

# **Standards for Quality in Social Services**

Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs  
Czech Republic, 2002

Dear Colleagues,

It is a great pleasure for both the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and for myself to be able to present to you the first key methodology material *Standards for Quality in Social Services*, which will contribute towards the creating of a system of quality social services. The presented material incorporates both field experience and the latest findings in the area of social services provision. The standards are based on meeting the basic human rights and freedoms as they are specified in the Declaration of Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms and anchored in legal documents of the Czech Republic.

The guiding principle in the process of creating standards for quality was the effort to assure that social services are directed towards the promotion of an individual's ability to remain in his/her natural setting, and towards the development of his/her natural social relationships. The standards therefore define such requirements for the quality of services that will be a guarantee of equal opportunities for social service users in society.

The standards are a tool for providers who strive to offer good and effective social services which respect and promote equal access to education, work and other civil and personal fulfilment, and thus are a prerequisite for a full, dignified, and free life.

The process that led to creating the standards is equally important as the material presented to you. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is convinced that the public should have an opportunity to participate in the preparation of the material, which fundamentally affects the delivery of social services in the Czech Republic. For this reason, the standards were – in all stages of their development – presented for public discussion. Great emphasis was further put on the verifying of the draft standards in the very process of social services delivery. The standards were tested by almost thirty organisations active in social services within a pilot project in Olomouc. The testing involved employees of these organisations as well as social services users themselves. The process of consultations with professionals and those who represent the interests of users and the verification of standards in practice was a valuable experience for the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, which will be further developed and applied, as it is a prerequisite for quality and applicable-in-practice strategies and methodology materials.

I believe that the standards presented to you will become a powerful tool which will lead to the improvement of the quality of social services provided, and which will assure the due protection of rights and freedoms of their users, enabling them to become equal members of our society.

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Deputy Prime minister and Minister of Labour and Social Affairs

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## Introduction

### STANDARDS FOR QUALITY OF SOCIAL SERVICES

In recent years, there have been significant changes in the area of social services, especially in the approach to services users and in methods used in social work. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is trying to respond to this shift, using systemic changes leading to the delivery of quality services in line with the current state of knowledge.

The main tasks for the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in social services is the prevention of social exclusion of persons, support of life in their natural community, protection of vulnerable groups of citizens against breaches of their civic rights, and against incompetent provision of services. In order to secure these tasks, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has decided to define the requirements placed on the quality of social services delivery in the form of standards for quality.

The mission of this publication is to make professionals and social services users acquainted with the first and currently most important tool for quality assurance in social services. In the presented standards, emphasis is put on dignity, promoting independence and autonomy of users, their participation in normal life in their natural social settings and especially respect for their natural and civic rights.

The understanding of the principles laid down in this publication will allow the service providers to start introducing the desired changes in services even before they are enacted in legislation.

### OUTLINE OF THE STANDARDS

The standards describe what a quality social service should look like. They are a set of measurable and verifiable criteria, not a draft law or regulation. Their purpose is to allow in a demonstrable way to assess the quality of the service provided, not to set forth which rights and obligations individual facilities and service users have.

An important characteristic of the standards is their universality – they are applicable to all kinds of social services. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs decided on this universality in an effort not to limit the existing kinds of social services by administrative breakdown and to allow that the requirements are also achieved in small or new facilities which are flexible in responding to the current needs of users by creating new kinds of services.

For the creation of social services standards, elements of quality assurance used in other sectors were used, where quality of services is generally understood as a capability to meet the interests and needs of customers. In the case of social services, which rank among public services, quality must issue from meeting the needs and interests of not only users, but also of those who commission the services, i.e. those who order the services and pay for them from public funds (e.g. municipality, state). The quality is described by means of a set of criteria (properties and characteristics) which are assumed to influence the capacity of services to fulfil the interests and needs of the both the above-mentioned interest groups – users and those who order the service.

The main mission of a social service is an effort to enable socially disadvantaged people (*the term people in unfavourable social situations is used in Czech*) to remain equal members of society and to use its common resources, to live independently, in touch with other people, and in their natural social settings. In this respect the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has tried to create such a set of criteria, with the help of which it will be possible determine whether the services promote personal growth and independence of the user.

An important feature of the quality of a social service is its capacity to support individual services users in achieving goals that they want to attain with the help of social services in order to solve their own socially disadvantaged situation. Therefore, the standards stress the orientation towards the personal goals of services users, which allows that abstract ideals such as dignity, full life, etc. can become quite specific.

The presented form of standards corresponds to the current state of knowledge and current requirements placed on good social services. It is a well-known fact that the demands on quality on the part of users are increasingly higher. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs therefore does not regard the presented version of standards as final and unchangeable, but on the contrary it expects to reassess the current level within 3 years at the latest.

