Human Services Quality Framework

Frequently Asked Questions: Transition to the HSQF

Child Protection Placement Services in-Scope of Licensing

The Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services (the department) has introduced organisation level licensing, incorporating the Human Services Quality Framework (HSQF) to streamline child safety licensing processes for funded organisations.

The HSQF is a system for assessing and improving the quality of human services. It applies to organisations delivering services under a service agreement with the department or other specified arrangements, including providers of child protection placement services funded through Child Related Costs Placement and Support (CRC PAS).

Certification and child safety licensing

Organisations operating services that have a primary purpose of providing care for children in out-of-home care (child protection placement services) must be licensed.

Before an organisation can apply for a licence it must achieve HSQF certification for those care services. Certification is granted when an organisation is assessed by an independent third-party (known as a certification body) as meeting the Human Services Quality Standards (the standards).

For child protection placement services required to be licensed, HSQF certification and the related audit report are used as evidence towards deciding a licence application.

Once an organisation providing placement services has been certified under the HSQF they will be invited to apply for a licence within 30 days of the department’s Child Safety Licensing team being advised of the certification.

The department has published an Organisation Level Licensing manual to guide service providers through the licensing process, available on the department’s website at: https://www.communities.qld.gov.au/childsafety/partners/child-safety-licensing/licensing-resources

Overview of Child Safety Quality System under the HSQF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HSQF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 standards, with mandatory evidence for child protection placements service requirements outlined in the User Guide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent third party audit conducted by JAS-ANZ accredited certification body engaged and contracted by the organisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audit occurs as part of the certification cycle which is separate to the licensing process and occurs before a licence application is made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certified at organisation level against all in-scope services state-wide (including child protection placement services)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certification bodies close out any non-conformities which are identified against the standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance audit conducted within 18 months from certification against a minimum four of the six standards (sampling of services is applied)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recertification every 3 years (needs to be completed before applying to renew a licence)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once licensed, organisations are required to maintain their HSQF certification as a condition of their licence.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services

HSQF FAQ – Transition Placement Services  Version 4-November 2016
What is JAS-ANZ and what is the role of certification bodies in the HSQF?

JAS-ANZ is the government appointed accreditation body responsible for providing accreditation of certification bodies that audit under the HSQF. Audits are undertaken in accordance with auditing guidelines, known as the HSQF Scheme (Parts 1 and 2) which was developed by the department in partnership with JAS-ANZ and a technical committee involving government, industry, service providers and technical experts. These guidelines are available from certification bodies or by contacting the HSQF team.

Certification bodies and their audit teams are independent of the department and are contracted by service providers to undertake audits of their services.

How do child protection placement services transition to the HSQF?

Services generally transition to the HSQF as their regional care service licence becomes due for renewal. Organisations should contact their regional Community Support Team or the department’s Child Safety Licensing team for information on transition arrangements.

Information about the key steps leading up to an independent audit and certification is available in a Fact Sheet ‘Certification at a glance’ on the HSQF website.

What happens if my organisation also delivers other department funded services?

Organisations will undertake a single HSQF audit for all their in-scope services – this includes services delivered under the Child and Family, Community Services and Disability Services funding streams. Further information on the types of services that are in-scope for certification is available in the Human Services Quality Framework document on the department’s website at: https://www.communities.qld.gov.au/gateway/funding-and-grants/human-services-quality-framework/overview-of-the-framework.

The department will work with organisations to discuss HSQF requirements and timelines for transitioning, such as aligning licence renewal dates with scheduled HSQF audit dates. Services are encouraged to contact their contracted certification body to discuss their specific transition arrangements.

What funding assistance is available for audit costs?

During the period 2016-2017, as a transitional arrangement, the department will provide eligible providers with one-off financial contributions towards the costs of completed audits. This is paid after the audit is completed and reflects the type and scope of audit undertaken. The payment is calculated using an approved HSQF audit pricing structure.

In future, organisations delivering existing services under the Child and Family and Community Services funding streams will be expected to meet quality compliance and audit costs within their allocated funding. Further information about how this will be implemented will be provided to impacted organisations.

The department does not meet the costs of any follow-up audits to close out any non-conformances or major non-conformances.

How will the certification body know which child safety care services to audit?

