



National Consultation on the development of an Outcomes-focused monitoring system for Adult Day Services

Summary Report



November 2024

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Introduction

The HSE in partnership with the National Disability Authority, persons using Adult Day Services and the disability umbrella bodies are developing an outcomes-focused monitoring system for Adult Day Services.

As it is essential to incorporate the insights and perspectives of key stakeholders when developing a monitoring system that can efficiently and effectively support the quality improvement of Adult Day Services, a comprehensive nationwide consultation was undertaken with persons using Adult Day Services, family members, interim standards organisational leads and direct support staff.

During the consultations participants were asked for their valuable feedback on the proposed monitoring approach prior to a Trial of the monitoring system. The aim of the Trial is to work together with Adult Day Service locations to create a monitoring system that works for everyone. This will involve testing, designing, and evaluating the system in a variety of Adult Day Service locations.

The Adult National Day Service Team and the Monitoring Steering Group extends its sincere thanks to all participants in the consultations and all who facilitated the sharing of information.

Consultation with People Supported in Adult Day Services

This consultation was conducted through 13 focus groups and 10 individual interviews. Overall, 78 individuals took part in the consultation from 12 different service providers. These individuals accessed Adult Day Services from 27 different service Locations or programmes, including hubs, Rehabilitative Training and life skills programmes and training centres.

Taking part in the monitoring process

All participants expressed a willingness to engage in future monitoring visits to their Adult Day Service. There was a strong consensus that the best way for Assessors to engage with people supported was through face-to-face meetings. However, it's important to note that several participants expressed concern that people supported might be afraid to speak up during the monitoring visits.

Participants recommended that the following information could be made available to people supported prior to any monitoring visit:

- The name of the Assessor
- A photo of the Assessor
- An introductory video from the Assessor
- Details about the Assessor – where they work, their experience, contact details
- Details on when the monitoring visit will take place – participants were not keen on unannounced visits
- Details on what the visit will involve – will the routine or programmes in the Location be disrupted?
- How long the Assessor will be in the Location
- What the Assessor will be doing and why they are doing it
- Will the Assessor be speaking to everyone in the Adult Day Service Location?
- What are the opportunities for people supported to get involved, how will they get involved, and when they can get involved?
- Some people would like to know the questions they might be asked in advance, but others would prefer to find out on the day.

Supports for the monitoring visit

Some people said they would like staff support for a meeting with an Assessor, but most said they would prefer that staff were not present. It was acknowledged that some people may need staff support to communicate their views or for medical reasons.

Some participants were disappointed to hear that people supported in Adult Day Services would not be part of the monitoring team and would like to see this discussed further. One participant suggested that there could be a panel of people supported and trained to monitor Adult Day Services (other than the organisation from which they receive support).

Important aspects of a Day Service – the views of people supported

Participants were encouraged to highlight things that they would like an Assessor to consider during a monitoring visit and elements that they believe are essential to a quality Day Service such as satisfaction with Adult Day Services, community inclusion, transport, Adult Day Service buildings, person-centred planning, having a say in how their Adult Day Service operates and supports to stay healthy and well.

Participants were asked about things they would like to change in their service. There was a wide variety of responses. In summary, they highlighted the need for their involvement in staff selection, and they asked for more time with staff and more frequent interactions with managers. They said that people supported should always be spoken to in a respectful manner, they emphasised their need for privacy, personal choices, flexible hours, improved transportation, smaller groups, and increased staff for activities. They also desired additional out-of-hours support, a wider range of activities to choose from, accessible Adult Day Service facilities and increased access to technology. They would like more information on advocacy groups and other Day Service Locations.

Questions an Assessor could ask during a monitoring visit

During the consultation the participants were asked for some questions that an Assessor should ask when spending time with people supported on a monitoring visit. Please see **Appendix 1** for a list of the proposed questions. These questions will be further developed through the Voices Together subgroup before being tried out in the Trial.

Consultation with Direct Support Staff

A consultation was conducted with 96 direct support staff across Ireland. To ensure widespread participation, six online consultations were held across July and August, offering flexibility for staff to attend. The questions for the consultation were as follows:

- 1) What are your thoughts on emerging approach for an Outcomes-Focused Monitoring System?
- 2) How do you support someone to have a meaningful day?
- 3) Does self-evaluation (e.g. the EASI process) help you to support someone to have a meaningful day?

