Wales Approved Accrediting Body) with the reporting of major changes to their Standard Owner. IAQF Wales Approved Accrediting Bodies will determine the major changes in relation to turnover, staffing changes etc. that the service must report on and any action that may be required by that service in order to maintain their accreditation which may include full or partial re-audit or other remedial action. Further information is included in *The IAQF Wales: Becoming an IAQF Wales Approved Accrediting Body* document.

Information and/or advice services accredited against the IAQF Wales will need to:

- Submit full details of their service to the Welsh Government's directory of information and advice providers
- Update full details of their service to the Welsh Government's directory of information and advice providers within one month of any change to their service
- Confirm their data entry on the Welsh Government's directory of information and advice providers every six months
- Prominently display the IAQF Wales accreditation logo in premises and other materials in line with any published guidance by the Welsh Government
- Remove any IAQF Wales accreditation marks within seven days of the suspension, withdrawal or removal of IAQF Wales accreditation.

DEFINITIONS

What does Good Information & Advice Look like?

Good quality information and advice is:

- Factually accurate and up-to-date
- Impartial and in the best interest of the client
- Delivered by an appropriately trained and competent information worker or adviser
- Appropriate and relevant to the client's needs and circumstances
- Provided in such a way as to enable the client to make informed and appropriate choices from options presented and take positive/beneficial action where possible
- Followed-up to assess the impact of the information or advice.

Types of Advice

The IAQF Wales recognises that information and advice may take many forms. We have defined these as “Types” of Advice. The existence of all of these types of advice is important in ensuring that all members of the community have access to the right support at the right time. Delivering good quality *Information* is just as important as delivering good quality *Specialist Casework*, perhaps more important – without good quality information the numbers who may require specialist support would be unsustainable and many would find their needs unmet.

The IAQF Wales has divided information and advice into five broad headings:

- Type One – Information
- Type Two – Guidance
- Type Three – Advice
- Type Four – Advice with Casework
- Type Five – Specialist Casework

In the sections below we provide a more detailed description of each “type” with an example of what that definition means in practice. Please note, within this report we have provided a range of generic examples *The IAQF Wales: Guidance & Good Practice* document contains further examples relating to particular advice topics.

Type One – Information

Describes a service which gives clients the information they need for them to know more and do more about their situation. It can include providing information about policies, rights and practices; and about local and national services and agencies who may be able to offer the client further help. Responsibility for any further action rests with the client.

A client asks whether he can get help with his council tax. You provide him with a leaflet “Help with Council Tax” and provide details of two local advice services which offer advice on welfare benefits.

Type Two - Guidance

Describes a service which may discuss the advantages and disadvantages of different options without making specific recommendations. It may include making and receiving referrals, identifying emergencies and prioritising issues.

A client wants to understand his finance options before choosing a new or used car. The money adviser explains the features of various purchasing options but does not recommend a particular finance option or provider.

Type Three – Advice

Describes services which diagnose the client’s legal problem and any related legal matters; identifies options and relevant legislation and decide how it applies to a client’s specific circumstances; includes identifying the implications and consequences of such action and grounds for taking action; includes form filling; provides information on matters relevant to the problem such as advising on next steps and identifying dates by which action must be taken to secure the client’s rights. Advice may take place on more than one occasion.

A client asks whether she can get help with caring for an elderly neighbour. You carry out a benefit check and identify she may be entitled to claim Carers Allowance depending on her neighbour’s benefits situation. You advise the client to obtain a claim form to protect her potential date of claim and offer details of services who can offer help to the client and her neighbour.

Type Four - Advice with casework

Includes all elements of an advice service and also involves taking action on behalf of the client to move the case on. It could include negotiating on behalf of the client with third parties on the telephone, by letter or face to face. It will involve the advice provider taking responsibility for follow-up work.

A student is having difficulty in negotiating the return of their damage deposit from local landlord. You contact the landlord and explain that you will be supporting the student to recover the maximum value of the deposit. The landlord claims there was damage to the property which the student later accepts. You negotiate a reasonable deduction for the damage.

Type Five - Specialist casework

Describes services where the adviser or the service as a whole undertakes advice and casework at a level where very detailed knowledge of the law and case law is required. Usually this means it is delivered by advisers who have the necessary depth of legal knowledge and expertise to undertake representation for clients through the court or tribunal.

