

## **The Single Assessment Process (SAP) Policy**

### **Purpose**

This policy is aimed at all staff in NHS and social care organisations (or wider) who undertake the assessment and care planning of health or social care needs. It requires staff to use the Single Assessment Process (SAP) in place of existing processes. This is initially as a paper or word template version, but from April 07, an electronic version (**eSAP**) will be gradually introduced to make this process easier. The implementation of SAP and eSAP is the responsibility of each participating organisation, alongside their own policies, protocols and procedures. The SAP policy is an overarching policy, which all organisations will use as a basis for their own more detailed ones.

### **Background**

The Single Assessment Process (SAP) originated from the Older People's National Service Framework (NSF) which was launched by the Department of Health in March 2001 with the aim of promoting independence, ensuring that age discrimination is eradicated and that older people and their carers receive consistently high quality services, wherever they live and whatever their circumstances. Standard 2 emphasises the need for a person centred approach and one single assessment process for NHS and social care staff to assess the health and social care needs of people without unnecessary duplication and ensuring the amount of assessment is proportionate to the person's needs.

In the South west peninsula (as in many other parts of the country) it was decided to apply the Single assessment Process across adults (except Mental health where the Care Programme Approach (CPA) will still be used though this can be seen as a specialist assessment within SAP).

### **What is the Single Assessment Process (SAP)?**

The Single Assessment Process is a new way of assessing health and / or social care needs for adults. It involves health and social care organisations working closely together with the person themselves and their carer (if they have one) to enable services or treatment to be received at the right time, through a multi-agency assessment, care plan and review process.

With the person's permission, assessment information will be shared with staff across health and social care agencies that are involved in providing care or services for the person. This means different professionals contributing to one assessment rather than repeating the process in separate assessments. This is a big culture change for staff in health and social care organisations, but it will be made easier with the introduction of an electronic SAP to enable information to be passed easily between the two.

## Are there different types or levels of assessment within SAP?

Although SAP is a single assessment process in order to ensure assessment is only proportionate to a person's needs there are 4 different types of assessment:

- **Contact** – at the initial point of contact basic personal information and presenting problem is gathered including some risk assessment screening. A multi agency referral tool which can be completed by a range of different staff.
- **Overview** – a holistic assessment that gives an overall picture of the person's needs from a health and social care perspective. Includes risk triggers and information about other services or treatment and whether any further specialist assessment is required.
- **Specialist** – one or more specialist assessment may be carried out when specific difficulties have been identified at contact or overview for unstable, unpredictable or complex needs and a specialist professional opinion is required.
- **Comprehensive** – in the southwest peninsula this is process not another tool. It is for complex, unpredictable and unstable cases where a large care package is likely and a number of professionals or agencies are involved. A person is required to co-ordinate the various professional contributions and monitor progress.

*(For list of tools to cover these types of assessment see section 5 –SAP Tools and SAP at a glance available on [www.devon.gov.uk/sap-pro](http://www.devon.gov.uk/sap-pro) )*

## What can service users and carers expect from SAP?

- The person will receive an information leaflet about the Single Assessment Process, explaining what SAP is, information sharing and consent, how information is stored, how decisions are made and how to make a complaint.
- The person being assessed will be central to the assessment process. Their views and wishes will be listened to and acted upon when ever possible. If this is not possible, then a full written explanation of the reason will be provided.
- The person will be offered a copy of their assessment or a summary and be provided with a copy of their care plan, explaining what services and treatment will be put in place.
- With the person's consent, one assessment will be carried out and shared across different health and social care agencies. This should limit duplication of effort and the assessed person repeatedly providing the same information.



## **When should SAP be used and what should it replace?**

Whenever there is a request for an assessment to identify needs for services and treatment in the NHS or social care then the Single Assessment Process should be used. This should replace any existing assessment processes and enable joint agency assessment and care planning.

## **Which organisations will be using SAP and who has agreed this?**

The Single Assessment Process Programme Board (with representatives from each participating organisation) has agreed a common set of documentation across all NHS and social care organisations in the southwest peninsula (excluding Mental Health). Each organisation should ensure that SAP replaces existing assessment documentation whenever possible to eliminate any duplication.

The participating organisations are:

- Cornwall Adult Social Care
- Cornwall & Isles of Scilly PCT
- Devon Adult Social Care
- Devon Doctors on Call
- Devon PCT
- North Devon Healthcare Trust
- Plymouth PCT
- Plymouth Community Care Services
- Royal Devon & Exeter Foundation Trust
- South Western Ambulance Trust
- South Devon HealthCare Trust
- Torbay Care Trust
- Royal Cornwall Hospitals Trust\*
- Plymouth Healthcare Trust\*

\* These organisations are not participating in eSAP at present. However, they will be participating in the principles of SAP and have licences for using the FACE tools.

## Continuing Health Care

- In the South west peninsula the **SAP Health Needs Assessment** (HNA) is the tool to use for assessing Continuing Health Care needs and for funding panels to make decisions about residential, nursing or complex care packages funding. It should usually be completed after an Overview Assessment, but in some circumstances a Contact and fully completed Health Needs Assessment may contain sufficient detail to enable funding panels to make decisions without duplication of assessment information.
- The Continuing Care (National Health Service responsibilities) Modification Directions 2006 should be referred to (see Dept of Health website: [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk)). It is extremely important that professional decisions are well evidenced and documented and there is separate guidance and training for staff to ensure this takes place. Please seek guidance from your line manager if you have any doubts about this area of work.



## What does this policy exclude?

SAP and this document exclude the policies and the standards that accompany commissioning and service delivery. These aspects will be covered by the specific standards and policies within each organisation.