

The Social Indicator Programmes (SIP)

Monitoring
and developing
the social sector
services using
indicators





BACKGROUND

The Social Indicator Programmes were developed by the Centre for Quality Improvement on behalf of the five Danish regions. The ambition is to gain detailed knowledge about the relationship between the individual background of service users, the work provided by the social sector services and the outcome with respect to the individual user's conditions of life.

As in the rest of Europe, the Danish social sector is characterized by a lack of systematic approach towards documentation and quality development and the sector has no evidence-based documentation of or common criteria for deciding best practice. This is partly due to the special conditions which apply to this sector. The issues social work address are characterised by being dynamic and very diverse. Because of this, the development and use of indicators in this particular area must be carried out in such a way that optimises the possibilities for learning and systematic reflection among professionals.

Six Social Indicator Programmes have been developed so far, covering the target groups: juvenile delinquents in secure institutions, adolescents with psychiatric disabilities, adults with psychiatric disabilities, adults with acquired brain injury, adults with mental function impairment and adults with autism spectrum disorder. The programmes share a common methodological platform but their content differs considerably.

RESULTS

Initial results indicate that the Social Indicator Programmes are useful instruments in deciding best practice in the longer term. Social workers find that the programmes are useful communication tools in daily practice, because each programme clearly illustrates an overview of the individual user's problems, resources and development. This can be used in planning future work and will thereby contribute to tailoring the service to the individual user.





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WHAT ARE THE SOCIAL INDICATOR PROGRAMMES?

The Social Indicator Programmes (SIP) collect knowledge about what initiatives have an effect on whom and under what circumstances, thus providing a platform for an evidence-based best practice within the social sector services.

SIP bases the concept of documentation on the particular conditions of social work, by focusing not only on measurable goals but also on activities, context and results. These focus areas are clarified by a number of indicators, which are based on relevant research, evaluation literature and the involvement of social workers.

To collect data on the selected indicators, social workers and service users answer a number of questionnaires. The answers clarify the conditions relevant to each individual user when entering and exiting the social service setting. When dealing with long-term or permanent stays status descriptions may also be carried out on an annual or biennial basis.

Based upon the quantitative data a number of statistical analyses are done to prepare for professional interpretation and discussion at audit-meetings. The answers from the questionnaires are interpreted into a social work frame that provides opportunities for learning and quality development and at the same time, assuring the quality of the data collection process and analyses.

Thus, SIP provides valuable data for the social workers in their every day work in the social service setting as well as for the administrative and political level via the annual countywide reports.



FURTHER INFORMATION

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The Danish Quality Model for the Social Sector

The five Danish regions have decided to develop and implement a national and mandatory quality model for the Danish social sector services. The model is developed by Centre for Quality Improvement. The objective is to create a system for quality assurance and quality improvement, which is structured in accordance with the principles of accreditation. The Social Indicator Programmes are part of The Danish Quality Model for the Social Sector as well as surveys amongst users and relatives of the social services.