The client has lost a first-tier social security tribunal. Your adviser identifies an error of law in the tribunal’s decision which they will go on to argue before the Upper Tribunal. Their arguments will reference legislation and case law.

Advice Topics

The IAQF Wales has been developed in response to the Welsh Government's identification of the important role that information and advice services should play in supporting the delivery of two of its strategic goals:

- Tackling poverty and promoting financial inclusion
- Promoting equality and building cohesive communities

Information and advice services should also promote the national well-being outcomes set out in the Well-being statement for people who need care and support and carers who need support, issued under the *Social Service and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014*.

It is also expected that information and advice services will play an important role in ensuring that Wales delivers against the aspirations contained within *Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015*. This overarching framework provides the opportunity to address the requirements of delivering outcomes that tackle poverty, promote equality and community cohesion and address the needs set out in the *Social Service and Well-being (Wales) Act* under the following headings:

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A Wales of vibrant and thriving Welsh Language
- A globally responsible Wales.

To this end the IAQF Wales is particularly focused on those social welfare advice topics that directly support these goals, most importantly:

- Welfare benefits
- Financial inclusion including debt and money advice
- Housing and homelessness
- Employment
- Immigration
- Discrimination

The Framework is, in the first instance, to relate to information and advice for social welfare law but over time it is anticipated that this Framework will be extended to information and advice provision on a wider range of topics. If the main focus of an information and/or advice service is in providing information and advice on other topics IAQF Wales may still be relevant to your work. For example, if the service is focussed on advising the victims of domestic abuse an understanding of an individual's rights under housing law or means by which they may secure welfare benefits or tackle debt may still be relevant.

IAQF Wales will be regularly reviewed and updated. The Welsh Government would like to hear from your organisation on ways in which IAQF Wales could be adapted to better meet the needs of your service and its service users.

QUALITY AREAS

Quality Area 1: Well Managed				
Overview				
Robust General Management Standards should deliver effective and sustainable management of the service and its resources.				
Ref.	Quality Criteria	Evidence of Compliance	Satisfactory/Good	Outstanding
1.1	<p>The information and/or advice service has a clear remit based on need, detailing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The information and/or advice topics covered by the service • The information and/or advice “types” of advice offered • The methods for delivering the service (e.g. face to face, telephone etc.) • The target population for the service (e.g. by geographical area and/or community of interest such as young people only etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A written remit for the service is available • Advice topics, types, methods of delivery and target population are included in promotional materials for the public. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs assessment completed (see 2.2 below) • Clear, written and published remit available and aligned with the needs assessment • Evidence of capacity to respond rapidly to new or emerging needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of planning and reviewing the remit of the individual service in partnership with other relevant organisations and/or provider agencies. • Evidence of public consultation on the remit of the service
1.2	<p>Clear management structure with defined roles and responsibilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organogram • Written description of management structure, including, where applicable, governing body. • Roles and responsibilities of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organogram with review date within last 12 months • Evidence of inclusion of management structures within staff induction plans • Dated job descriptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For third sector organisations this must include details of current governing body members and roles where applicable. • Succession plan for

		everyone involved in planning, management and delivery of information and advice services	for all of those involved in the planning, management and delivery of information and advice services. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff have knowledge of management structure, roles and responsibilities 	key management and governance roles. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear development routes for all staff.
1.3	All staff involved in the planning, management, support or delivery of information and/or advice services have regular supervision, annual appraisal and access to staff development opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear policy on paid and unpaid staff supervision, appraisal and development commensurate with experience. • Staff training records demonstrating appropriate training has been provided commensurate with work roles and responsibilities • Health, safety and well-being of staff reflected in robust policies • Staff training budget in place. • Training records for all staff in equality and diversity are 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of regular supervision of all paid and unpaid staff and annual appraisal / review of development plan. • Individual and/or organisational training plan supported linked to development plans. • Staff attendance records are in place and these are reviewed • Organisational policies, procedures and documentation covering all aspects of health and safety compliance in relation to the service provider's remit. Examples: lone working, visiting services users in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Succession Planning for staff in service critical roles (e.g. some specialist advisers) • Development programme which demonstrates developing capacity including business critical roles. • Evidence of individuals taking up development opportunities (internally and externally). • The service demonstrates a proactive policy for promoting staff well-being.

