United Response
support that changes with you

University of Kent | Tizard Centre

What does good look like?

A guide for observing in services for people with learning disabilities and/or autism

OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

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OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

This booklet is part of the 'What Does Good Look Like' resource, which provides an overview of what good support looks like in services for people with learning disabilities and/or autism.

It should be used in conjunction with the 'What Does Good Look Like' Guide, which can be found at www.unitedresponse.org.uk/what-does-good-look-like

Together they outline what good practice looks like and provide a set of observable practices that can indicate that a service is implementing person centred approaches such as Person Centred Active Support, The National Autistic Society's SPELL Framework, Total or Alternative and Augmentative Communication, and Positive Behaviour Support.

The guide can be used prior to or during observations to help the observer know what to look for and how to evaluate the service. It includes a number of key areas to look for, a rationale for why the area is important, and what you should see if a service is providing good support.

The checklist helps you to record and rate a service based on what you observe.

Who is it for?

This resource can be used by anyone who might observe a service, including formal inspectors (e.g. from the CQC), experts by experience, professionals and researchers.

Where can it be used?

This resource can be used in any setting that supports people with learning disabilities or autism, including residential services, assessment and treatment services, schools and colleges. It can also provide a useful framework to assess the support provided by domiciliary, outreach or supported living services to people living in their own (or family) home. It is less likely to apply to secure forensic services, as some of the elements may be hard to effectively implement within the necessary constraints of the service. However, the resource could still be used in these settings with this borne in mind.

Observation Checklist

For each of the following statements, rate how true the item is on the following scale:

0	1	2	3
Not Seen	Could do much better	Strong points but improvement needed	Lots of strong points, hard to do better

ITEM		SCORE			
1. Are people engaged in meaningful activities and relationships?		0	1	2	3

Things to consider	Working	Not Working
Do you see people being supported to do things for themselves as much as possible – even basic self-care things like feeding themselves, wiping their face, serving their food at the table? Do you see people taking part (with or without support) in a range of real and age appropriate activities around the service – household, leisure, education, gardening, social? Is there evidence that people regularly get to access shopping, leisure, education, work, social activities out in the local community? Are people supported to be active in their activities, not just sedentary activities? Is there a range of things available in the environment for people to do independently? Do people have regular contact with their families and friends, with regular visits of family to the unit/home and of individual to their family or friends?		

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ITEM		SCORE			
2. Are staff consistently supporting individuals to engage and communicate?		0	1	2	3

Things to consider	Working	Not Working
Are all staff enabling and empowering individuals to participate in all aspects of their lives, using the same methods and those identified as preferred in people's support profile/care plan? Are they using non-verbal communication, communication aids etc. to supplement verbal communication or if necessary replace verbal communication? Are staff noticing and responding when people try to communicate? Is it clear that communication is based on an assessment and an agreed plan for that individual, that all staff use consistently?		

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ITEM	SCORE			
3. Is there an accessible way for those being supported and staff to know what's happening that day?	0	1	2	3

Things to consider	Working	Not Working
Is there visual structure that helps people predict what is going to happen at least over the next few hours and who will be supporting whom? Does this relate to what is actually going on at the time? If not is there a reasonable explanation why not? E.g. illness of individual, or they requested to do something different, or to go later etc. Is this individualised so that each person has their routine and their plan reflected, not the same plan for everyone?		

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ITEM	SCORE			
4. Are staff supporting people to experience real choice and control?	0	1	2	3

Things to consider	Working	Not Working
Are people being offered/ do they have available more than one option to choose from as they go through the day? Do they have as much control as possible over how activities unfold – e.g. the order they do things, how long they do them for etc. Do they have choice in terms of food, drink, how their room is decorated at least in terms of soft furnishings, their own personal possessions etc.? Do they have choice about when family and friends can visit? When people request activities or even a particular food that is not available that day are staff dismissing their requests or supporting them to plan for the future?		

