



Housing action.

Quality criteria for evaluating and developing housing solutions

**ADVISORY BOARD OF HOUSING FOR PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL
AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES (KVANK), DECEMBER 14, 2018**

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Quality criteria for evaluating and developing housing solutions



The quality criteria for housing solutions provide guidelines on evaluating and developing housing solutions for persons with disabilities. Housing solutions for persons with disabilities shall be founded on equality with others. This calls for action to promote the rights of persons with disabilities on an equitable basis with other people.

The assessment of quality and the related development of housing solutions are based on human rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities specifying those human rights. One essential element is being able to live and participate in society and in one's community like other people. This shall be put into practice in the way chosen by each individual. Services that support living and participation also promote equity.

The quality criteria for housing solutions were prepared by the Advisory Board of Housing for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, which is a network of NGOs and public bodies in the disability sector.

Core principles

Equity is enhanced by having an opportunity to live in ordinary housing solutions and to take decisions on one's own life. The right to make decisions regarding housing solutions requires that one can choose where to live and whether to live alone or together with others. Disability does not oblige a service user to live separated from other people or to live together with other persons with disabilities.

Ordinary housing means living in an apartment that meets the service user's individual needs and wishes regarding housing and is located in an ordinary residential area. Possibilities may include, for example, living in an apartment of one's own, in a small group of apartments or in a group home. The house may also comprise facilities that are shared with other residents.

Help and support for housing allow persons with disabilities to live in a home of their own and to get involved in the same way as other people do. Services and support shall

be designed with consideration to the service users' individual wishes and needs. Having the right to make choices and decisions regarding one's own life means that there must be alternatives. Information about the alternatives must be made available to service users in a format that they can understand. They shall also have access to neutral support in choosing and decision making.

Ordinary housing and related support services are a way to reduce inequality. Inequality is caused by a lack of housing alternatives for persons with disabilities, as well as by inflexible services which may force service users to live in large, institutional housing clusters, which are formed on the basis of categorising people according to their special needs.

Quality criteria and evaluation of housing solutions

The starting point for evaluation, according to the quality criteria for housing solutions, is to look at the final outcomes of the services, i.e. their impact on the individual's life. The right to take decisions upon one's housing and living requires that the outcomes are viewed from the perspective of the individual person. Housing is viewed as a whole, which has an impact on the service users' well-being and is connected to the different spheres of their lives. The quality criteria allow a comparison of services from the point of view of their impact and guide the development of housing and related support services.

There are nine quality criteria which will be explained in more detail in the table below.¹ The criteria include the following: 1) service users are living in their own home in the community 2) they are exercising

¹ The criteria are based on a framework for measuring the outcomes of disability services which was developed by the Irish National Disability Authority, or NDA. The framework has been adapted and complemented by the Advisory Board of Housing for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. (NDA paper on outcomes for disability services – May 2016,

<http://nda.ie/nda-files/NDA-Paper-on-Outcomes-for-Disability-Services-May-20161.pdf>)

choice and control in their everyday lives and 3) participating in social and civic life, 4) have meaningful personal relationships and 5) opportunities for personal development, 6) have valued social roles, 7) are enjoying a good quality of life and well being, 8) get support in maintaining and promoting their personal health and 9) are safe and feel secure.

A description of the areas to be evaluated against the criteria is provided in the middle column of the table below. The column on the right lists the articles of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities that are relevant for each criterion. In the column below the title of each criterion, there is a description of the content of the area to be evaluated.

A glossary of keywords related to housing has been prepared to support the quality assessment. In this glossary, the core concepts are defined from the point of view of the service user. The glossary is available in Finnish on the website Asumisen tekoja (Housing action): <https://verneri.net/asumisen-tekoja/sanasto/>. ■



Quality criteria for housing

1. LIVING IN THE COMMUNITY

Outcomes of the services in the persons' lives	Areas to be evaluated	Articles in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
Service users are living in their own home in the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Ordinary housing » Suitable housing according to needs » Can choose who to live with » Can run their own home » Personal belongings » Privacy » Possibility to lead a family life » Technology and assistive devices supporting independence 	Articles 18, 19, 22, 23

Description of the area to be evaluated:

Service users live in their own homes in the community.

The service users have control over matters concerning their homes. They have the opportunity to choose their place of residence as well as where and with whom to live. For this to be possible, there must be alternatives and ordinary housing available to choose from. The service users are not obliged to use a living arrangement which they do not wish to live in. When they wish, they can move and relocate to another municipality. To support their independent living, they have access to residential support services and personal assistance.

Keywords: home, apartment, community, need.

2. CHOICE AND CONTROL

Outcomes of the services in the persons' lives	Areas to be evaluated	Articles in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
Service users are exercising choice and control in their everyday lives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Choice and related alternatives » Minor and major decisions » Accessible information » Supported decision making » Individual routines and control of one's own needs » Positive risk-taking » Respectful encounters 	Articles 12, 14, 21, 29

Description of the area to be evaluated:

Service users exercise choice and make decisions in their everyday lives.

Information about alternatives and services is available in an understandable and accessible form. The service users have access to support in receiving and processing information. They have access to support in forming and expressing their own opinion and will. The service users can choose who supports them in decision-making. They have access to support in understanding the consequences and outcomes of decisions in their lives.

