

HSQS Certification Guidebook

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1 Introduction

This Certification Guidebook is designed to inform your organisation of the requirements for certification to the Human Services Queensland Standards (HSQS) as required by the Queensland Government Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors, Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women, and Queensland Health.

The department/agency responsible for administering this scheme is referred to as the Queensland Government Scheme Administrator (QGSA).

2 National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Transition Requirements

Until 1 July 2019, providers registered with the NDIS to deliver services in Queensland are required to meet the HSQS including undertaking a HSQS audit where required.

From 1 July 2019, NDIS providers in Queensland are required to register with the NDIS and undertake quality and safeguards assessments in accordance with the requirements of the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.

BSI is no longer accepting any new applications for HSQS certification for NDIS providers under the NDIS transition arrangements.

3 Steps to Certification

The following section outlines the steps that apply for engaging BSI as your certification body for HSQS certification. BSI reserves the right to provide its clients and those that request quotations with marketing and technical information relating to standards, training and compliance services.

Certification to this standard is accredited to ISO 17065:2012. This is a JAS-ANZ accredited scheme which is offered nationally. BSI is currently accredited to this scheme.

3.1 Initial Inquiry

Requests for quote for certification to HSQS will be handled by the BSI sales team. A BSI sales team member will send you a quotation request form so you can provide us with some details about your business and your funded service delivery. This will assist us in preparing a proposal that tailors our audit services to your organisation's needs. We will need to know information about the service types you are funded to deliver, the number of people your organisation provides services to and the number of sites/outlets that deliver these services.

3.2 Audit planning

Once you have signed the BSI proposal, we will begin planning your certification assessment. The proposal together with this document forms the contract between your organisation and BSI. You will also receive a BSI Welcome Pack that outlines all essential information about BSI.

Your organisation's details will be entered into our database and a Client Services Officer will be appointed to look after your audit booking and requirements. The Client Services Officer will be your primary point of contact with BSI and is responsible for ensuring that our assessment services are delivered to your organisation in the most effective manner possible.

The Client Services Officer will confirm all the information about your organisation's service delivery to ensure the duration of the audit and the composition of the audit team are matched to your organisation's requirements. The duration of the assessment and composition of the audit team will be based on the information you provide us. Provision of incorrect information may result in allocation of insufficient time or incorrect technical skill for your service delivery. In such circumstances, the audit may not be able to be completed during the allocated time and additional time required at a later date and additional cost.

3.3 Preparing for your audit

Your organisation is required to complete the Client Details Form and return to your Client Services Officer prior to 8 weeks from the start of your audit. Failure to provide this information to your Client Services Officer in a timely manner may result postponement of your audit.

Your organisation is required to keep a record of all known complaints relating to meeting the requirements of the HSQS. These records must be made available to the audit team and BSI when requested. Your organisation is required to demonstrate that you have taken appropriate action to address these complaints through investigation and correct any deficiencies found. These actions must be documented.

Your organisation must ensure that consumers are offered information about the audit process and independent support to engage in the process prior to any consent being obtained. Participation by your clients in audits is at all times voluntary and be based on the principal of informed consent.

Your organisation is required to make all necessary arrangements to allow the evaluation and surveillance activities to take place.

Prior to your audit, the BSI auditor will contact you for a de-identified consumer list including all your consumers. Your organisation is required to provide this information no less than 28 days from the start of your audit. Involvement of consumers in the audit process is an important aspect to certification. Failure to provide your BSI auditor with a de-identified participant list in a timely manner may result in postponement of your audit.

3.4 Gap Analysis (optional)

A gap analysis approach often proves an invaluable tool in determining system implementation, particularly for new systems that are still in the early stages of development. This one-off assessment includes the identification of gaps against the requirement of the HSQS. At the conclusion of the gap analysis you will receive a report that highlights any gaps as well as options for next steps on your path to certification. The results of a gap analysis are not directly linked to any subsequent certification audits.

3.5 Initial Certification Audit

Newly funded human services organisations, or organisation who are now required to undertake assessment to the HSQS due to a change in service delivery, are required to complete the initial certification audit in a two-step process (stage 1 and stage 2). A stage 1 assessment is not required for subsequent recertification or surveillance audits and is not required for organisations transferring a current JAS-ANZ HSQS certification to BSI from another provider.

