

Joint Working & Assessment Standards

Why joint working?

In the White Paper, "Our health, our care our say" an emphasis is placed on health and social care organisations to work more closely together using a common assessment framework. The Single Assessment Process is a sound basis for the common assessment framework (CAF) and requires joint working arrangements in place to ensure more effective co-ordinated services are provided across health and social care.

What are the standards that are required to ensure a quality assessment?

In order to ensure consistency of outcomes to assessment and care planning across organisations, all staff must apply these standards when carrying out the Single Assessment Process.

Standard 1 - The person being assessed should be fully involved in the process (and also the carer, if the person agrees).

Standard 2 - Information should be gathered in a way that is respectful and sensitive as well as efficient, proportionate, timely and adequate with due regard to people's equality and diversity needs.

Standard 3 - The process should help to recognise and build on the strengths of people who use services, and their carers, enabling and supporting people to resolve their needs themselves wherever possible.

Standard 4 - Assessment should fulfil all legal requirements as described in SAP implementation guidelines 2- Legal & Policy framework)

Standard 5 - The Single Assessment Process should avoid the need for people to repeat information to different staff involved in assessing and providing for their health and social care needs.

Standard 6 - Assessments and care plans must be clearly and succinctly recorded providing evidence for decisions made.

Standard 7 - Records and plans must be communicated and made accessible to the person assessed and their carers where consent is given.

Standard 8 - Information must only be shared after consent has been given and only for the purposes stated on the consent form.

Standard 9 - Single assessment and care planning must involve effective communication and collaboration within a culture across health and social



care agencies with a mutual respect and understanding of each other's professional roles and responsibilities.

Standard 10 - Assessment must include assessment of risk by taking account of the need to protect individuals from harm but also enabling them to make decisions about their own lives including aspects of independence, choice and dignity.

Standard 11- Assessments and care plans should be completed within the timescales required by each organisation.

Do we have to trust each other's assessment?

The principles of the Single Assessment Process mean that assessments and care planning information is shared across agencies and professionals and will therefore rely on a degree of trust. This is quite a new concept and will take time to develop but is very much part of a person centred approach where service users and carers do not like having to repeat information and have an expectation that there will be good joint working arrangements in place.

Will someone be needed to co-ordinate the assessment and care plan?

If there are several people involved in one assessment it will be necessary to identify the key worker or care coordinator and discussion needs to take place with the service user and carer about who is the most appropriate person to do this. The personal held record, which is kept in the person's home and contains assessment and care planning information, can help with communication between professionals in these situations (see implementation guidelines 6- personal held record).

What difference will eSAP make?

With the introduction of electronic SAP (eSAP), the amount of sharing of information and joint work on an assessment will be possible to an extent which has never really been possible before.

Whereas in the past each professional would undertake their own assessment and often ask the service user very similar questions, the electronic version of SAP will enable much easier sharing of information and should therefore help improve joint working arrangements. eSAP enables different professionals to be able to work on an assessment together and complete different domains by sending the assessment electronically to each other and being able to access it in one place electronically.

This will take time to get used to and will require better communication and more efficient processes between professionals and scrutiny about whether further assessment or care planning adds value or has already been carried out by someone else.





How will professional skills and identity be maintained?

SAP will involve a set of skills for joint working to enable standards to be met whilst recognising the value of different professional skills. See standards and joint working arrangements.

Who should do what?

The **SAP at a glance** outlines which type of staff should complete which tools (see www.devon.gov.uk/sap-pro).