### UTILISATION OF STANDARDS

Standards which describe what a quality social service should look like are beneficial both for the services providers and users. To utilise the standards in practice, it is necessary to understand the requirements. This is identified in the results of the testing of standards in the pilot Olomouc region as part of a Czech-British project for the support of social services reform. The services providers who tested the standards in practice say that

additional financial sources in services are badly needed for training, supervision and the increasing of awareness.

The results of the above-mentioned project also show that in all monitored areas it is possible to begin to improve the quality immediately, without additional financial means. Nevertheless, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is aware of an increase in costs due to implementing the changes relating to the application of standards, and therefore it counts on creating programmes which will help the social services facilities with increasing the quality of the services provided.

Implementing the standards into practice on a nation-wide level will enable the comparison of the effectiveness of individual kinds of services which are helping people solve the same type of socially disadvantaged situation as well as effectiveness of different facilities which provide the same kind of services. This will be very important for the institutions which finance the social services – local self-administration authorities, state, sponsors, etc., and above all for the users themselves.

Creating conditions for quality assurance is closely related to the reform of public administration, the aim of which is to transfer competences/powers to lower levels of administration (regions, municipalities, non-governmental sector). In this situation it is necessary to create mechanisms which would secure safety, expertise, and the availability of social services. This mechanism should be the review of the quality of provided services – i.e. inspection. During the inspection, the standards will serve as benchmarks for the assessment of quality. Inspection will be put into practice depending on the adoption of necessary laws, but will be on a voluntary basis first. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs will maintain a register of facilities which voluntarily undergo inspection. At the same time, the methodology for inspection will be used in cases where there are justified doubts about the quality of services provided in those facilities where the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is entitled to enter without lawful authorisation, i.e. those which the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs founded or those to which it grants subsidies.

For a compulsory inspection to be introduced it is necessary to include some requirements (specified in the standards) into existing legislation as obligations. In addition, authorisation to carry out inspection must be enacted.

## **ASSESSMENT OF QUALITY USING THE STANDARDS**

The high level of universality of their criteria is typical of the standards. It is necessary to ensure that the standards are applicable for any social service regardless of its character, the size or legal status of the facility. Standards formulated in such a way expect that social services providers will themselves define important criteria in their own documentation – e.g. goals of services, mission, target group of users, capacity, procedures, how to secure respecting the rights of service users, ways and principles of services delivery and other internal rules. This type of documentation, along with documentation of how services delivery was realised (records of extraordinary events, individual plans, agreements on the provision of service and their filing, etc.), are an important source of information for the assessment of the quality of services.

The most important indicator for the evaluation of services, however, is how the provided service projects into the life of the people who receive it. The service user together with the facility's employee<sup>1</sup> define a goal towards which the service provision should work. In the standards, this goal is called a "personal goal" and it can include e.g. a chance to go to work or school, to remain in one's own home environment, to raise one's children, to have somewhere to sleep and find one's own dwelling, etc. The satisfaction of the users with fulfilling their "personal goal" using the help of the service is assessed on the basis of two main components – satisfaction with the result of the service and satisfaction with the process of its delivery. The criteria laid down in the standards therefore focus on both the results (fulfilment of goals of services, needs of users, etc.) and on the process (planning the process of services, dealing with the prospective service user, way of settling complaints, respecting the rights, etc.).

## **IMPORTANCE OF STANDARDS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF LEVEL AND EFFECTIVENESS OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs deems the creation and publishing of this material as the first key step towards the improvement of quality and effectiveness of social services. Although the standards are intended for all kinds of services, they will be most important for institutional facilities. Introducing the standards which are oriented towards promoting each user's independence of the social service will in its final sense contribute to providing help and support to the users according to their real needs, not across-the-board to all users in the same amounts and in the same manner. The expected result of these changes is an increase in the effectiveness of utilisation of resources expended on social services. This should lead to the development of alternative social services and a reduction in the number of people on waiting lists for institutional care facilities. Social services will then become a truly public service which is duly available to everyone who needs it.

<sup>1</sup> Transl. note: In the context of these standards, employee shall mean any physical person who works in the facility (i.e. employees under labour law, volunteers, students, etc.)

