

# **SUPPORTING PEOPLE REVIEW OF QAF QUESTIONNAIRE**

July 2016

**Housing**  
Executive

**REGIONAL SERVICES**  
Supporting People and  
Homelessness

<b>Key Findings</b>	<b>Page</b>
1.1 Providers Profile .....	2
1.2 Service Type .....	2
1.3 Organisations Client Group .....	3
<b>Section 2: Quality Assessment</b>	
2.1 Completing QAF .....	4
2.1a Reasons why difficult to complete QAF .....	4
2.2 Completing SPOCC.net .....	5
2.2a Reasons why difficult to complete SPOCC.net.....	5
2.3 Reflect the nature of the service .....	6
2.3a Why it does not reflect the <b>nature</b> of the service .....	6
2.4 Reflect the quality of the service .....	7
2.4a Why it does not reflect the <b>quality</b> of the service .....	7
2.5 Views on QAF Scoring Method .....	8
2.6 Reporting to Agency/Body .....	8
2.7 Strength of QAF .....	8
2.8 Weakness of QAF .....	9
2.9 General comments regarding changes to QAF .....	10
<b>TABLES .....</b>	<b>11-21</b>

This survey was carried out by Supporting People (NIHE) in July 2016 as part of the SP Business Improvement Project.

Providers' views are a critical part of the review of QAF (Quality Assurance Framework), and the way it is used.

The Survey collected views on the existing Quality Assessment process such as easy/difficulty to complete, use of SPOCC.net and if QAF was reflective of the nature and quality of the service. The survey also asked for opinions of the current grade-based QAF along with strengths/weakness of this process.

A total of 86 Provider/Organisations were asked to take part in the Survey and 36 (42%) completed the questionnaire.

## Key Findings

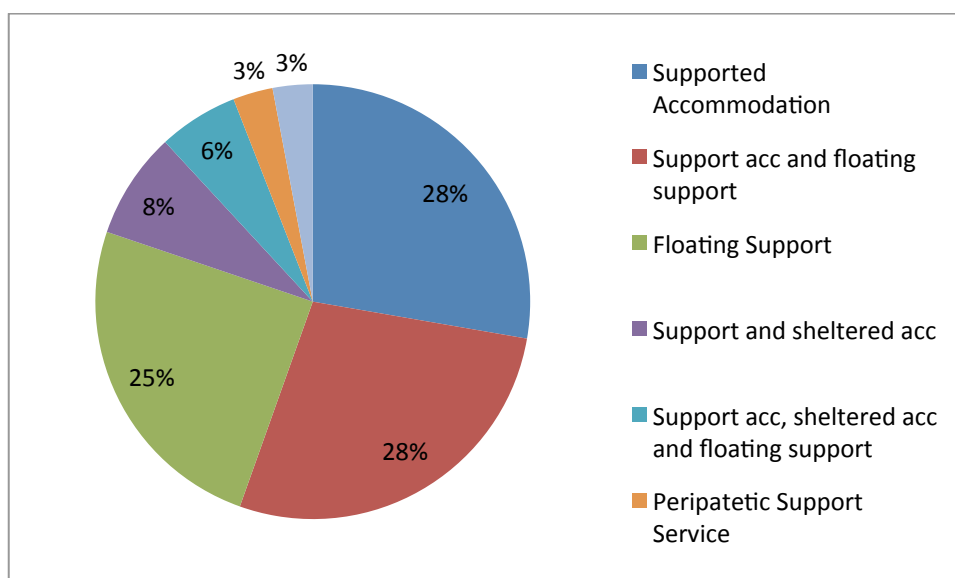
### SECTION 1

#### 1.1 Provider Profile

A total of 36 Organisations completed the questionnaire. A list of each Organisation that responded can be seen in [Table 1](#).

