

Introduction

The Social Care Standards are the first official care standards designed for social services for people with disabilities in Iceland. They have also been published in an easy-to-read version. The Care Standards apply to the services that people with disabilities are entitled to according to the Municipal Social Services Act no. 40/1991, Act on the Protection of the Rights of People with Disabilities no. 88/2011, and the Act on Services for People with Disabilities with Long-Term Support Needs no. 38/2018.

The Care Standards take into consideration the international agreements that the Icelandic government has entered into and legislation based on those agreements, mainly the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The treaty was signed on behalf of Iceland in March 2007 and ratified in the autumn of 2016. In October 2018, the Municipal Social Services Act was amended, and new legislation on services for people with disabilities came into force following the ratification, aimed to implement the convention in services.

The Care Quality Inspectorate for Social Services and Child Protection publishes the Care Standards developed in close collaboration with the main stakeholders. These are the State Diagnostic and Counselling Centre, the National Association of Intellectual Disabilities, Icelandic Association of Local Authorities, the Association of Directors of Social Affairs, Reykjavík's Department of Welfare, and The Icelandic Disability Alliance.

The document containing the Care Standards includes a glossary of terms to increase the reliability of results and promote common understanding.

What are the Social Care Standards?

Essentially the Social Care Standards are human rights-based and define both the rights people are entitled to and the type of services to be delivered. Although the Care Standards are not legally binding, they are founded on provisions in law and offer suggestions for implementing legislation. Publication of the standards lays the ground for the way services should ideally be meeting users' needs and to what extent services improve people's quality of life, rather than evaluating procedures and resources.

What are the Social Care Standards for?

The Social Care Standards are intended to guide municipalities and those who provide services to people with disabilities and may benefit regulators, service providers, and service users in evaluating services. They provide important means for improving services for people with disabilities. The Care Standards can be used for evaluating the services that people with disabilities receive, whether it is an internal or external review, or for service users themselves. The Care Standards measure e.g. quality of communication, trustworthiness, care provision, safety, efficiency, and quality of management. Evaluation is carried out by reviewing users' self-assessment, e.g., whether the service is empowering and enabling them to be socially active and contribute to society. When applied, the Care Standards contribute to the consistency of services, procedures, and systems and clarify a service's requirements.

Should an audit using the Social Care Standards suggest that the services are inadequate, procedures are reviewed, as well as resources and other practical factors.

The Social Care Standards for services for people with disabilities

The Social Care Standards include four main standards for effective delivery of services and define the requirements set forth in law. The standards are presented in the first person singular to emphasize that the focus should be on the user's assessment when evaluating the quality of the service they receive.

- 1. The care and support I receive enable me to live an independent life**
 - 2. I am involved in designing the care and support I receive**
 - 3. I have confidence in those who care for and support me**
 - 4. The care and support I receive is trustworthy**
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Principles in social care for disabled people

The Social Care Standards are founded on four main principles that are based on fundamental human rights as set forth in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and in Icelandic legislation. They should be central to services and are as follows:

Community participation

I receive care and support that help prevent social isolation and enable me to participate in society equally and based on my wishes.

Holistic approach and well-being

My well-being is fundamental in the decision-making and implementation of services, which are based on a holistic approach, individualized needs assessment, and my views.

Equality and respect

The care and support I receive are delivered with respect and without discrimination. I can make my own decisions in life, and my autonomy and right to privacy are respected.

Quality of service

I can depend on receiving appropriate care and support when I am in need. The services are well managed, and my well-being is central to its delivery.

Social care indicators for Social Care Standards

Each Social Care Standard includes social care indicators that can be used to assess a user's experience. The indicators are indicative of how well a service meets the Care Standards. Sections in law referred to in this

document are from the Act on Services for People with Disabilities with Long-Term Support Needs no. 38/2018, unless otherwise stated.

The application of different indicators varies depending on the individualized service being evaluated. Thus, indicators can be omitted if they do not apply to the evaluation of a particular service.

Many of the indicators can be used both when evaluating services for children and adults. However, some aspects of children's services are subject to different law. Therefore, specific indicators have been developed for each Care Standard to evaluate the extent to which the indicators are implemented in services for children. The Care Indicators for children presented in 1st person singular from the user's perspective (I) can be adapted to include the parent's views using 3rd person singular (my child).

Response scale for social care indicators

To evaluate each social care indicator, the use of either a three- or a five-point Likert scale is suggested. The potential responses for the five-point scale are: 5) Strongly agree, 4) Agree, 3) Neither agree nor disagree, 2) Disagree, 1) Strongly disagree. For the three-point scale, potential answers are: 3) Agree, 2) Neither agree nor disagree, 1) Disagree. The following responses should also be included: a) Do not know, b) Does not apply, c) Do not want to answer.