## A. PROCEDURAL STANDARDS FOR QUALITY OF SOCIAL SERVICES

### 1 PURPOSE AND WAYS OF SERVICE DELIVERY

The purpose of social services is to allow people in a socially disadvantaged situation to use local institutions which provide services to the general public as well as their natural network of relationships, remain a part of natural local community, in short to be able to live a normal life. The provided social services maintain and develop a dignified life of users, and they are safe and professional.<sup>2</sup>

#### CRITERIA

- 1.1 Social services facility (hereinafter referred to as facility) has a written statement which defines its mission, goals, target group (users), and principles of its services, and understands them as its public commitment.
- 1.2 The public commitment as defined in 1.1 is directed towards securing that socially disadvantaged people could remain in their natural local community, live a normal life, use local institutions which provide services to general public, their natural network of relationships and their own potentials.
- 1.3 Services are provided in compliance with the methodology which the facility had designed in writing. The methodology is normally available to its employees.
- 1.4 The facility creates opportunities for users to be able to assert their own will, act according to their own decisions, in short – to be themselves.
- 1.5 The facility has its internal rules for the protection of users against prejudice and negative opinions which could occur in connection with the delivery of the service.

#### RATIONALE

*The purpose of this section is to summarise the requirements for the purpose and ways of social services delivery. The goal of social services is to create opportunities that will enable people in a socially disadvantaged situation an access to all services provided to general public, possibility to live in their own home environment, to maintain meaningful relations with the family and other people, to got to work and school At the same time, the services are provided according to clear procedures which the facility has formulated in its methodology; the procedures are formulated in such a way which minimises the occurrence of prejudices on part of the society towards social services users.*

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<sup>1</sup> In all hereinafter mentioned rights it is assumed that they are provided to users regardless of their competence to perform legal acts. In justified cases, legitimate representative will use the rights on behalf of the user.

## 2 PROTECTION OF SOCIAL SERVICES USERS' RIGHTS

In its activities the facility respects the basic human rights of the services users, their demands arising from other existing legal regulations and rules of citizens coexistence.

### CRITERIA

- 2.1. The facility has defined areas in which breach of users' rights could occur in connection with the delivery of services. The following areas are especially sensitive: protection of personal freedom, privacy, personal data, right to education and free choice of occupation, protection against any form of abuse, forced labour, discrimination, etc.
- 2.2. For areas defined in 2.1, the facility has written internal rules which in practice effectively prevent the breaking of rights of services users. The facility has corrective mechanisms in case that the breach of users' rights by either the facility or its employees is discovered.
- 2.3. The facility has defined situations where conflict of interests could occur, i.e. conflict of interests of facility/employees with interests of users, and sets written internal rules which prevent possible conflicts.
- 2.4 The user's decision about solving his/her own socially disadvantaged situation by means of social services is respected.

### RATIONALE

*Delivery of the social services often touches on basic human rights. For a number of reasons, social services users in their relation towards the social services facility are at a disadvantage. In most cases it is not the user who pays for the services provided, and so the facility may not feel a sufficient need to adapt the services to meet his/her needs. Users are disadvantaged often due to the very ground of their socially disadvantaged situation and frequently are not able to defend themselves, because in the case of the state- or town-guaranteed services, not the private-law but public-law regulation is in force which puts the user at a disadvantage when dealing with the facility. Social services facilities are often enclosed institutions, where claiming one's right is sometimes very difficult, etc. For these reasons, social services users belong among the vulnerable groups of inhabitants and it is the State's duty to protect their interests. The criteria focus on the monitoring of how the facility ensures the protection of rights of its users depending on the nature of the services provided.*

### 3 DEALING WITH A PROSPECTIVE SERVICE USER

Before the conclusion of an agreement, the prospective services user (*i.e. person interested in receiving a service*) is acquainted with all the conditions of services delivery. The facility employee finds out what the person expects from the service and then together they formulate how the provided service will meet the agreed goals.

#### CRITERIA

- 3.1 Using its internal rules<sup>3</sup> the facility pro-actively informs an individual about the social service offered and about all obligations which would arise for him from the Agreement on the provision of service including the conditions and way of service provision and its price.
- 3.2 The goals that the social service should fulfil are set by the user. The facility supports the person interested in receiving the service in formulating his/her own personal goals.
- 3.3 Responsible persons from the facility will agree with the person what personal goals the service will fulfil and what will be the specific form, process, conditions and extent of the services which the facility will provide.
- 3.4 Personal goals are based on the potentials and abilities of the prospective service user. Social and health diagnosis and ensuing limitations are applied mainly during the stage of planning the way of achieving the set goal, of preparing a strategy to minimise the risks, etc.
- 3.5 The information about the service is communicated to the person with regards to his/her situation and capacity of perception and understanding in such a way and to such an extent that he/she is able to recognise whether the service meets his/her needs and could make an informed decision for or against using the service.
- 3.6 The facility sets the rules that govern the rejection of the prospective user on grounds of insufficient capacity, failing eligibility criteria for target group of users.