#### 1.2 Service Type

Providers were asked to identify what services(s) their organisation provided. More than one-quarter (28%:10 providers) provided Supported Accommodation and the same (28%: 10 providers) provided Supported Accommodation and Floating Support. One-quarter (25%: 9 providers) provided Floating Support only. For further details see [Table 2](#).



*Figure 1: Service(s) delivered by their Organisation*

### **1.3 Organisations Client Group**

Providers were asked to indicate what client group(s) their organisation provided SP (Supporting People) funded support to.

A total of 28 percent (10 providers) provided support to Homelessness, 11 percent (4 providers) provided support to Learning Disability and 8 percent (3 providers) provided support to the Elderly ([full list of Client Group\(s\) Table 3](#))

## SECTION 2

### Quality Assessment

This section provides a view on the existing Quality Assessment process.

#### 2.1 Completing QAF

Providers were asked if they found it easy or difficult to complete the Quality Assessment Framework (QAF). Of the 36 providers, one-third (33%: 12 providers) stated it was easy to complete and the remaining 67 percent (24 providers) stated it was difficult to complete (Table 4).

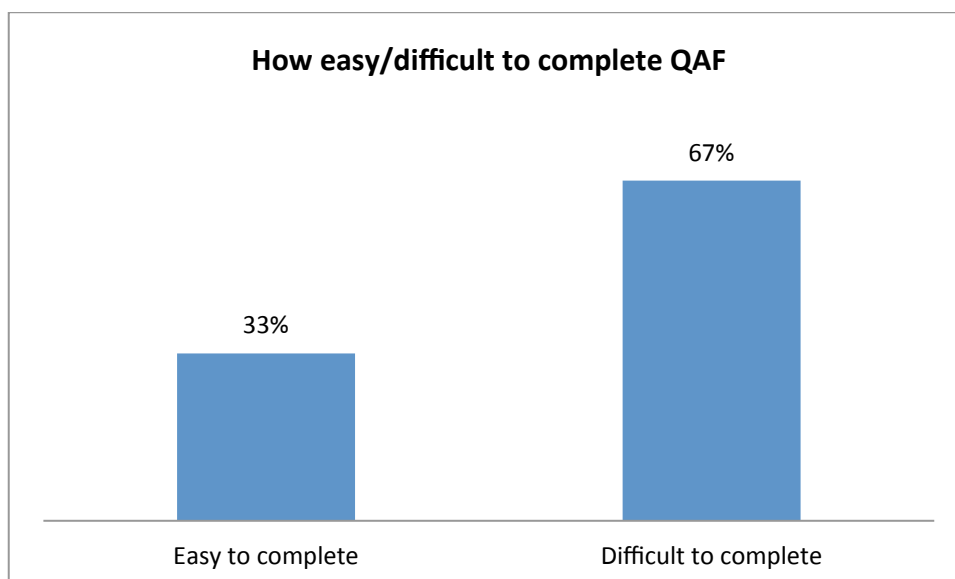


Figure 2: Ease/difficult to complete QAF

#### 2.1a Reasons why difficult to complete QAF

Providers could provide a number of reasons as to why they found it difficult to complete. A total of 24 providers provided 47 comments. Almost half (45%: 21 responses) found it 'very time consuming, cumbersome, lengthy and too many documents to be attached' followed by 17 percent (8 responses) stated there was too much duplication, cross-referencing and repetitiveness. Eleven per cent (5 responses) found the system not user friendly, access difficult and often timed out and data lost. For full responses see Table 5.

	No	%
Very time consuming, cumbersome, lengthy, too many documents to be attached	21	45
Too much duplication, cross-referencing and repetitiveness	8	17
System not user friendly, access is difficult, often timed out and data lost	5	11
No specific guidelines on QAF on evidence required or training available	3	6
Not every subject relevant to the service or client group e.g. floating support	3	6

Top 5 reasons for difficulty to complete QAF (24 providers provided 47 responses)

## 2.2 Completing SPOCC.net

Providers were asked if they found it easy or difficult to use SPOCC.net to complete and submit the QAF to Supporting People. Three-quarters (75%: 27 providers) found it difficult to complete and the remaining (25%: 9 providers) found it easy to complete (Table 6).