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ITEM	SCORE			
5. Are staff warm, respectful, empathic and positive towards the people they support and their families?	0	1	2	3

Things to consider	Working	Not Working
Are staff using positive, respectful language? Are staff warm and appropriate in their interactions? Do staff treat people with dignity? Do staff have positive expectations for the people they support – do they work on the basis that people can and will participate in all areas of their lives with enough support? Do staff use low arousal approaches in their interactions with people – calm, focused, paying attention to people's sensory sensitivities?		

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ITEM	SCORE			
6. Are people showing any behaviour that might be described as challenging and if so do staff respond with strategies consistent with Positive Behaviour Support?	0	1	2	3

Things to consider	Working	Not Working
Is restraint only used as a last resort? Do staff appear to be successfully using proactive strategies to reduce the frequency and severity of challenging behaviour? Are staff vigilant, watching people's reactions, paying attention to their non-verbal communication, quickly identifying if someone is becoming over-aroused, upset or frustrated and then acting to diffuse the situation or distract the person?		

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ITEM	SCORE			
7. Do you see evidence that each person's health and wellbeing needs are known?	0	1	2	3

Things to consider	Working	Not Working
Does each person have a health care plan? Is there evidence that people are supported to access mainstream and specialist health / mental health services? Are comprehensive records kept relating to health & wellbeing? e.g. medication records, doctors' visits, health care procedures etc. Are all individuals supported to monitor their own health and wellbeing? Do staff encourage a healthy lifestyle whilst respecting an individual's right to live the lifestyle they choose?		

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ITEM	SCORE			
8. Do staff identify skills teaching targets based on what is important to the individual, developing their independence, and skills relating to the function of any behaviours which challenge?	0	1	2	3

Things to consider	Working	Not Working
Do staff use systematic skills teaching procedures, e.g. prompting, modelling, shaping etc.? Are skills taught in a range of environments with a range of people? Does every individual have a skills teaching plan (which may be part of their behaviour support plan)?		

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ITEM	SCORE			
9. Is there evidence that a range of assessments are conducted for each person and the results used to develop support?	0	1	2	3

Things to consider	Working	Not Working
Is there evidence that assessments are repeated as necessary? Is ongoing data collected about a range of outcomes, e.g. quality of life, communication, skills, engagement in meaningful activity, challenging behaviour etc.? Are plans for support updated regularly and in light of data?		

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ITEM	SCORE			
10. Is there evidence that individuals are supported to be involved in all aspects of their support (including assessments, planning and reviews) in whatever way they can (e.g. through taking part in meetings or having their preferences assessed and respected?	1	2	3	4

Things to consider	Working	Not Working
Is there evidence that other stakeholders (including family carers, friends, support workers, specialists if necessary) are involved in all elements of an individual's support, including assessments, planning, and reviews? Are stakeholders (including the individual themselves) able to provide feedback to the service, and is this feedback used to improve support and celebrate good practice? Are stakeholders provided with training in aspects of the individual's support? Is there evidence that stakeholders are offered support for their emotional wellbeing? Is there evidence that stakeholders (including the individuals who use the service) can be involved in shaping the organisation, e.g. on recruitment panels, steering groups, providing feedback on policy etc.?		

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ITEM	SCORE			
11.Do you see senior staff and managers leading good practice?	1	2	3	4

Things to consider	Working	Not Working
Are senior staff visible with staff rather than being in the office? Do they show skills in supporting people in person-centred approaches? Do they take opportunities to give feedback to staff, to model appropriate behaviour if needed? Are they conducting regular, useful supervision with staff and supporting the team to keep the person they support at the centre of what they do through team meetings etc.?		

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ITEM
12. Other Observations, Questions & Notes

Observations, questions	Working	Not Working

United Response is a national charity supporting young people and adults with a wide range of disabilities and mental health needs to live full lives in the community.

The Tizard Centre is the leading UK academic group working in intellectual disabilities and community care and is widely known both nationally and internationally. Through teaching, research and consultancy, the centre aims to improve the quality of life of people with disabilities, through supporting the development of high quality, community-based services.

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