#### RATIONALE

*The purpose of this standard is to summarise the procedure for dealing with the person who is interested in receiving the service. This negotiation should precede the conclusion of the Agreement on social service provision and should take place in three stages. The facility will offer services to the prospective user (will describe their goal, content, conditions, etc.), find out what his/her needs and interest are and in cooperation with facility's employee then enable the person to formulate what services the facility will offer to him/her. In doing so, the facility makes sure that the person interested in the service knows about all conditions relating to the service provision and that he/she understands them. It is important that the needs and interests are defined by the applicant, not by the facility.*

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<sup>3</sup> It is assumed that rules are defined with regard to the nature of the service provided (e.g. rules in residential services will be different from those in street work or crisis intervention).

## 4 AGREEMENT ON THE PROVISION OF SERVICE

Social services are provided to the user on the grounds of a concluded Agreement<sup>4</sup> on the provision of service. The agreement will stipulate all important aspects of the service provision including the personal goal which the service should fulfil.

### CRITERIA

- 4.1 The assigned representative of the facility and the user conclude an Agreement on the provision of service.
- 4.2 The Agreement is concluded according to the needs of the user and to the nature of the service, either orally or in writing. The concluded agreements are filed. A written Agreement is concluded each time the prospective user (applicant) / user shows interest or if the services include residence<sup>5</sup> and/or assistance in securing basic life necessities.
- 4.3 The Agreement contains arrangements pursuant to point 3.3 and it also defines provisions regarding a probation period, procedures when breaking the agreed conditions of the service provided, the way and conditions for termination of service and ways in which this agreement can be changed.
- 4.4 The facility makes sure that the prospective user / user understands the content and purpose of the Agreement.
- 4.5 The user can withdraw from/terminate the Agreement any time; the facility only under the conditions set forth in the Agreement.
- 4.6 The procedure designed for the cases of would-be termination of service delivery on the part of the provider will enable the user to secure a replacement service.

### RATIONALE

*The criteria specify in detail the procedure for concluding the Agreement on social service provision. The agreement should be concluded in writing; in justified cases (depending on the nature of service) orally. All agreements must be filed.*

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<sup>4</sup> That assumption is that even though Act No. 100/1988 Coll. on Social security as subsequently amended is in force, the user is entitled to conclude a civil-law agreement on the provision of service.

<sup>5</sup> This does not mean e.g. a single sleepover at a night shelter

## 5 PLANNING AND ACTUAL IMPLEMENTATION OF SERVICES PROVISION

The provision of services respects the personal goals and needs of the user and is based above all on his/her abilities. The implementation (the course) of the service is adequately<sup>6</sup> planned.

### CRITERIA

- 5.1 The implementation of the service is based predominately on internal resources and the potential of the user, follows the achieving of agreed personal goals and is planned together with the user.
- 5.2 The fulfilment of the user's personal goals is re-assessed during the course of the service. The user has a possibility to change his/her personal goals.
- 5.3 The facility has its written internal rules which govern the planning of the process of service delivery. The facility sets these rules depending on the nature of services. Depending on the nature of the services the way of recording the implementation of services provision is settled (including the deadlines and the way how the service delivery can be re-assessed).
- 5.4 Individual (specific) employees of the facility<sup>7</sup> are responsible for planning and the implementation of the service provided to individual users.
- 5.5 A system of sharing essential information about the services which are provided to individual users is applied in the facility.
- 5.6 The facility has the criteria for the evaluation whether the personal goals of services users are being met.

### RATIONALE

*The standard is based on the assumption that social services must be individually tailored to suit the needs of individual users and that the users must have an opportunity to influence their implementation, to change their personal goals which they aim to achieve with the help of services. The facility must be interested in personal wishes, interests and goals of people in order to be able to provide targeted and effective services using the full potential of the individual users. The procedures agreed with the user must - depending on the nature and extent of the service – be recorded in documentation.*

<sup>6</sup> In the long-term provision of services (in region of months) "adequately" means e.g. a written set of goals, procedures and deadlines; in the short-term provision of services (in region of max. weeks) oral agreement on the goal of services and the way of its achievement.

<sup>7</sup> For example the so-called key worker.

## 6 PERSONAL DATA

The facility collects and processes such user data that enable it to provide safe, professional and quality social services. The facility creates conditions so that processing of personal data complies with the existing legal norms.

### CRITERIA

- 6.1 The facility has specified which personal data it needs from the users so that the services provided could be safe, professional and of high quality.
- 6.2 The facility processes only the personal data of users which is determined as necessary for the delivery of safe, professional and quality services.
- 6.3 The internal rules enable the designated employees of the facility to effectively use the personal data for the purpose of providing safe, professional and quality services.
- 6.4 The facility creates conditions allowing that the processing of personal data complies with the existing legal norms<sup>8</sup>.
- 6.5 If required by the nature of the service or users themselves, the facility ensures the anonymous filing of individual users.
- 6.6 Documents which are maintained for services provided to individual users are archived for an adequate period of time<sup>9</sup>.