3.5.1 Stage 1

In order to gain certification to the HSQF scheme your organisation is required to have an initial audit followed by a certification audit. An initial audit determines your readiness for certification.

A stage 1 audit is conducted by a qualified BSI auditor to assess your readiness to undertake a certification audit. It is usually completed off-site as a "desk-top review" however, the BSI auditor can conduct this at your organisation's head office if necessary.

Your organisation will receive a written report that will identify any areas that will need to be addressed prior to the stage 2. The stage 2 audit will generally be conducted within 3 months of the stage 1 audit, however this interval will be discussed between you and your BSI auditor to ensure your organisation has sufficient time to rectify any areas of concern identified in the stage 1.

3.5.2 Certification Audit (Stage 2 Audit)

The certification audit (stage 2 audit) will be undertaken by a qualified auditor and are conducted on-site. The BSI auditor will be in communication with you prior to the assessment to plan and prepare for your certification assessment. Your BSI auditor will confirm your service delivery information such as the Queensland government funded service types, number of staff, number of outlets, and number of participants.

During the stage 2 assessment, your BSI auditor will:

- Confirm that your organisation is adhering to its policies, procedures & objectives and conforms with all the requirements of the HSQS;
- Verify that appropriate procedures, controls and guidelines are in place, and roles and responsibilities are defined;
- Review a range of documents and records to confirm the requirements of the HSQS are being met
- Engage with consumers during the audit to collect, examine and analyse feedback with respect to the HSQS and service delivery;
- Review consumers files and follow up on issues raised by consumers

Your BSI auditor will conduct an opening meeting at the commencement of the assessment and conclude with a closing meeting. Your consumers should be notified of the opening and closing meeting dates/times in order to participate in the audit process if they wish. During the closing meeting, your organisation will be advised of the findings of your assessment.

3.6 Surveillance Audits

At least one surveillance audit is conducted between each certification/re-certification audit, as close as possible to 18 months from the previous audit date.

The surveillance audits will cover the core HSQS Standards 1, 3 and 4. At least one other standard will be selected by your auditor according to the results of the previous audit, complaints or significant changes. The auditor will record the justification for the choice of standard in the report.

On your request, BSI may split the 18 monthly surveillance audit into two annual audits to align with other annual audits you may be certified to (e.g. ISO 9001). Audits that are split will cover half the required material at each audit to ensure that all the required standards are assessed before the next re-certification audit.

A Client Services Officer will get in contact with you prior to your audit to begin planning. The Client Services Officer will confirm if any changes have occurred to your service delivery since the last audit and get updated information on your funded service types, number of consumers and number of sites/outlets your organisation operates from.

3.7 Re-Assessment Audits

The re-assessment cycle for this program is three (3) yearly. Your reassessment audit must be conducted within three (3) years of the initial certification or last recertification or your certification will no longer be valid. Extensions on the re-certification dates are only granted following written approval from the department your organisation is funded by.

Your re-assessment audit will be booked several weeks prior to the expiry of your certificate to ensure you have sufficient time to close any outstanding major non-conformities before your certificate expires. A Client Services Officer will get in contact with you to plan your audit. The Client Services Officer will contact you to get updated information on your organisation including your funded service types by each department, the number of consumers accessing your services, the number of sites/outlets your organisation operates from and any changes that have occurred since your last audit. The Client Services Officer will calculate your audit duration based on this information.

3.8 "Out of Cycle" assessment

An out of cycle can be conducted by BSI at any time if requested by any of the departments from which your organisation is receiving funding. These audits may be short notice or unannounced and may cover a specified component or all of the applicable HSQS as directed by the relevant department. These will be invoiced to your organisation at the usual BSI day rate.

4 The Audit Team

All HSQS audits are conducted by a qualified HSQS auditor. All BSI's HSQS auditors have completed mandatory training with the funding departments and are trained in quality auditing principles. BSI is required to regularly assess our auditor's skills by observing them conducting an audit.

All auditors must comply with BSI's code of conduct.

BSI auditors are competent in conducting audits of organisations delivering services to Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander people as well as people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

5 Audit Planning and Consumer Participation

Your BSI auditor will provide you with an audit plan outlining what will be assessed during your audit based on the information you have provided on your service types, sites and consumer numbers for each service type.