		<p>maintained</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring in place for paid and unpaid staff by protected characteristics 	<p>their home, work stations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff training on equality, diversity and discrimination awareness and diversity provided at induction and at least every two years thereafter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The service demonstrates a proactive policy for dignity at work Adopts an innovative approach to ensure staff carry out their roles well and safely
1.4	Robust system of financial management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear documentation of financial management systems with documented lines of delegated authority for budget holders. Clear arrangements for establishing and monitoring annual service budgets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Named individual responsible for overall financial management. Arrangements for periodic external scrutiny of finances by senior person not involved in day to day financial management e.g. treasurer/management committee/trustees. Annual service budget prepared and regularly reviewed. External audit undertaken where legally required. Management reports on performance against budget reviewed at least 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicative service budget prepared for the next three years including best case, base case and worst-case scenarios. Clear assessment/possible mitigation of financial risks included in budget. Evidence that financial prudence is observed with organisation management (e.g. procurement procedures). Regular management accounts show budgets vs. actual by project and explain variances.

			4 times per year.	
1.5	Clear lines of internal communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal communication plan • Team meeting cycle • For third sector organisations management committee meetings held according to constitutional requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team meetings or alternative method of internal communication taking place at least 10 times per year. • Documented procedures for staff escalating concerns about service or management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff engagement in planning. • Whistle blowing policy. • ‘End to end’ organisational communication and organisational understanding. Examples: ‘back to the floor days’ for managers/board members; staff suggestions; opportunities for job shadowing etc.
1.6	Compliance with all relevant general legislation and regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office manual identifying relevant legislation and detailing compliance. • Legal requirements adhered to e.g. Financial Conduct Authority • Authorisation held where the service delivers regulated debt advice and/or 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to date office manual with evidence of review within last 12 months. • Inclusion of office manual within induction plan for new staff. • Insurances held are appropriate to the service provided. • Evidence of organisation / staff awareness of 	

		<p>non-commercial credit information services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff have knowledge of Office Manual and contents	<p>legislative / regulatory requirements</p>	
--	--	--	--	--

Quality Area 2: Well Planned

Overview

The planning of services is a key component of developing a quality service. Standards for planning should ensure that information and advice interventions are evidence based, reflect the needs of the community, subject to periodic review and with robust governance arrangements to ensure effective accountability. Service Planning should include consideration of evidence from Quality Area Seven: Delivering Outcomes.

Ref.	Quality Criteria	Evidence of Compliance	Satisfactory/Good	Outstanding
2.1	Service Governance	<p>There is a documented governance structure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures that the activities of the service are both within the law and within its constitutional remit • Determines the mission and purpose of the service and agrees strategic plans • Develops and agrees policies • Agrees the budget and monitors financial performance and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic and operational leads clearly identified. • Responsibility and accountability for planning and reviewing the service operations and outcomes clearly evidenced. • Roles and responsibilities, authorities and accountabilities communicated to all within the service. • Up to date Risk Register in place and risk register reviewed by governing body at least 4 times per year • Regular reporting on operational performance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme for public engagement in governance. • For third sector organisations, programme for equipping individuals from socially excluded communities to engage in the governance of the service • Effective engagement between governance leads and strategic managers. • Robust business continuity plan in place

		<p>accountability to funders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures the service has adequate resources and that these are effectively managed • Monitors service provision • Acts as employer and actively reviews the performance of the most senior member of staff, sets salary levels. • Regularly reviews performance through monitoring and evaluation • Manages the service's public relations • Reviews its own performance as a governing body • Understands and manages risk 		
2.2	Needs assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business plan for service delivery takes into account 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertakes/commissions or works in partnership to identify needs of the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs assessment takes into account early intervention and