### RATIONALE

*The criteria specify in detail the requirements for the personal data of services users. The facility defines what requirements it needs in order to provide quality, professional and safe services, and creates conditions for such processing of personal data that this processing complies with the existing legal regulations and internal rules, which it issues for processing of personal data.*

<sup>8</sup> Especially with Act. No. 101/2000 Coll., on the Protection of Personal Data and on amendments of some laws, as subsequently amended; Article 90 of the Regulation of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs 182/1991 Coll., which enforces the Social Security Act and an Act of ČNR on spheres of authority of bodies of the Czech Republic in social security, as subsequently amended.

<sup>9</sup> The period for archiving basic documents, e.g. Agreement on the provision of service, documents relating to the use of the means of physical restriction, etc. is 5 years, with other documents 3 years..

## 7 COMPLAINTS ABOUT QUALITY OR WAY OF SOCIAL SERVICES DELIVERY

The users can complain about the quality or way of the delivery of social services, without being themselves in any way jeopardised by doing so. For this purpose, the facility has specified and asserts internal rules, which both users and employees are acquainted with.

### CRITERIA

- 7.1 The users are informed that they have a possibility to complain, how to make a complaint and who will deal with the complaint, and how the complaint procedure is conducted. Facility employees are also acquainted with these procedures.
- 7.2 From the rules for making a complaint it is clear to whom the users should address their complaints and who else (employees, institutions) is entitled to participate in handling the complaint.
- 7.3 If dissatisfied with the way the complaint has been solved, the users are advised by the facility of the possibility to appeal to a superior or independent body<sup>10</sup> with a request that the complaint procedure should be investigated. The rules for handling complaints include contacts to these bodies.
- 7.4 The conditions for filing and handling complaints are safe for the user and enable a fast and appropriate solution. The period for resolving complaints is adequate<sup>11</sup>.
- 7.5 The complaints are solved in writing and are filed.
- 7.6 The complaints are recorded in such a way so that they correspond to what the complainant intended.
- 7.7 The complainant has a possibility to choose an independent representative<sup>12</sup> to act on his/her behalf in the complaint procedure.
- 7.8 If needed, the complainant will have an interpreter at his/her disposal.
- 7.9 The rules for filing and handling complaints exist in a written form and they are in such a form which is understandable for the users.

### CRITERIA

*The criteria specify in detail the procedure for accepting and handling complaints regarding quality and the way of social services provision including the possibility to investigate/review the resolved complaint.*

<sup>10</sup> E.g. to the Office of the Ombudsman, national and international organisations monitoring the state of human rights, organisations of people with health disabilities.

<sup>11</sup> The "adequate" period for resolving a complaint is 28 days.

<sup>12</sup> Depending on the nature of the matter, the independent representative can be a physical person or legal entity. The rule is that the independent representative stands outside the structures of the facility and provider.

## 8 LINKS TO OTHER RESOURCES

The facility is active in encouraging the user to make use of common public services which are available in the neighbourhood. The facility also encourages the user to use his/her own natural networks such as his/her family, friends, and tries to prevent him/her from developing of addiction to a social service. If needed, it enables the user to use other social services.

### CRITERIA

- 8.1 The facility does not replace or substitute institutions which provide common services to the general public, such as a school, labour office, employer, health care facility, societies, hobby groups, etc. On the contrary, it co-operates with these institutions if needed, thus creating opportunities for the user to use the institutions as his/her peers use them.
- 8.2 The facility co-operates with institutions, professionals and other people who the user selects from his/her surroundings, to facilitate that the user is working towards attaining his/her personal goals.
- 8.3 The facility assists the user in contacting and using other services depending on his/her needs and wishes, especially those which head towards increasing self-reliance and independence of the system of social services.
- 8.4 If the facility is not able to cover the needs of the service user in terms of extent, expertise or competence, it arranges (acts as an agent) for services of other specialists and/or institutions for the user.
- 8.5 In line with the user's wishes, the facility creates opportunities for meaningful relations between the user and his/her family and significant others. In the case of conflict, the facility maintains neutral position.

### RATIONALE

*The criteria take up on the requirements to secure specialised services by means of cooperating with external specialists, creating conditions for the users to have access to common services provided to the general public and to maintain meaningful contacts with their families and other natural social networks.*

## B. PERSONNEL STANDARDS FOR QUALITY IN SOCIAL SERVICES

### 9 STAFFING OF SERVICES

The structure, number of employees, their educational background as well as skills comply with the needs of the service users and enable the fulfilment of the standards for quality of social services. New employees receive initial training.