1) Reflections on the emerging Outcomes-focused Monitoring System

There was a consistent agreement that a supportive and collaborative approach to monitoring with a focus on recognising good practice would be most effective. The use of the Desktop Review to review the admin was seen a positive, as it would give more time for the Assessor to spend with people supported.

Many Staff emphasised that Assessors should have knowledge and experience of Adult Day Services and the specific needs of people supported. They also emphasised the need for observing day-to-day activities and interactions rather than solely relying on written documentation.

They highlighted the importance of speaking with people supported and that the Assessor will have to be flexible to be able to engage with as many people as possible.

Across the consultations there were differing opinions on whether a person's Circle of Support should be involved in engaging with the assessor during a monitoring visit. However, all Direct Support Staff consultees were in agreement that if they are involved it must be following agreement from the person supported.

Direct Support Staff consultees hoped monitoring can lead to positive changes, additional funding, and overall improvement in service quality.

2) How do staff support people to have a meaningful day?

Staff highlighted the importance of trust, communication, family involvement, and community engagement in supporting people to have a meaningful day.

Staff emphasised the importance of recognising a person's preferences, and structuring their day according to what works best for each person. Staff do this by seeking regular feedback from people supported, through weekly check-ins, quarterly reviews, yearly person-centred planning meetings as well as unstructured/informal feedback mechanisms like Jot Forms, WhatsApp groups, and regular family feedback to gauge satisfaction and areas for improvement.

Participants acknowledge the important role Circles of Support play in supporting the individual's goals and that this requires regular communication and involvement of Circles of Support.

3) The role of Location self-evaluation in facilitating people to have a meaningful day?

Staff noted that EASI self-evaluation process is valuable for developing plans and reflecting on achievements and that the roll out of training has helped integrate EASI into everyday practices.

However, staff noted difficulties using the EASI tool as it is seen as complex and difficult to use. Additionally, it can be a challenge to engage some of the people who attend Day Services in the process, especially for the themes relating to governance and management. Staff told us that their involvement in the EASI self-evaluation process is limited because of insufficient staff and limited time for self-evaluation and documentation.

Staff suggested that the EASI tool could be made simpler and more user-friendly, and it would be helpful if additional training was provided.

Consultations with Organisational Leads for New Directions Interim Standards

Consultations were held across each of the 9 CHOs, throughout July and August 2024. During each of the consultations the participants were asked for their feedback on the following:

1. The overall approach to the Monitoring system
 - a. Feedback on the principles
 - b. Feedback on the overall approach
2. The Outcomes-focused Monitoring Framework (each CHO undertook to review a different segment of the Framework)

Feedback on the emerging Outcomes-Focused Monitoring System

The Organisational Leads felt that the introduction of monitoring was a positive development and that the focus on improvement is key to the success of monitoring.

They shared that some staff would have fears about what monitoring will be like and they will need to be reassured that monitoring is not 'trying to catch them out'. Therefore, Organisational Leads advised that monitoring must be supportive. Additionally, they felt that monitoring should acknowledge achievement and recognises good practice.

Organisational Leads emphasised that it is important that Assessors have an understanding that Adult Day Services are very diverse. Finally, they suggested that monitoring should be introduced slowly and that it should start with information sessions, easy read materials, webinars, and videos by people supported for people supported.

Principles

Organisational Leads felt that principles seemed to be appropriate and the supportive approach to service improvement set out in the principles was welcomed. The focus on shared learning and the commitment to develop appropriately trained Assessor in the principles is extremely important and reassuring.

Desktop review

The Organisational Leads welcomed the Desktop Review as it would be beneficial to get the paperwork done in advance of a monitoring visit which should allow for more time for discussion and observation.

They emphasised that providers will want to know what data is being looked at in the Desktop Review. They advised that Locations will need at least 2-3 weeks' notice for submission of documents for the Desktop Review and that the structure of the EASI tool could be improved so that a Location can "put their best foot forward".