		community needs assessment (commissioned or in partnership).	community E.g. with local networks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs assessment is mapped against existing delivery to avoid duplication. Systems for recording client information and any specific needs. Client feedback systems in place with evidence of reviewing and adapting services. 	prevention <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively participates in local/national early prevention initiatives Needs assessment uses a range of national and local data using a clear methodology
2.3	Business planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costed, 'SMART' business plan includes service objectives; details of service provided; forward strategy, action plan Business plan clearly states, goals, values and objectives of business and where service fits into community Business Plan reflects the service remit at 1.1 above 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses needs assessment to evaluate gaps in service and if/how the service plan can meet these. Focus of service delivery tailored to community needs. Funding applications linked to needs assessment and business objectives Realistic key performance indicators/critical success factors built into business plan. Planning demonstrates clear understanding of local and national environment and how service fits into this. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact assessments built into business planning. Plan has strong focus on early intervention and prevention. Clear vision on community needs and who is best to serve these. Strong partnerships form foundation of business planning. Funding applications involve strong partnerships and avoid duplication of provision. Business plan includes marketing strategy.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of plan accessible to service users and potential service users. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business plan recognises social benefits to community. Example value of business to volunteers/Board members. • The plan seeks to improve service productivity (e.g. includes plans to reduce potential non-attendance of clients).
2.4	Service Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review methodology built into business plan • Key outcomes of service delivery are analysed and factored into review of business planning • Review includes feedback from clients, staff and partners • Monitoring in place for service use by protected characteristics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key outcomes and performance are built into the business planning review and improvement targets set. • Review builds on successes and is transparent about weaknesses. • Trends identified and evaluated against planning review to inform service improvements. • Involves stakeholders in review process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benchmarks against other analogous providers to improve processes/outcomes for service users and stakeholders. • Review process involves all staff and is open to staff suggestions for improvement. • Involves stakeholder and clients in review process. • Actively participates in local/national initiatives to identify meaningful outcomes for service delivery and how these can inform planning and

				<p>review.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review takes account of targets relating to early intervention/prevention in the context of local and national landscape.
--	--	--	--	--

Quality Area 3: Accessible, Caring and Safe

Overview

Services operating under IAQF Wales should be accessible to all members of the community, provide the highest standards of customer care and place the safety of the individual at the centre of their work.

Ref.	Quality Criteria	Evidence of Compliance	Satisfactory/Good	Outstanding
3.1	Equality, Diversity and Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy detailing how the needs of the community are to be met by the service provider, including those who may be disadvantaged or discriminated against • Policy must also detail the type of work undertaken and where service provision is limited to certain target groups • Methods of delivery of service are designed and regularly reviewed to promote accessibility • The service has a clear and public statement on equality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equalities taken account of in policies and procedures. • The service's statement of equality and diversity is reviewed at least once every two years and where appropriate produces an action plan for implementation. • Staff have access to translation facilities, directly or via partnership arrangements. • Staff are aware of cultural issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All relevant policies, procedures, and plans have equalities impact assessments. • Service provider gathers appropriate statistical information regarding service use to seek to ensure the needs of the community are being fully met and inform planning to close identified service gaps. • All information relevant to service

		and diversity	<p>which impact on service delivery and take account of these when delivering service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paid and unpaid staff training records evidence equalities awareness training. • Accommodation and facilities (main office and surgeries) regularly reviewed to ensure accessibility requirements are met. • Methods of delivery are reviewed to ensure accessibility. • Service has a plan to ensure that recruitment of paid and unpaid staff reflects the community it serves in terms of equality and diversity 	<p>users in any medium e.g. posters; website checked for appropriate language and clarity, ensuring this information is accessible to all service users.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service seeks out and consults with non-service users. • Paid and unpaid staff profile reflects the community it serves in terms of equality and diversity
--	--	---------------	--	--

3.2	Codes of behaviour are in place for both staff and service users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear statement regarding expectations of behaviour of staff and service users is accessible to all staff and service users. • Service’s staff adhere to codes of behaviour at all times, via all communication channels. • Paid and unpaid staff training records in customer care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff and service users are clear about the boundaries of acceptable behaviour and the impact behaviours have on other service users. • Statement of expectations of service user and staff behaviours to be prominently displayed in public areas of office e.g. reception and interview rooms. • Evidence of staff training in appropriate behaviours when dealing with service users. • All client facing staff receive training and support in customer care and dealing with 	
-----	--	---	--	--

			<p>challenging behaviour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational policies and procedures covering health and safety (e.g. lone working) 	
3.3	Information Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies, procedures and processes ensure that service user details and client records are handled in line with data protection legislation at all times. • Training records for relevant staff evidence training in data protection issues. • Service users are made aware of how the service provider will handle their data; boundaries to confidentiality and of how to complain regarding any breach of confidentiality • Structured system in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear Information Governance Policy in place including: • Confidential interview space for service users • Service users asked for explicit permission to record/pass on any sensitive personal data to another service • Record maintenance, retention and destruction policy including specification of secure destruction of records in place for all information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively participates in networking with other organisations within service provider area to ensure service user confidentiality is preserved whilst most effective service is delivered. • Holds ISO 27001 Information assurance standard.