#### CRITERIA

- 9.1 The facility has determined a structure and the number of jobs, work profiles, qualification requirements as well as personal and moral requirements. The structure and number of staff correspond to the defined needs of the facility and to the current number of service users and their needs. At the same time, the composition and replenishing of the work team allows fulfilling the standards of quality.
- 9.2 The facility has its internal rules for hiring new employees and their initial training. Special attention during the initial training is paid to the principles that the facility asserts in the area of protection of the rights of service users and to the ways of fulfilling specific needs of individual users with whom the new employee is going to work.
- 9.3 In the case of users with specific needs, the staff has appropriate expert education and skills.
- 9.4 The facility creates such conditions that the hiring and initial training of employees is in compliance with the existing legal regulations<sup>13</sup> and set internal rules.

#### RATIONALE

*The criteria specify in detail the securing of appropriate staff for the services. The management sets forth the required structure and the number of employees who are responsible for the services and for the technical and administrative background, and adapts the rules for selection of new employees, qualification requirements, training, etc. The same conditions apply to volunteers or students' work experience.*

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<sup>13</sup> Especially Act 65/1965 Coll., Labour Code, as subsequently amended.

## 10 WORKING CONDITIONS AND MANAGEMENT OF SERVICES PROVISION

The management of the facility ensures such conditions that the employees is able to perform quality work, and sets and makes available rules for their work.

### CRITERIA

- 10.1 The facility has defined its own organisational structure which clearly shows the powers and responsibilities of individual employees.
- 10.2 If persons are hired who are not actual employees of the facility under labour law<sup>14</sup>, the facility applies its internal rules for concluding Agreements on the Performance of a Work Assignment and ensuring of working conditions, especially insurance, setting of responsibilities, pledge of confidentiality, etc.
- 10.3 The facility creates such conditions that the working conditions are in compliance with the existing legal regulations<sup>15</sup> and set internal rules.

### RATIONALE

*The criteria are based on the existing legal norms. The management of the facility makes sure that all important aspects of the service that are not governed by existing legal regulations were clearly formulated and that employees are made familiar with them. Special attention is paid to the rules for persons who are not employees under labour law. In these cases, the facility must ensure that their engagement is in compliance with the norms regulating e.g. protection of personal data, work safety, etc. which automatically are binding for persons who are employees under labour law.*

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<sup>14</sup> E.g. volunteers, students on work-experience, persons performing their “civil service” (in Czech the term means an alternative to the compulsory service in the army)

<sup>15</sup> Especially Act No. 65/1965 Coll., Labour Code as subsequently amended; Act No. 174/1968 Coll. on State Supervision over Occupational Safety as subsequently amended.

## 11 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF EMPLOYEES AND WORK TEAMS

The facility ensures the professional development of work teams and individual employees, their skills and capabilities needed for the facility to fulfil its public commitments as well as the personal goals of service users.

### CRITERIA

- 11.1 The facility applies a procedure for the regular evaluation of its employees. It includes especially setting, developing and fulfilling personal profession goals, tasks and needs for further extending expert qualification.
- 11.2 The facility enables its employees to be involved in the development and quality improvement of the social services provided.
- 11.3 The facility applies a system of two-way communication between the management and employees.
- 11.4 The facility has and uses a system for rewarding its employees, not only through financial rewards but also through other means (appraisal, increasing qualification, etc.).
- 11.5 The programme of further education/training is applied, especially for those who work directly with the users. Each employee is acquainted with the programme. Further training of employees stems mainly from the identified needs of the services users and from the current trends in social services.
- 11.6 For employees who work directly with the users, the facility obtains support from an independent qualified specialist in order to solve problems that individual employees or work teams encounter in their work.

### RATIONALE

*In the services, there are close relations between the users and employees who are in direct contact with them. The quality of a service depends directly on these employees and therefore special attention must be paid to them. The criteria specify the requirements for management and development of teams of employees who do direct work with the user. The employees must have sufficient amount of support, motivation and space for participation in the development of services provided by the facility, and for solving the problems which they encounter in their work. .*

## C. OPERATIONS STANDARDS FOR QUALITY IN SOCIAL SERVICES

### 12 LOCATION AND TIME AVAILABILITY OF A SERVICE

The location and time of day of the service delivery are in keeping with the goals and nature of the service and with the needs of the target group of users.

#### CRITERIA

- 12.1 The specified location and time during which the service is provided meet the needs of the target group of service users.
- 12.2 The service provided is available for the users from the given area both in terms of its location and time.

#### RATIONALE

*The criteria specify in detail the locality and time availability of services for the users. The time of day when services are provided must meet the possibilities of people who use them. At the same time, it is monitored whether the commitments which the facility makes in this respect are true to reality.*

### 13 AWARENESS ABOUT THE SERVICE

The facility informs the public about the mission, goals, principles and target group of users and gives other information which facilitate orientation for the prospective service users and other organisations/bodies, thus contributing towards greater availability of services.