The Monitoring Visit

Organisational Leads stated that it is important that Assessors have sufficient time to meet people and Locations will need guidance on how to prepare for the visit. They advised that the visit should be conducted informally and include a walkabout to get a sense of the Location and that Circles of Support should only be involved in the monitoring process if the person supported wants them to be involved.

They cautioned that there needs to be more consideration of how escalation and enforcement processes will work given that there is no legal enforcement mechanism. And there is a need for more consideration of what happens if the monitoring visit identifies that more funding is required to support the Location to deliver a service in line with the Standards and consideration of how data from the monitoring system will inform future funding strands.

The Outcomes-focused Monitoring Framework

The detailed feedback on the text of the Monitoring Framework will be inputted into a revised draft of the Monitoring Framework. Overall, the Organisational Leads welcomed the Monitoring Framework and acknowledged that it could be a helpful document to help them prepare for a monitoring visit. It was acknowledged that not all questions in the Monitoring Framework will be relevant in all situations that therefore the Assessors will need to use their professional judgement when deciding which questions to ask. Finally, it was proposed that the observation section could be expanded further to include staff interactions, and if people supported appear content and happy.

Consultations with Families

The family survey with seven questions was distributed to Day Services Locations on behalf of the National Office for Adult Day Services of the HSE. The survey was developed in partnership with Inclusion Ireland and results were analysed by the NDA. In total, 1,810 people participated in the survey, please see Table 1 for a summary of the survey findings for the first six questions. The last question consisted of an open-ended question in which families were invited to give feedback to support the development of the development of the HSE's Outcomes Focused Monitoring System. The findings of question 7 are summarised on page 11.

Table 1: Summary findings from Q1- Q6 of the family survey

Q1: What do you think will be the positives of having a HSE monitoring system reviewing Day Services?
Almost 68% of respondents believed that the benefits of monitoring would lead to more individualised supports, positive changes based on feedback, and identification of areas for improvement.
Q2: When a HSE Assessor is visiting a Day Service, who should they speak to/meet with?
63% of people indicated that Assessors should speak to or meet with persons attending the services, support staff, management and members of circle of support
Q3: What is the best way for people receiving a service, working in collaboration with their families, to be involved in the monitoring process?
72% opted for meeting with the person and their chosen circle of support.
Q4: What is the best method to communicate information and updates on the development/progression of the monitoring process?
Almost 52% of respondents felt that this could be done through the provider. while 41% opted for newsletters.
Q5: What are the most important aspects for review when monitoring a Day Service?
73% selected person-centredness, almost 72% opted for health and wellbeing. 60% opted for health and safety, 59% selected community inclusion. 57% felt it was important to review resources, almost 56% opted for accessibility, and almost 52% felt it was important to monitor equal human rights
Q6: If feasible, what information would you like to have shared with you after the monitoring visit?
84% of people wished to know the outcome of a monitoring visit, 55% wished to receive information on the development of the HSE monitoring system. 29% indicated that they would like advanced notice of a monitoring visit

Family feedback from the survey

The final section of the survey consisted of an open-ended question in which there were 777 responses who gave feedback to support the development of the development of the HSE's Outcomes Focused Monitoring System. They identified key areas for monitoring to focus on such as the happiness and fulfillment of people supported, person-centered planning, the health and well-being of people supported, the safety of buildings and facilities, and financial transparency and accountability.

When talking about the process of monitoring, family members felt strongly that there was a need for external monitoring, and it was essential that Assessors have an understanding how Adult Day Services work and the processes that take place on-site. They advised on how the Assessors would need to closely consult with people supported on their experiences and their level of satisfaction. Family members reiterated repeatedly that the monitoring process must not become a mere box-ticking exercise with the purpose of generating more paperwork.

Families felt strongly that the outcomes of any monitoring process must be shared with all stakeholders, including family members. Several respondents were fearful that the new monitoring system would add to the workload of over-burdened staff.

Finally, a proportion of the comments were not directly related to the issue of monitoring or indeed Adult Day Services specifically and they have been shared with relevant personnel in the HSE.