		<p>place to manage client records.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registered with the Information Commissioner. 	<p>formats.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All staff understand the process for dealing with breaches of Information Governance policy. 	
3.4	Complaints and compliments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear, publicised and accessible complaints policy, detailing all steps of complaints process including external arbiters where appropriate. All staff receive training appropriate to their role in complaints handling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complaints procedure accessible to all users and staff trained in how to identify complaints and deal with these accordingly. Analysis of complaints and compliments received is utilised to improve service provision and improvements are monitored. Changes to services arising from customer feedback is included in the Annual Report Positive service user feedback is 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively participates in local/national groups which aim to improve service user experience. Organisational culture which celebrates success and failure equally.

			shared openly and feeds into staff appraisal system.	
3.5	Redress for service users in the event of service errors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The service provider has a clear policy in place for service user redress. • Appropriate professional indemnity insurance is held. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear arrangements in place to alert service user to errors made by the service and provide them with appropriate redress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of indemnity cover kept under review. • Service has a policy of candour which is reflected in job descriptions and induction training
3.6	Safeguarding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy on safeguarding of children and young people, including named responsible officer. • Policy on safeguarding of adults at risk, including named responsible officer • Staff training record on safeguarding training for all client facing staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All relevant staff trained in identifying safeguarding issues and means of escalating concerns • Service has arrangements in place for referral of safeguarding concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service engages with / provides information to appropriate safeguarding boards • Service participates in local/national initiatives relating to safeguarding issues

Quality Area 4: Information & Advice Provision

Overview

Regardless of the medium through which information and advice is delivered (e.g. face to face, telephone, digital), services operating under IAQF Wales must have processes that ensure safe, effective and efficient services for their users.

Ref.	Quality Criteria	Evidence of Compliance	Satisfactory/Good	Outstanding
4.1	Ensuring information and/or advice is provided “in the best interests of service users”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies and procedures detailing boundaries to independence of service • Information provided to service user as to other sources of advice provision where there is any potential, perceived or actual conflict of interest • Costs notified to service user in a transparent and timely manner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information relating to independence of service is available to enable service users to make an informed decision about using the service from the outset of their case. • Service user is notified of boundaries of service from the outset of the case. • Service demonstrates that they are able to act in the best interest of the service user. • All staff aware of need to declare conflict of interest in relation to service being provided. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service actively and consistently participates in local networks to ensure that all service users are able to access information/advice which is in their best interest. • Client feedback and engagement addresses question of independence to inform policy development.
4.2	Networking and Referral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation engages with a range of external 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of active and consistent participation in local and national networks, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes a leading role in promoting formal and

		<p>stakeholders in the best interests of their service users and their own development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance of an up to date directory of signposting / referral agencies and their remit • Minutes of local referral network meetings • Referral and feedback procedure. 	<p>including local authority information, advice and assistance services on care and support; and gives examples of its impact e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes of networking meetings • Local forum attendance • Active participation in online networks • Partnership working • All staff are aware of the need to provide the service user with information, advice and assistance which is within their service's remit and who to signpost/refer to ensuring the service user's best interests are served. • Staff are able to identify where signposting/referral to a particular service could lead to a conflict of interest for the service user • Staff are able to take referrals from other agencies where appropriate • Structured referral system is in place locally, with formal referral agreements 	<p>informal networking opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies networking opportunities from service user data and outcomes and follows through on these opportunities including influencing social policy using strategic networks. • Provides training to other services in area. • Provides opportunities for partners to exchange staff on short term basis • Captures detailed data on referrals and uses this to improve referral arrangements,
--	--	---	--	--

