

Facts for Families: Checking the quality of our support services

We want to ensure that the people we support have a good quality of life, doing things they enjoy with the people they like.

Like all other support providers, we are regulated by the Care Quality Commission/Care Services Inspectorate Wales and by the Homes and Communities Agency. We have to comply with the standards they expect. We have also developed our own standards to reflect and exceed the requirements of our regulators and to ensure we provide a high quality service for the people we support and their families.

How we ensure people are getting good support

Our Quality and Compliance team, a Better Practice Team and Performance Improvement team work alongside our support staff and managers to develop their skills and understanding.

Our team of auditors undertake regular compliance audits. They use a specially designed audit tool which checks that standards are being met and people are safe, happy, enjoying good relationships and busy doing the things they choose.

Most importantly our team of almost 50 quality consultants – that's people with learning disabilities and autism who we support and who we also employ – have a specific role quality checking our services and often pick up things that other inspections might miss.

In the spirit of openness and transparency, families are also welcome to see any of our policies. Please ask your relative's manager.

Involving families

We want families to have confidence in the support we are providing to their relative and so we will regularly ask you what is working and not working for your relative and for you. We do this through your relative's annual reviews, our family survey, through opportunities to meet with the Executive Team and through our Family Forum. However, you don't have to wait to be asked and can always contact your relative's locality manager or get in touch with our Family Consultant if you have any concerns about the support your relative is receiving.

You should already have all the contact details of key people in your region, including the Operations Director and the Regional Managing Director. If you don't have this information please request it from your relative's Locality Manager.

You can also ask to see a summary of the audits that have been completed in your relative's service.

How we check standards

Each individual or shared house is visited four times a year. Our quality and compliance auditors look at all areas of support, including support plans, health and safety and recruitment. Information such as staff sickness absence and training is requested from the locality manager prior to the visit. Staff are observed to assess the quality of support, how staff relate to people, and how people are supported to live the life they choose.

Each section has detailed questions to assess the quality and compliance of the service and the support delivered.

How we measure quality

We employ people with learning disabilities, autism and also family members to help us to measure the quality of support we provide and the services we offer.

This role is called a Quality Checker. It is a specific one because it brings with it lived experience and is thus a great way of offering the opportunity to check and influence how Dimensions provides support to those actually experiencing it.

The Quality Checkers are well trained and work alongside Dimensions Quality and Compliance reviewers. Together they approach all aspects of support and each bring unique skills such as experience and knowledge. Their comments, recommendations and observations are vital to the review report and their presence at reviews is seen as positive and helpful.

For more information contact:

The families team
email: family.helpline@dimensions-uk.org
phone: 0300 303 9161
Monday – Friday 10am – 12pm

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Involving you

As part of our ongoing commitment to involve families, auditors will phone a random selection of relatives and seek your opinion. Everything you say will be treated in the strictest confidence and of course you can choose not to comment. Your views are valuable and we know that families see things that others might not notice.

When the audit is completed, the report is given to the manager with a rating and comments and an action plan is produced. Any concerns or risks are then flagged up to others in the organisation to follow up or with the Executive Director of Operations, if there are immediate concerns.

Part of the audit process is a two hour structured visit/observation with a formalised scored assessment in five sections:



information, involvement, planning and delivery of support



observation of support and engagement



recruitment, management, training, supervision and appraisal



finance and medication



housing, health and safety.