The JAS-ANZ HSQF Scheme contains requirements for determining which care services need to be visited during an audit. These requirements vary depending on which type of audit is being undertaken and whether a sample can be used during an audit. A summary of these requirements is provided below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service model</th>
<th>Certification/recertification audit</th>
<th>Mid-term maintenance audit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-family-based care service (e.g.</td>
<td>All service sites and outlets are visited</td>
<td>Sample of service sites and outlets are visited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>residential care)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family-based care service (e.g.</td>
<td>Sample of service sites and outlets are visited</td>
<td>Sample of service sites and outlets are visited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster and Kinship care service with</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no direct care)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To assist with audit planning, certification bodies will ask service providers to complete a ‘Confirmation of organisational addresses requiring audit’ form (sometimes referred to as a CoOARA) which the certification body will submit to the department for verification.

The form captures the addresses of a service provider’s head office, each address where services are delivered from, as well as the service delivery model of each site.

The department’s Child Safety Licensing team will confirm the addresses with the certification body. Service providers can request a copy of the final verified form from their certification body, which can be re-used as part of a service provider’s licence application provided that the sites and outlets have not changed between the HSQF audit and the licence application.

Will client files be audited and how is permission given?

Audit teams will need to review a sample of client files during the audit process to assess the care provided to children and young people. Service providers will need to obtain written consent from foster and kinship carers prior to an auditor reviewing their files.

Service providers for children and young people in care are able to provide auditors with access to client files as the HSQF audit directly relates to a child’s protection or wellbeing and therefore meets the confidentiality exemption provision outlined in section 188(3)(c) of the Child Protection Act 1999 (the Act).

What happens if a major non-conformity is identified in an audit?

Under the HSQF, certification bodies may give a service provider up to three months to address a Major Non-Conformity (MNC) identified during an audit. However, if the service provider currently holds a licence, they must comply with legislated requirements. The department may therefore require them to address issues in a shorter timeframe, so that they meet the conditions of their licence.

A licence or licence renewal cannot be granted while there are outstanding MNCs associated with the management, coordination or delivery of a care service. Evidence that MNCs have been addressed will therefore be considered by the department as part of the licence application assessment process.
What is the purpose of the maintenance audit and what does it cover?
The maintenance audit is intended to ensure that organisations are on track to maintain and build on the quality of the services provided, check that any previously raised issues are continuing to be addressed and to assist organisations to continue to meet HSQF standards. The audit covers three set standards (1, 3 and 4) plus at least one other standard selected by the audit team. It should occur no more than 18 months from the date an organisation is certified/recertified.

How does the maintenance audit link with the department’s licence monitoring processes?
The licence monitoring process meets the legal requirement for the department to monitor that the care provided to children meets the standard of care in the Act, and that the organisation continues to meet licensing requirements and conditions. The licensing and licence monitoring processes assess the organisation’s compliance with the Act and licensing requirements for the entire term of the licence.

The department will seek access to records and undertake physical inspections in line with the monitoring framework in order to evidence that the organisation is meeting licensing requirements. Identified concerns are brought to the attention of the organisation to enable them to take action in response to the concerns, and may be required to take actions in line with the department’s Non-Compliance Framework.

Foster and kinship type services have one scheduled inspection a year; residential type services have one scheduled announced inspection and one unannounced inspection a year. The department can undertake additional inspections as necessary to inspect for compliance with the Act.

Where a HSQF maintenance audit coincides within three months either side of a scheduled departmental announced inspection of residential type services, the HSQF maintenance audit may replace the inspection for any residential type services visited by the HSQF audit team. This does not apply to the scheduled announced inspection of a foster and kinship care services.

The HSQF audit is a point-in-time assessment of an organisation’s implemented systems and processes against the HSQF. The HSQF audit is one piece of evidence used in licensing.

How to find out further information
These resources and additional information is available online at HSQF website: www.communities.qld.gov.au/gateway/funding-and-grants/human-services-quality-framework

For further information regarding the HSQF, please contact the Human Services Quality Framework team on (07) 3247 3072 or hsqf@communities.qld.gov.au.

Resources and additional information is available online at the department’s licensing website: http://www.communities.qld.gov.au/childsafety/partners/child-safety-licensing

Further information about the licensing process is available from the Child Safety Licensing team on (07) 3006 8787 or by email at: CS_Licensing@communities.qld.gov.au