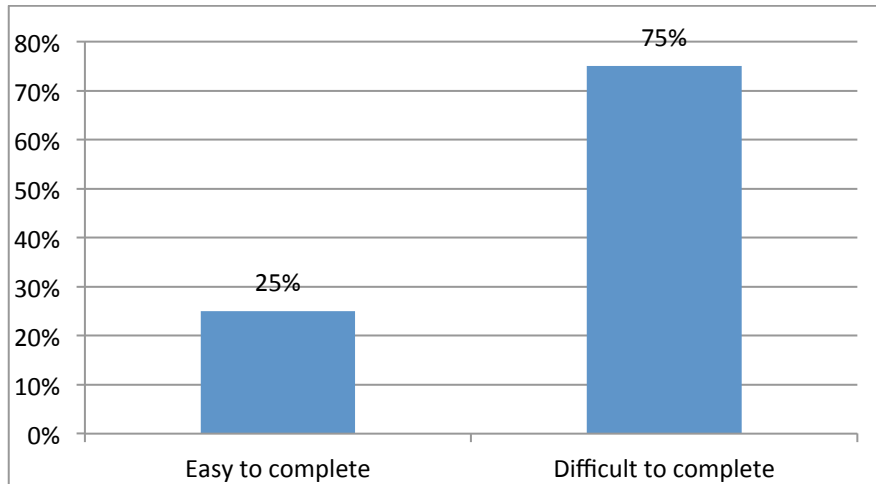


Figure 3: Easy/difficult to use SPOCC.net

### 2.2a Reasons why difficult to complete SPOCC.net

Of those who found it difficult to complete, providers could provide a number of reasons. A total 27 providers provided 56 comments.

More than one-third (36%: 20 responses) found SPOCC.net 'not friendly, difficult to access, layers of security and passwords expire time consuming and data lost'. One-quarter (25%: 14 responses) found it difficult to attach documents due to the vast numbers and document size whilst not knowing what evidence to attach. Thirteen percent (7 responses) found it very cumbersome, time consuming and replicating evidence. See Table 7 for further responses.

	No	%
Not user friendly, difficult to access, layers of security and passwords expire time consuming and data lost	20	36
Difficult attaching documents due to vast numbers and document size, also knowing what evidence to attach	14	25
Very cumbersome, time-consuming and replicating evidence, does not flow	7	13
SPOCC could be improved to easily add, review, amend and upload information required	3	5
SPOCC often crashes and information lost, lots of technical issues	3	5
Not compatible with Words, Excel, Mac i.e. cut and paste	3	5

Top 6 answers for difficulty to complete SPOCC.net (27 providers: 56 responses)

### 2.3 Reflect the nature of the service

Providers were asked if they thought the contents of the QAF accurately reflected the **nature** of their service. More than half (53%: 19 providers) stated that it did accurately reflect the nature of their service and 17 providers (47%) stated it did not (Table 8).

