



SOFI: CSSIW Quality of Life Methodology

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What is SOFI?

SOFI (Short Observational Framework for Inspection) is an inspection tool that can be used by CSSIW inspectors to make a judgment as to what life is like for people using services.

CSSIW introduced the methodology, developed by the University of Bradford, in 2012 as part of the programme to modernise our inspections. We are currently using SOFI2, the second edition of the tool.

What role does it play in inspections?

As part of our inspections we look at quality of life for people using services as well as checking that services meet minimum standards.

SOFI is used when people using the service are unable to say what their care and treatment is like, for example people with dementia or young children. It provides a snapshot observation and can be used flexibly to record observations for a group of individuals on a one-to-one basis.

SOFI will be used to improve the knowledge and expertise of inspectors where there are people with cognitive or communication difficulties in services they inspect.

How does SOFI work during the inspection?

Inspectors using SOFI observe a number of people receiving care over a period of time. They make a record after every 5 minutes noting how content the person is, whether they are engaged in activity, or with other people, and the quality of any staff interactions.

By tracking a number of people over a period of time a clear picture emerges which gives an indication of people's quality of life and the care they receive.

To undertake SOFI inspectors must undertake a two day training course.

The use of observational methods has already raised the quality of our evidence and improved our immediate feedback to staff and managers. SOFI is very helpful in identifying "institutional" abuse.

More information

Information for care providers on how SOFI is used during inspections is also available. For more information, contact cssiw@wales.gsi.gov.uk