				<p>networks and protocols.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participates in/leads on meetings of local/national services with a view to building a seamless and efficient referral network.
4.3	Service recording and case management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies and procedures relating to case recording and case management that includes: initial interview; definition of case; case closure procedure • Structured case management system – IT or paper based • Review process in place of casework by suitably qualified person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies, procedures and processes ensure case recording is undertaken in a consistent and effective manner. • Details of how cases are to be reviewed and responsibility for this. • Case details relevant background; options discussed; action plan; timescales; client notifications; roles and responsibilities; outcomes and closure. • All documentation relating to a case is traceable and appropriately archived. • Service users' documentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes the opportunity for the service user to have access to their case work records. • Engages/leads on local/national discussions regarding efficient, effective and consistent case management. • Has local/national peer review system in place to ensure casework is of the correct

			<p>is returned to them within set timescales.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key dates are recorded and reviewed and are easily accessible for succession purposes. • Case recording is succinct and contains all relevant detail. Can be easily followed by other case workers, management and auditors. • Informs the service user how to have access to case work records. 	standard.
4.4	Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to suitable and up to date information sources either online or paper based. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitable reference library; use of internet resources. • Subscription to journals or groups. • Evidence of regular review of information sources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement in sharing information through local and regional networks

Quality Area 5: Competent Information & Advice Staff

Overview

Services operating to the IAQF Wales must ensure that all paid and unpaid staff gain, maintain and develop the awareness, knowledge and skills necessary to meet the needs of their service users. For this Quality Area IAQF Wales specifies the level of awareness and the range of skills required by information and advice providers. In addition we have identified the Framework against which the advice topic specific areas will need to be assessed by Standard Owners. In developing their response to this quality area Standard Owners will need to consider the evidence requirements in order that they can assess the extent to which service providers:

- Have systems to identify the skills and knowledge required to meet users' needs and the procedures to match these requirements with paid and unpaid staff delivering the service
- Ensure that all staff are provided with adequate training and development
- Ensure that all staff involved in delivering the service have core competencies before they advise the public
- Ensure that all staff undertake sufficient information and advice work and update training to maintain their competence
- Ensure that all cases are dealt with by an adviser competent in that area of law
- Ensure that all information and advice work is supervised by a suitably qualified individual, either from within or outside the service
- Ensure that the service provider understand the work of other relevant agencies in their localities

5.1 Awareness Framework

All paid and unpaid staff engaging with the public should be able to demonstrate that they have an awareness of the following areas regardless of the topics of advice provided by their service.

For **Type One & Type Two Service Providers** this must include awareness of the system and where or who to signpost to in the following areas:

- Benefits System
- Debt & Financial Capability
- Housing Rights
- Employment Rights
- Equalities/Human Rights/Data Protection/ Discrimination

- Health and Social Care

In addition *all* paid and unpaid staff must secure Safeguarding level I training for children and adults.

For **Type Three, Four & Five Service Providers** this must include awareness of the system and a good knowledge of where to refer for further support in the following areas:

- Benefits System
- Debt & Financial Capability
- Housing Rights
- Employment Rights
- Equalities/Human Rights/Data Protection/ Discrimination
- Health and Social Care

In addition *all* paid and unpaid staff must secure Safeguarding level I training for children and adults.

5.2 Knowledge Framework

Standard Owners will need to demonstrate that their assessment process ensures that all paid and unpaid staff engaging with the public should be able to demonstrate that they have the appropriate level of knowledge in the advice topic for the type of information or advice delivered by them within their service. This should include evidence that training of sufficiently high quality is undertaken and learnt from by all relevant staff.

Knowledge requirements for information workers and advisers should be evidenced in their job descriptions and/or person specifications and referenced in information workers and advisers annual appraisals.

5.3 Skill Framework	Type One: Information	Type Two: Information & Guidance	Type Three: Advice	Type Four: Advice with Casework	Type Five: Specialist Casework
All paid and unpaid staff engaging with the public should be able to demonstrate that they have appropriate skills in the following areas regardless of the topics of advice provided by their service.					
Customer care and dealing with challenging clients	√	√	√	√	√
Effective interviewing			√	√	√
Diagnosing problems			√	√	√
Effective research into local, regional and national agencies to signpost appropriately		√	√	√	√
Effective legal research (Knowing where to find up to date information on the client's problems)			√	√	√
Communication skills (speaking and listening) at an appropriate level	√	√	√	√	√
Writing skills including form filling and letter writing			√	√	√
Internal monitoring and recording of enquiries	√	√	√	√	√
Recording assistance given			√	√	√
Managing casework (i.e. understanding the timeliness of interventions etc.)				√	√
Making and receiving referrals	√	√	√	√	√
Negotiation on behalf of the client				√	√

Preparation for a case for representation in court or tribunal				√	√? ¹
Representation (e.g. in courts or tribunals)				√	√? ²
Self reflection and self-assessment	√	√	√	√	√
Understanding and acting on personal and organisational limits	√	√	√	√	√

¹ Dependent on the work of the service.