Keywords: supported decision making, inclusion, accessibility, family and supporters.

3. SOCIAL AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION

Outcomes of the services in the persons' lives	Areas to be evaluated	Articles in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
Service users are participating in social and civic life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Meaningful/important activities » Participation in community activities » Civic activities » Can access the community (accessibility of information/physical accessibility) » Technology and assistive devices supporting communication 	Articles 18, 19, 20, 21, 29, 30

Description of the area to be evaluated:

Service users are participating in social and civic life.

The service users get support to participate and, when necessary, also to find out about their own interests. When they wish, they can participate in community activities that are important for them (such as residents' activities, cultural and leisure activities, religious activities, voluntary work, NGO activities). They also have contacts to people without disabilities who take an interest in the same things and activities. By participating, the service users can make a difference and contribute to the life of the community. Participation and mobility in the community require an accessible environment and access to information.

Keywords: community, inclusion, individual support.

4. PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Outcomes of the services in the persons' lives	Areas to be evaluated	Articles in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
Service users have meaningful personal relationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Important personal relationships and control over them » Intimate relationships and family life » Friendships 	Articles 22, 23

Description of the area to be evaluated:

Service users have meaningful personal relationships.

The service users decide upon important personal relationships in their lives. In these relationships, they can experience belonging and attachment. They have the possibility to establish intimate relationships, build a family, and lead a family life. They have access to support in forming and maintaining personal relationships as well as learning the related skills and gathering experience.

Keywords: family and supporters, community, personal development.

5. EDUCATION AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Outcomes of the services in the persons' lives	Areas to be evaluated	Articles in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
Service users have opportunities for personal development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Strengths and abilities » Education and studies » Civic skills » Personal goals for the short and long term » Learning technology and other assistive devices 	Articles 24, 27, 30

Description of the area to be evaluated:

Service users have opportunities for personal development.

The service users have the opportunity to identify and make use of their strengths and abilities as well as access to related support. The planning of individual support is based on strengths and abilities. The service users can choose which education to pursue and develop themselves according to their wishes, and have access to necessary support. The service users have access to support for setting and achieving personal goals and have the opportunity to try, succeed and fail.

Keywords: personal development, strengths, individual support.

6. VALUED SOCIAL ROLES

Outcomes of the services in the persons' lives	Areas to be evaluated	Articles in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
Service users have valued social roles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Working life and paid employment » Voluntary work and being active in NGOs » Expert by experience » Contributing to the common good/ doing things for others 	Articles 18, 19, 24, 27, 29, 30

Description of the area to be evaluated:

Service users have valued social roles.

The service users have roles in which they can feel important and needed. Their skills are identified and recognised. They have roles in which they can participate in developing their communities. The service users have access to support in functioning in these roles, such as seeking and performing paid employment, voluntary work, NGO activities or other activities. When necessary, they have access to support in finding meaningful roles.

Keywords: community, inclusion, supported decision making.

7. QUALITY OF LIFE

Outcomes of the services in the persons' lives	Areas to be evaluated	Articles in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
Service users are enjoying a good quality of life and well being.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Satisfaction with life » Things that are important » Experience of well being » Life changes 	Articles 22, 23, 25, 28, 30

Description of the area to be evaluated:

Service users enjoy a good quality of life.

The service users' own experience of well being and quality of life has primary importance. The service users' lives consist of elements which are important for them. They have and do things that make them happy. They meet who they want and are able to feel valued and important. They have access to support in forming and pursuing dreams.

Keywords: quality of life, inclusion, needs.

8. HEALTH AND WELL BEING

Outcomes of the services in the persons' lives	Areas to be evaluated	Articles in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
Service users have the possibility to achieve the best possible health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Psychosocial well being » Health promotion » Access to information relevant to well being » Preventive support » Sexuality 	Articles 20, 21, 22, 25, 26

Description of the area to be evaluated:

Service users are getting support in maintaining and promoting their personal health.

Health consists of both physical and psychological well being as well as having one's health-related needs met. Health needs are unique to every individual. The service users have access to information about their health as well as support in maintaining and promoting their personal health. They have the possibility to maintain and promote their personal health with the help of physical exercise and nutrition according to their preferences. The service users' gender experience and sexuality are realised in the way they choose. They have access to information and tools to maintain and promote their personal health.

Keywords: quality of life, supported decision making, needs.

9. SAFETY AND SECURITY

Outcomes of the services in the persons' lives	Areas to be evaluated	Articles in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
Service users are safe and feel secure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Safety » Security and continuity » Being respected and listened to » Freedom from abuse and ill-treatment 	Articles 12, 14, 16, 17

Description of the area to be evaluated:

Service users are safe and feel secure.

The service users have people in their lives with whom they have mutual trust. They are treated respectfully and feel they are being heard. They are not subjected to physical or psychological violence, ill-treatment or abuse. The service users' financial situation is not threatened. The service users' everyday lives and the supports they need are not threatened, allowing them to experience continuity in their life.

Keywords: quality of life, supported decision making, needs.

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**Housing
action**

Support
for equitable
housing solutions