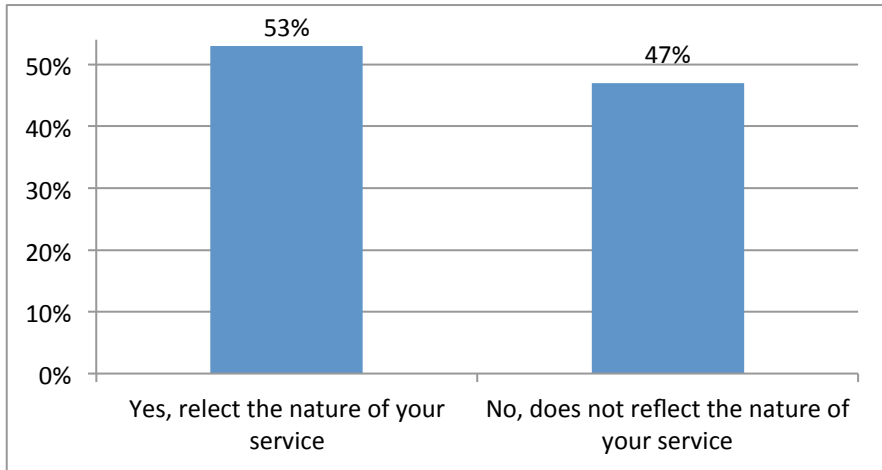


Figure 4: Contents of the QAF accurately reflected the nature of their service

#### 2.3a why it does not reflect the nature of the service

Of the 17 providers who said it did not reflect the nature of their service, 27 comments were provided. Almost half (48%: 13 responses) stated it was not service specific, aspects not relevant, not aligned with type of service provided as one size does not fit all. Almost one-fifth (19%: 5 responses) stated that QAF concentrates on Policies and Procedures and forms. Full comments see Table 9.

	No	%
Not service specific, aspects not relevant, aligned with type of service provided, assumes one size fits all	13	48
QAF concentrates on Policies and Procedures and forms	5	19
Not suitable for a Floating Support Service, Refuge	3	11
Does not reflect aspirations of the service or only part reflects the strategic relevance assessment	2	7

*Top 4 reasons why QAF did not reflect nature of the service (17 providers: 27 responses)*

## 2.4 Reflect the quality of the service

Providers were asked if they thought the contents of the QAF accurately reflected the **quality** of their service.

Almost three-fifths (58%: 21 providers) stated it did not and the remaining 15 (42%) providers stated it did reflect the quality of their service (Table 10).

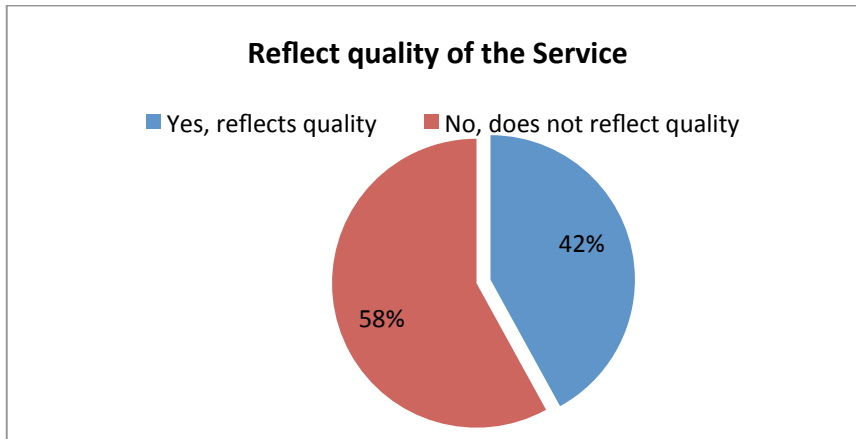


Figure 5: Contents of the QAF accurately reflect the **quality** of their service.

### 2.4a why it does not reflect the quality of the service

The 21 providers who stated it did not reflect the quality of the service provided 38 comments.

Half (19 responses) stated that QAF did not reflect the quality of their service, positive outcome achieved, and/or the service and support provided to difficult clients. More than one-quarter (26%: 10 responses) stated there should be more emphasis of feedback from clients, family stakeholders to capture progress and eleven percent (4 responses) stated Grade A difficult to achieve due to client group, not reflective of outcomes, quality of work involved and time consuming (Table 11).