Conclusion

The nationwide consultation with people supported, direct support staff, interim standards organisational leads and families has provided valuable insights that will be important in shaping the development of an Outcomes-focused Monitoring System for Adult Day Services. Through the analysis of this stakeholder feedback, it was possible to identify key themes and areas of concern which will be incorporated into the ongoing design of the monitoring system during the Trial which will commence in Q4 2024.

All consultation feedback received was considered. The feedback highlighted the importance of spending time with people supported, the need for a supportive approach, and Assessors who are familiar with Day services. People supported asked if Assessors could provide information and a photo of them before they visited, and we are now incorporating this into our Visits. We are also integrating their suggested questions for the Assessor (Appendix 1) into the Outcomes-focused Monitoring Framework. In addition, people supported asked that people with experience of attending an Adult Day Service would be on the Assessment team and in response we will try this out during the Trial.

Throughout the consultation stakeholders asked if Assessors could link in with the Staff in the Location before visiting the Location to work on developing an approach to the on-site monitoring visit, that would best suit people supported, and this will be incorporated in the Trial.

The need for an individualised approach to assessing the experiences and outcomes of people supported was raised and as a result the Assessors will be flexible in how they spend time with people supported and will follow the direction of the person supported.

Lastly, a recurring theme from the direct support staff and Interim Standards Organisational Leads consultation was that it is essential that the Assessor have experience of Adult Day Services. In response, further consideration will be given to having an Assessor on the assessment teams who have significant professional experience of working in Adult Day Service.

The consultation findings have enabled the approach to be refined and every effort will be made to incorporate the consultation findings into the design of the monitoring system. As we move forward, we remain committed to a partnership approach to developing an Outcomes-focused monitoring system for Adult Day Services.

Appendix 1 – List of Suggested questions for an Assessor

General questions

- Did you choose your Day Service?
- Are you happy with your Day Service?
- Is there anything that you are not happy with in your Day Service or anything you think could be better?
- What is the most important thing about your Day Service?
- Is the Day Service doing what it said it would?

Person-Centredness

- Do you have an interesting day at your Day Service?
- Do you get to do the things you want to do?
- Can you make your own choices and decisions?
- Do you get a chance to do courses and to learn new things?
- Do you have a keyworker?
- Did you choose your keyworker?
- Do you have a person-centred plan?
- Do staff support you to achieve your goals?
- What happens if your goals are not achieved?
- Can you go to your Day Service on the days that you want and at the times that suit you?
- Can you ask to change Day Services, and do you get the right information and supports to make this happen?
- If you cannot move, are you given a clear reason why?
- Can you stay in your Day Service as you get older if you want to?
- Do you have the supports you need to stay healthy and well?
- Who makes the decisions in your Day Service?
- Do you get a say in what happens in your Day Service?
- Are you asked for feedback about your service?
- Do you feel confident to speak up about your Day Service?
- Do you have any say in what happens in your organisation?
- Do you feel listened to when you have feedback?

Community Inclusion and Active Citizenship

- Is your Day Service close to the local community?
- Can you get out from your Day Service and use your local community?
- Do you have the supports you need to get a paid job if you want one?
- What roles do people have in the community?
- Do you have an advocacy group in your Day Service or organisation?
- Do you get support to take part in advocacy?

Quality

Some participants recommended that the Assessor should ask about fire safety, health and safety, manual handling, work safety, and safeguarding.

- Is transport available to get people to and from the Day Service if they need it?
- Do you have to pay for this transport?
- How long is your journey to your Day Service?
- Is there enough transport available during Day Service hours for people to do the activities they want and need to do?
- Are there enough accessible toilets and changing places?
- Do you have the right space and equipment in your Day Service to learn the skills you want to learn?
- Is the building suitable and accessible?
- Did people supported have a say in choosing and signing off on the building?
- How does your organisation check if your Day Service is of good quality?
- Do people supported get a chance to interview staff for jobs in their Day Service?
- Do they have a say in choosing staff?
- Do staff treat you well?
- Do staff have the right skills to support you?
- Do staff have the right attitude for the job?
- Do staff know about New Directions?
- Can staff drive?
- Are there enough staff to support people to do the things they want to do and achieve their goals?
- Are staff available to work out of hours to support people with specific goals and activities?
- Do you get the right information at the right time and in the right way for you?