² Dependent on the work of the service.

Quality Area 6: A Bilingual Service

Overview³

Services operating to the IAQF Wales must ensure that they have arrangements in place to meet the needs of individuals whose preferred or required language is Welsh. Organisations that are required to comply with the Welsh Language Standards should refer to those standards in relation to the services they deliver. For organisations that do not currently fall directly under the Welsh Language Standards, they must have an effective action plan to ensure they move towards providing their service in the clients preferred language in line with the requirements below within 10 years. Good or best practice for Welsh language should, wherever possible, be the service aspiration for all community languages.

Ref.	Quality Criteria	Evidence of Compliance	Satisfactory/Good	Outstanding
6.1	The internal management of the service is moving towards full bilingualism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A clear <i>Welsh Language Progress Plan</i> with timelines for moving towards fully bilingual service management based upon the planning tool available on the Welsh Language Commissioner's website. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language champion within the organisation to promote Welsh language. All staff aware of the organisations Welsh Language policy. Training available to staff in the use of the Welsh language. Making use of good quality free resources, such as 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key internal management documents are available in the Welsh Language for staff on request. Training and development opportunities for staff are made available in the medium of Welsh language Staff encouraged to use the Welsh

³ The Welsh Language Commissioner's 'Hybu' website provides useful advice and resources (www.welshlanguagecommissioner.cymru/hybu)

			<p>those provided by WCVA.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment policies seek to extend breadth and depth of organisational capacity. • Human Resource policies are made available to staff in Welsh Language on request. 	<p>language in their day to day work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designated budget for translation.
6.2	Well Planned service with clear accountabilities for developing Welsh Language capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs assessment includes the needs of Welsh speakers • Business planning responds to the needs of Welsh language speakers • Service Governance includes named person for promoting development of Welsh language • Outcomes for Welsh Language speakers are monitored and action taken if this monitoring indicates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of needs assessment including those of Welsh language speakers with a clear action plan for meeting these needs. • Senior person named as responsible for this agenda. • Monitoring of service use and outcomes captures and reports information on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear process for systematic review of the service and Welsh language capacity with senior leadership.

		that Welsh Language clients are not achieving comparable outcomes to other service users	<p>Welsh language speakers separately.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactive offer of language choice to service users, record of language choice kept on records when transferred within the organisation and with partners. • Has completed Welsh Language Commissioner’s business planning tool⁴ 	
6.3	Accessible, Safe and Caring services available in Welsh Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service committed to ensuring that information and advice services are accessible to clients whose preference or need is to communicate in Welsh. • Adequate internal protocols and/or 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translates own leaflets on request. Offer is made clear to all service users. • Links to other reliable and good quality websites with bilingual content (E.g. DWP, Money Advice Service etc.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All information resources (paper and digital) are available in Welsh. • Training for staff in providing customer care in Welsh. • Capacity to deliver fully bilingual service.

⁴ <http://www.comisiynyddygyymraeg.cymru/hybu/en/home/Pages/home.aspx>

		<p>referral arrangements to deliver bilingual services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate resources are available to provide services in Welsh language and to fund staff training in Welsh language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to services in Welsh on request (e.g. through referral arrangements or access to translation services). • Raises awareness of Welsh service with clients • Ensures all translated documents are of equal quality with English versions. • Effective monitoring of Welsh language service requests and Welsh language speakers satisfaction with the service. • Bilingual welcome to the service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactive offer with regards to availability of Welsh services made to all service users.
--	--	--	---	---

Quality Area 7: Delivering Outcomes

Overview

Services complying with the IAQF Wales must have robust measures and demonstrate collation of evidence to assess the impact their service is making. As a minimum this must include outcome measures to demonstrate their impact in relation to:

- Tackling poverty and/or financial exclusion
- Promoting equality and/or community cohesion.