	No	%
Doesn't reflect quality of service, positive outcomes achieved, service & support provided to difficult clients	19	50
More emphasis of feedback from clients, family, stakeholders as this cannot be recorded on paper or capture progress	10	26
Grade A difficult to achieve due to client group, not reflective of outcomes, quality of work, time consuming	4	11
Too much emphasis on Policy and Procedures and areas relating specifically to SP	2	5

*Top 4 reasons why it does not reflect the quality of their service (21 providers gave 38 responses)*



## 2.5 QAF Scoring Method

Providers were asked their views on the current grade-based QAF scoring methods. A total of 56 comments were given by all providers. Three-tenths (30%: 17 responses) stated Level A was unattainable, unrealistic, repetitive and difficult to achieve due to client group and service size. Twenty-one per cent (12 responses) stated it set clear goals against standards, benchmarking, provides frameworks, clarity and encourages continuous improvement. Thirteen per cent (7 responses) stated the use of a Pass/Fail or Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory scoring should be used. Further comments [Table 12](#).

	No	%
Level A is unattainable, unrealistic, repetitive, difficult to achieve depend on client group, services too small,	17	30
Sets clear goals against standards, benchmarking, provides frameworks, clarity, encourages continuous improvement	12	21
Use Pass/Fail or Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory scoring	7	13
Does not capture or reflect quality of service, ability to build relationship of trust, to achieve better outcomes	4	7
QAF grading very subjective, no consistency. This requires a holistic approach as one size does not fit all	3	5
The overall cumulative score can pull overall grade down	3	5
Provide comparisons to show improvements in service or feedback on how to improve the service to next grade	3	5

*Views on current grade-based QAF scoring method (All providers gave 56 responses)*

## 2.6 Reporting to Agency/Body

Providers were asked if they reported on service quality to any other Agency/Body. Twenty-seven (75%) providers reported to a number of other agencies/bodies, the majority being RQIA (35%) and Trust/HSCB (30%) – [Table 13](#) and [Table 14](#).

## 2.7 Strength of QAF

Providers were asked what they saw as the key strengths of the current QAF based service quality assessment process. A total of 60 responses were obtained from 34 providers. More than two-fifths (42%: 25 responses) stated it provided specific measures, achievable goals, standards, expected quality, progress and where improvements were required. Ten per cent (6 responses) stated it was a useful tool for Validation visit and Supporting People provided a valuable feedback. The same proportion (10%: 6 responses) stated it demonstrated and highlighted Good Practice, VFM, Benchmarking, consistency and the standards expected. Further comments [Table 15](#).

	No	%
Specific measures, achievable goals, standards, expected quality, progress and where improvements required	25	42
Demonstrates and highlights Good Practices, VFM, Benchmarks, consistency, standards expected	6	10
Useful tool for Validation visit and SP provide valuable feedback	6	10
Ensures all policies and procedures are up to date	4	7
Encourages self-reflection and bottom up top down assessment tool	4	7
Comprehensive quality framework and challenges services to be professional	4	7

*Top 6 answers of key strengths of current QAF based service quality assessment process – 34 providers gave 60 responses*

## 2.8 Weakness of QAF

Providers were asked what they saw as the key weaknesses of the current QAF based service quality assessment process. A total of 34 providers gave 72 comments. Almost half (46%: 33 responses) stated it was very repetitive, bureaucratic, time consuming, lengthy, too much cross-referencing and generic nature of the format. Fifteen per cent (11 responses) stated it did not capture quality of the service, user involvement, needs and outcomes especially those with high needs and challenging behaviours. Further comments [Table 16](#).

	No	%
Very repetitive, bureaucratic, time consuming, lengthy, too much cross referencing and generic nature of the format	33	46
Does not capture quality of service, user involvement, needs, outcomes, with high needs, challenging behaviour	11	15
Need quicker feedback report outlining strengths and areas of improvement and recommendations	3	4
Should use or reflect specific themes to RQIA and if passed by RQIA, then pass ported by SP	3	4
Too long between submission of QAF and the validation and then between validation and report	3	4
Standards need streamlined and questions grouped together for same outcome	3	4
QAF progress too subjective and lacks consistency	3	4