#### CRITERIA

- 13.1 The facility has detailed a set of information about its service, which is available to the public, in a form adequate to the needs and possibilities of the target group (in writing, audio or video recording) web pages, specially adapted documents for people with special needs in the area of communication and understanding.
- 13.2 Publicly available set of information contains especially the following: legal status, IČO (ID number of organisation), statutory representative and responsible person, address of the registered seat of the provider and the place where services are provided, telephone number, mission, goals of services, principles for their achievement, specification of the target group of users, conditions for the delivery of the service, facility's capacity, price of service for the user.
- 13.3 The facility issues an Annual Report on its activities and makes it available to the public.

#### RATIONALE

*The criteria summarise the information which should be generally available to the public about the facility and the services provided and they also describe the form in which it should be published taking into account the needs of target group of users.*

## 14 SETTINGS AND CONDITIONS FOR DELIVERY OF SERVICES

The setting and conditions in the facility are adequate to the capacity, nature of services and users' needs. The facility takes due care that all the existing legal regulations associated with the provision of social services are met.

### CRITERIA

- 14.1 Environment and equipment (especially wheelchair accessibility, environment allowing for privacy, toilet facilities, lights and warm harmonious atmosphere, compensatory equipment and aids) of the facility is adequate to the capacity, nature of the provided service and needs and interests of users.
- 14.2 The rooms in the facility where services are provided are clean, neat and free of biological or chemical smells.
- 14.3 The facility creates such conditions that the rooms for service provision conform to existing legal norms.<sup>16</sup>
- 14.4 If need arises, it issues and applies its internal rules, which users and facility's employees are acquainted with.

### RATIONALE

*The criteria summarise basic technical pre-requisites for delivering quality services. The point is that services are to be provided in such setting the nature of which meets the needs of target group, which does not lower the social status of people who use the services and complies with the existing legal norms.*

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<sup>16</sup> E.g. Act No. 133/1985 Coll., on Fire prevention as subsequently amended, Regulation of the Ministry of Interior No. 246/2001 Coll., on Determining the Requirements for Fire Safety and Performance of State Fire Surveillance (regulation on fire prevention).

## 15 EMERGENCIES AND ACCIDENTS

Facilities, employees and users are prepared to solve accidents and emergency situations.

### CRITERIA

- 15.1 The facility defines possible accidents and emergency situations<sup>17</sup> and ways to solve them.
- 15.1.1 The users and employees are acquainted with procedures in the event of accident or emergency. Such conditions are created in the facility for employees and users to be able to use the defined procedures if necessary.
- 15.2 Documentation is kept about the course and solution of emergency and accident situations.

### RATIONALE

*The criteria summarise the required procedures for solving emergencies and accidents. The facility defines which contingencies may occur and has a procedural plan of courses of actions for their solutions. At the same time it makes sure that both employees and users are duly acquainted with the defined procedures and that conditions are created for them to be able to use these.*

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<sup>17</sup> Depending on the nature of services, facility and target groups, various contingencies may occur, e.g. temporary shortage of staff, fire, exhaustion of financial reserves, sudden decline in user's health condition of a user, etc.

## 16 SERVICES QUALITY ASSURANCE

The management of the facility works towards the continuous improvement of the quality of services provided. Both the employees and services users are involved in the evaluation of quality of services.

### CRITERIA

- 16.1 The facility checks and reviews, whether the provision of services is in compliance with its public commitment and whether it meets the personal goals of individual users. Necessary conclusions are derived from possible inadequacies.
- 16.2 The facility has its internal rules for finding out about users' satisfaction with the services, with settings in which they are provided, etc. and uses the findings in preparing plans for services improvements.
- 16.3 The services are evaluated by employees at all levels and by representatives of other interest groups (municipality, co-operating institutions, etc.).
- 16.4 The complaints made about the quality or way of provision of services are deemed as a suggestion for development and improvement of the service.
- 16.5 The facility creates conditions for environmentally friendly approaches, sparing global resources<sup>18</sup> and fulfilling the existing generally-binding legal regulations in this area.

### RATIONALE

*The criteria specify the facility's procedures in the care of securing the quality of its services. The "disadvantage" of the services is that they are provided at the time of their inception and there is no space for additional modification and corrections. The facility, therefore, must have systems of an on-going evaluation, to say if the services are provided in compliance with internal rules and criteria and the possibility to correct possible mistakes. Very important is the internal review of meeting the public commitments of the facility and meeting personal goals of users. It is based on the assumption that quality is determined by balancing and satisfying the needs of all interest groups, especially users and employees. The quality service is in itself the source of continuous improvement.*

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<sup>18</sup> E.g. recycling, waste separation, using products marked with "Environmentally friendly product" label, etc.