It is also expected that information and advice services will play an important role in ensuring that Wales delivers against the aspirations contained within Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. In particular contributing to the improved outcomes for:

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A Wales of vibrant and thriving Welsh Language
- A globally responsible Wales

Information and advice services should also promote the national well-being outcomes set out in the well-being statement for people who need care and support and carers who need support, issued under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

For the first version of the IAQF Wales outcomes will not be prescriptive. Services will also be expected to evidence, in conjunction with partners, the on-going development and collection of appropriate outcome measures which demonstrate the contribution their service is making in relation to any future local and national strategic outcomes.

Over time it will be expected that the IAQF Wales will develop common outcome measures for use by accredited agencies across Wales.

Ref.	Strategic Goals	Outcome Measure	What to Measure
7.1	A prosperous Wales	<p>For this objective information and/or advice agencies should consider the contribution they make to tackling poverty and/or financial exclusion. Outcomes could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Gains • Economic well-being • Securing rights and entitlements • Education, training and employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income for client secured / predicated • Reduced / managed debt • Access to info/advice at right time • Advice stages e.g. 'crisis advice' versus initial application • Outcome of referrals OR referrals tracked • Improved qualifications • People are in work or supported to work
7.2	A resilient Wales	<p>For this objective information and/or advice agencies should consider the contribution that they make to ensuring social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change. Outcomes could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution made to reducing carbon emissions • Amount of procurement locally sourced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of any internal environmental policies (e.g. car pooling, enhanced travel payments for low carbon emission transport, recycling). • Impact of any advice activities on securing funds for clients to environmental retro-fitting funds etc. • Social Return on Investment audits to include environmental gain
7.3	A healthier Wales	<p>For this objective information and/or advice agencies should consider the contribution that they make to ensuring improvements in people's physical and mental health and well-being is improved and that these improvements are sustainable. Outcomes could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced levels of stress (for example by tackling debt problems). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People report healthier/less stressed • Numbers of people supported to maintain/improve access to utilities (e.g. gas and electricity arrears). • Numbers of people supported to access appropriate housing • Numbers of people supported to tackle housing disrepair • Numbers supported to escape situations of

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced fuel poverty • Reducing the numbers of people in temporary/inappropriate accommodation • Reducing health adverse housing disrepair • Reductions in people at risk of domestic violence. 	domestic violence.
7.4	A more equal Wales	<p>For this objective information and/or advice agencies should consider the contribution that they make to ensuring that people are able to fulfil their potential regardless of their background or circumstances. Outcomes could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased numbers of people reporting that feel involved in decisions affecting their lives. • Improved access to training, development and support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numbers of people reporting that they feel more independent/better able to make their own decisions • Numbers of local people trained or supported into employment. • Number of people who are more confident to engage in public life.
7.5	A Wales of cohesive communities	<p>For this objective information and/or advice agencies should consider the contribution that they make to ensuring that they are building are attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities. Outcomes could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reductions in the number of people reporting that they feel isolated or lonely • Increased number of people feeling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numbers of people contributing to the work of the service (e.g. volunteer hours) • Numbers of people participating in community activities • Numbers of people reported as feeling more part of their local community • Levels of satisfaction with access to services

		<p>that they belong to their local area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased numbers of people reporting that they have access to the right information and advice when they need it. 	
7.6	A Wales of vibrant and thriving Welsh Language	<p>For this objective information and/or advice services should consider the contribution that they make to ensure a society that promotes culture, heritage and the Welsh language encouraging participation by people in cultural and recreational activities. Outcomes could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved access to information and advice in Welsh Increased numbers of staff able to provide bi-lingual services Enhanced access to recreational opportunities for services target community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased percentage of service information resources available in Welsh language. Numbers of paid and unpaid staff confident to provide information and advice in Welsh language Reductions in numbers of people reporting that they are unable to participate in recreational or cultural activities due to financial or other circumstances. Increasing take up of Welsh language services.
7.7	A globally responsible Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The seventh Strategic Goal is an overarching consideration for all publicly funded services in Wales. Welsh Government would welcome examples from Information and/or Advice Providers of outcomes achieved that support this goal. 	