*Top 7 answers – key weakness of QAF (34 providers gave 72 responses)*

## 2.9 General comments regarding changes to QAF

Providers were asked if there were any elements of the current quality assessment process that needs to be changed. A total of 31 providers give 57 responses. Twelve per cent (7 responses) stated there was too much cross-referencing, it was time consuming and cumbersome and the same proportion (12%: 7 responses) stated the process should simplify the process, terminology, language, streamline questions and shorten the paper process. Eleven per cent (6 responses) stated that more time should be spent on service users and staff to assess the quality of the service and 9% felt there should be clear guidance templates and sample of standards and good practices provided. Further comments [Table 17](#).

	No	%
Too much cross referencing, time consuming and cumbersome	7	12
Simplify process, terminology, language, shorten paper assessment, streamline questions	7	12
More time should be spent on service users and staff to assess the quality of the service	6	11
Provide clear guidance templates, sample of standards and good practices	5	9
Assessments should be service specific to enable focus on good practices	4	7
Times between submission of QAF, inspection, feedback need shortened, better communication	4	7
Use Pass or Fail grading or percentage grading system	3	5
Improve SPOCC access and the use of Words, Excel to format and upload	3	5
Include stakeholders to review outcomes in line with Outcome Based PfG, better communication	3	5

*Elements of the current quality assessment process that needs to be changed (31 providers give 57 responses)*



TABLE 2

**s1q2 What services organisation provides**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Supported Accommodation	10	28
Support acc and floating support	10	28
Floating Support	9	25
Support and sheltered acc	3	8
Support acc, sheltered acc and floating support	2	6
Peripatetic Support Service	1	3
Supp acc Floating support and adult placement	1	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>100</b>

TABLE 3

**s1q3 Client Group**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Homelessness	10	28
Learning Disability	4	11
Older People	3	8
Homelessness and Younger People	2	6
Homelessness and Domestic Violence	2	6
Learning Disability, Physical Disability and Older People	2	6
Homelessness, Older People and Younger People	2	6
Mental Health	1	3
Younger People	1	3
Homelessness, Mental Health, Learning Disability, Older People, Younger People	1	3
Homelessness and Travellers	1	3
Homelessness, Learning Disability, Older People and Younger People	1	3
Mental Health, Learning Disability, Physical Disability and Older People	1	3
Homelessness, Mental Health, Learning Disability and Younger People	1	3
Homelessness, Mental Health, Learning Disability, Physical Disability, Older People and Sensory Disability	1	2
Homelessness, Younger People and Offenders	1	2
Homelessness, Learning Disability and Physical Disability	1	2
Homelessness and Offenders	1	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>100</b>

TABLE 4

**s2q1 Easy or difficult to complete QAF**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Easy to complete	12	33
Difficult to complete	24	67
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>100</b>

TABLE 5

## S2q1 why difficult to complete QAF

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Very time consuming, cumbersome, lengthy, too many documents to be attached	21	45
Too much duplication, cross-referencing and repetitiveness	8	17
System not user friendly, access is difficult, often timed out and data lost	5	11
No specific guidelines on QAF on evidence required or training available	3	6
Not every subject relevant to the service or client group e.g. floating support	3	6
Hard copy print facility would be beneficial prior to submission as difficult to proof read	2	4
Process easy to understand and follow	1	2
New system much better	1	2
Should inform continuous improvement and highlight areas of good practice	1	2
This information should be disseminated to raise standards across the service sector	1	2
No aligned with the service	1	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100</b>

**TABLE 6**

**s2q2 Easy or difficult to use SPOCC.net**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Easy to complete	9	25
Difficult to complete	27	75
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>100</b>