## 17 FUNDING

The facility has a plan for securing sources of funding for the services provided, and creates conditions for the financial management to be in compliance with the existing legal regulations and that it is transparent.

### CRITERIA

- 17.1 The facility has a budget for the respective calendar year containing especially the planned expenses and incomes needed for securing the services. The budget corresponds to the planned extent of services per a given period.
- 17.2 The facility designs and publishes Annual Report on its economic performance which gives an account of incomes and expenses for securing the services in respective year.
- 17.3 The facility has set and applies internal rules for accepting donations.
- 17.4 The facility has a system which enables that the existing legal regulations are fulfilled<sup>19</sup> as well as other internal rules if there are such.

### RATIONALE

*The criteria specify requirements for financial securing of services in a way that their continuity is not threatened by shortage of funds, that the existing legal regulations are met in this area and that financial management of the facility is transparent*

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<sup>19</sup> Especially Act. No. 563/1991 Coll., Accounting Act as subsequently amended.

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Normal way of life	A situation when the person has an opportunity to make use of common services provided to the general public, his/her natural social network and own resources, is in contact with other people, inner and outer environment in which he/she lives corresponds to that of his/her peers
Target group of users	Socially disadvantaged persons (in Czech terminology persons in an unfavourable social situation) for whom the services offered by the facility are intended
Discrimination	Unequal and thus unjust treatment of some inhabitants on the ground of racial, cultural, religious or other difference, or difference in gender. etc. It consists in deliberate disadvantaging by creating unequal economic, political or legal conditions. The discrimination is accompanied by prejudices, fixed habits and can lead to social degradation and segregation.
Volunteer	A person who does voluntary work outside of any of the following: employment under labour law, service relationship, membership relationship, schooling or studies
Informed decision	A decision made by the user who understands the possible consequences of different alternatives
Key worker	A worker whose task is to co-ordinate services which are provided to a particular user, be active in monitoring his/her needs and satisfaction and advocate for his/her interests
Methodology	A document defining the principles and procedures for the provision of a service
Natural social networks	Personal contacts of the person with his/her surroundings – family, friends, acquaintances, colleagues from work, etc.
Socially disadvantaged people	(in Czech terminology persons in an unfavourable social situation) People who find themselves in a situation when they – due to their age, loss of self-sufficiency, illness, health disability, crisis situation, life habits, socially disadvantaging environment, jeopardising rights and interests by criminal activity of another person or due to other serious reasons – are not able to secure and fulfil their life needs and these needs are not otherwise secured or if their way of life poses a threat to the interests and needs of the society.
Authorisation to provide social services	A formal acknowledgment of the facility's readiness to provide social services in compliance with the existing standards for quality in social services
Personal goals	Goals which the services user aims to achieve using the social service provided. They include especially users' wishes and needs.
Existing legal regulations (generally-binding regulations)	Constitutive laws, Acts, government's directives, regulations issued by central administration authorities, regulations issued by territorial self-administration authorities and international documents which the Czech Republic is obliged to obey
Employee	In the context of these standards, an employee is any physical person who performs work in the facility. They include especially: employees under labour law (i.e. physical person in employment relation), volunteers, persons doing "civil service" and students doing their professional work experience in the facility.
Means of physical restriction	Protective net beds, strapping, straight jackets, isolation of users, etc.
Social service	An activity providing support to socially disadvantaged people in social integration and protection against social exclusion with the aim of enabling them to integrate into regular life of society and use its systems in a way which is normal for other people (e.g. housing, schooling, health care, employment services, etc.). Social services is a public service.
Standards for quality in social services	A set of criteria through which the minimum level of quality in social service provision is defined in the areas of personnel, procedures and operations.
Complaint	A written or oral statement made in the interest of the individual, in which the complainant expresses his/her dissatisfaction with the quality of the service or the way in which the services are provided.
Users	A person who uses social services because he/she has found himself/herself among the socially disadvantaged (see above).
Internal rules	Rules created by the organisation for its own needs. They specified the course of action where existing legal regulations are too general or non-existent.
Peer	A benchmarking comparison for the user, his/her skills and opportunities which are common in our culture with regard to age and gender.
Prospective service user	A person who has shown interest in knowing more about the services, conditions of service provision, etc. with the intention to use the service.
Social service facility	A self-contained unit for the provision of social services which is characterised by an address, group of users, work team, set of relating services and area for provision of services and/or scope zone of activity (e.g. town or its part) <sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> In contrast to Act No. 114/1988 Coll., part four, which defines the "social care facility" as an enumeration of buildings in which strictly defined services are provided to individual groups of users, the purpose of the proposed definition is that social services would also include purely field services, which are provided exclusively in households of users, in the street, etc.

## LIST OF LITERATURE

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