**TABLE 7**

**s2q2ALL**

	<b>Responses</b>	
	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Not user friendly, difficult to access, layers of security and passwords expire time consuming and data lost	20	36
Difficult attaching documents due to vast numbers and document size, also knowing what evidence to attach	14	25
Very cumbersome, time-consuming and replicating evidence, does not flow	7	13
SPOCC could be improved to easily add, review, amend and upload information required	3	5
SPOCC often crashes and information lost, lots of technical issues	3	5
Not compatible with Words, Excel, Mac i.e. cut and paste	3	5
Attach all document in one area or provide hard copies	2	4
SPOCC questions different from QAF framework	2	4
Difficult to complete for Floating Support Services	1	2
Cannot see above ,below couple of lines typing on	1	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>100</b>

*27 respondents provided 56 comments*

TABLE 8

**s2 q3 Do you think the contents of QAF accurately reflect the nature of your service?**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Yes	19	53
No	17	47
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>100</b>

TABLE 9

**Responses s2q3a If no, state reason why**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Not service specific, aspects not relevant, aligned with type of service provided, assumes one size fits all	13	48
QAF concentrates on Policies and Procedures and forms	5	19
Not suitable for a Floating Support Service, Refuge	3	11
Does not reflect aspirations of the service or only part reflects the strategic relevance assessment	2	7
QAF outcomes should be used to better performance, manage services, utilisation and outcomes	1	4
Does not fit with other regulatory framework i.e. RQIA	1	4
Only Ass & Support planning and safeguarding are relevant	1	4
Involve all stakeholders for accurate judgement of efficiency	1	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>100</b>

*17 respondents provided 27 responses*



TABLE 10

**S2q4 Do you think the content of the QAF accurately reflects the quality of your service?**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Yes	15	42
No	21	58
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>100</b>

TABLE 11

**Multi Response recode s2q4a If no, please state reason why**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Doesn't reflect quality of service, positive outcomes achieved, service & support provided to difficult clients	19	50
More emphasis of feedback from clients, family, stakeholders as this cannot be recorded on paper or capture progress	10	26
Grade A difficult to achieve due to client group, not reflective of outcomes, quality of work, time consuming	4	11
Too much emphasis on Policy and Procedures and areas relating specifically to SP	2	5
Not all aspects of the service are measurable on QAF	1	3
Should be more focus on outcomes for service users leaving the service	1	3
Quality of service should be achieved by numbers and percentages	1	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>100</b>

*21 respondents provided 38 comments*

TABLE 12

**s2 q5b What are your views on the current grade-based QAF scoring method?**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Level A is unattainable, unrealistic, repetitive, difficult to achieve depend on client group, services too small,	17	30
Sets clear goals against standards, benchmarking, provides frameworks, clarity, encourages continuous improvement	12	21
Use Pass/Fail or Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory scoring	7	13
Does not capture or reflect quality of service, ability to build relationship of trust, to achieve better outcomes	4	7
QAF grading very subjective, no consistency. This requires a holistic approach as one size does not fit all	3	5
The overall cumulative score can pull overall grade down	3	5
Provide comparisons to show improvements in service or feedback on how to improve the service to next grade	3	5
Useful tool for staff team building and opportunities to develop skills and expertise	1	2
Bureaucratic process, needs simplified	1	2
Requires a lighter scoring mechanism for small services	1	2
Requires an agreed framework between SP and RQIA	1	2
Service users not involved in this grade based scoring method	1	2
Engage with providers to agree a set of standards, indicators and measures	1	2
Services can fail due to global P&P not being updated	1	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>100</b>

*36 respondents gave 56 responses*

TABLE 13

**s2 q6 Are you required to report on service quality to any other Agency/Body?**

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Yes	27	75
No	9	25
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>100</b>

TABLE 14

**s2 q6a If Yes, can you please provide details of other Agency/Body?**  
**Multi response**

	Frequency	Valid Percent
RQIA	13	35
Trust, HSCB	11	30
Owning Organisation, Landlord	2	5
CJINI	2	5
HSC Public Health Agency	2	5
Borough Council	1	3
Investors in People i.e. Bryson	1	3
Internal	1	3
Big Lottery	1	3
Children in Need	1	3
Social Services	1	3
CHKS Accreditation Programme for Addiction Services	1	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>100</b>

*27 provided 37 comments*

TABLE 15

**s2q7a What do you see as the key strengths of QAF\_1 multi response**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Specific measures, achievable goals, standards, expected quality, progress and where improvements required	25	42
Demonstrates and highlights Good Practices, VFM, Benchmarks, consistency, standards expected	6	10
Useful tool for Validation visit and SP provide valuable feedback	6	10
Ensures all policies and procedures are up to date	4	7
Encourages self-reflection and bottom up top down assessment tool	4	7
Comprehensive quality framework and challenges services to be professional	4	7
Highlights positive outcomes for service users and encourages client involvement as the centre of Best Practice	3	5
Links to higher level outcomes as a useful tool	3	5
Shows safeguarding, improve client wellbeing through a structured assessment and action planning process	3	5
Pride in the service when we do well, good for team building	1	1
An extensive paper trail	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>

*34 Respondents provided 60 responses*

TABLE 16

**s2q8a What do you see as the key weaknesses of QAF\_1**

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Very repetitive, bureaucratic, time consuming, lengthy, too much cross referencing and generic nature of the format	33	46
Does not capture quality of service, user involvement, needs, outcomes, with high needs, challenging behaviour	11	15
Need quicker feedback report outlining strengths and areas of improvement and recommendations	3	4
Should use or reflect specific themes to RQIA and if passed by RQIA, then pass ported by SP	3	4
Too long between submission of QAF and the validation and then between validation and report	3	4
Standards need streamlined and questions grouped together for same outcome	3	4
QAF progress too subjective and lacks consistency	3	4
Paperwork more important than spending time with service users, staff and managers	2	3
Should be continuous annual assessment and ongoing monitoring with quarterly returns information tied in	2	3
No benchmarking across services to identify improvements or no Best Practices shared by SP	2	3
QAF should reflect client group, similar services	2	3
Grade A difficult to achieve due to client group	1	2
Scoring varying service provisions, client groups ,one contract not equitable assessing standards of provision	1	2
Laborious document to complete for small organisations who provide a good quality short term service	1	1
Does not add value nor help with service development and improvements	1	1
More advice on how to achieve A, B & C standard	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>100</b>

*34 respondents provided 72 comments*

TABLE 17

**s2q9a Are there any elements of the current QA process that need changed?\_1**

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Too much cross referencing, time consuming and cumbersome	7	12
Simplify process, terminology, language, shorten paper assessment, streamline questions	7	12
More time should be spent on service users and staff to assess the quality of the service	6	11
Provide clear guidance templates, sample of standards and good practices	5	9
Assessments should be service specific to enable focus on good practices	4	7
Times between submission of QAF, inspection, feedback need shortened, better communication	4	7
Use Pass or Fail grading or percentage grading system	3	5
Improve SPOCC access and the use of Words, Excel to format and upload	3	5
Include stakeholders to review outcomes in line with Outcome Based PfG, better communication	3	5
Should use specific themes similar to RQIA	2	3
Duplication in monitoring and inspections from RQIA and DSD, streamline these or joint inspections	2	3
A and B not reflective cumulative score can bring grade down, A should be specific to needs of client group	2	3
More clarity on higher level outcomes	1	2
Floating support services are poorly reflected in QAF	1	2
Central QAF standard shared docs e.g. policies process assessed every 3-5 years, individual service 2-3 years	1	2
A reduced level for small organisations as level C very laborious especially if needs regularly reviewed	1	2
Does not provide up to minute information about the service	1	2
Untoward, adverse incidents, no clear guidance from SP	1	2
Too much emphasis on policies and procedures	1	2
QAF submissions updated annually	1	2
More emphasis on outcomes, service improvement, development	1	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>100</b>

*31 respondents provided 57 comments*