Consumer feedback is an integral part of the HSQF assessment. Your BSI auditor will ask you for a de-identified list of all consumers who have accessed your service within the previous 12 months. The auditor will randomly select consumers to interview and review files from this list, ensuring the selection represents a broad range of consumers.

Each service type funded by a department and within each service stream is considered to be a separate population. The BSI audit team is required to sample all service streams and types funded by each department at every audit.

Consent is required before the BSI auditor can interview consumers or access their files. Your BSI auditor will provide you with a consent form template to be completed by the selected consumers. The signed consent forms will be sighted by the BSI auditor.

Note: Consumers have the right not to be involved in the audit process.

6 Reporting

At the conclusion of the audit, the audit team will prepare a written report on the audit findings.

Your organisation will receive an audit report even if the recommendation is not to certify, within 25 calendar days of completion of the stage 2 audit.

Non-conformances will be discussed with your team during the assessment and outlined at the closing meeting. Non-Conformances are categorised as Major, Minor and Observations.

If you are unclear of the meaning of anything in your audit report, please contact your BSI auditor. If you disagree with the findings in the audit report, please follow the process described in section 16: Complaints and Appeals in this document to lodge an appeal of the audit findings.

The audit report will include the following information:

- An executive summary of the overall findings (conclusions) on the effectiveness of your system in meeting the requirements of the standard
- Ratings of the non-conformances against each KPI and each standard
- Suggestions for continual improvement
- Positive finding areas
- Times allocated for the activity, number and type of interviews conducted with consumers

A copy of the completed report will be forwarded to the QGSA even if the decision is not to certify.

7 Non-Conformances

At the closing meeting your BSI auditor will discuss findings of the audit including any non-conformances. Written confirmation of the findings will be provided soon after the audit.

The HSQS standard indicators may be graded as:

C – Conformity

NC – minor non-conformity

MNC – major non-conformity

If any non-conformances are found during your audit, you will need to submit a corrective action plan to your auditor within 5 working days of the written notice of audit findings.

Non-conformances, major or minor, will need to be reassessed within the designated timeframe to ensure compliance with the scheme. Your auditor will discuss the requirements for follow up audits at the closing meeting. Additional audit time will be required to conduct this reassessment and will incur additional charge.

Major non-conformances may be closed out on-site or remotely. Your BSI auditor will advise whether the non-conformance closure will be assessed on-site or remotely. Matters taken into consideration in determining whether a remote or on-site audit will be conducted include, the nature and complexity of the major non-conformance, the location of your organisation, the cost of providing on-site closure and any other matters BSI considers applicable.

The audit report may also include observations. Observations are comments, which may include praise, or comments that may be relevant for the next audit. Actions do not necessarily have to be taken for observations however; it is recommended that these have been considered as part of your continuous improvement process.

7.1 Major Non-conformances

Major non-conformances are audit findings that reveal the organisation is unable to demonstrate quality and safety system process meet the HSQS indicators and/or the gaps present a high risk.

BSI is required to notify the QGSA as soon as possible following an audit that identifies any major non-conformances. This may result in further investigation or required action from the relevant department.

Major non-conformances must be closed or downgraded within 3 months of your organisation receiving written confirmation of the audit findings. All major non-conformances must be closed out or downgraded before certification is granted or expiry of certification. If you are already certified, failure to downgrade or close a major non-conformity within 3 months will result in your certificate being suspended.

Major non-conformances can be raised as a single major non-conformance against any indicator but a major non-conformance will also be raised if there are three or more non-conforming indicators in the same standard or three or more non-conforming standards.

Where a major cannot be closed completely however steps have been taken to reduce the risk, the major non-conformance may be downgraded to a minor. If this occurs, this minor non-conformance will need to be closed within 12 months of written notification of the initial major non-conformance.

If your organisation holds certification with BSI for HSQS and another certification standard, BSI shall follow-up on the other certification standard related findings under the relevant certification standard's accreditation requirements.

Where your organisation is funded by more than one department and:

- a major non-conformance is raised that relates to service delivery of only one department; and
- the major is unable to be closed or downgraded within the designated timeframe

As a last resort, BSI may exclude all services funded by that department from the scope of certification.

Note: This action is a last resort and is only available if the major nonconformity cannot be closed within 3 months, or prior to the certification expiry date, as applicable.

7.2 Minor non-conformances

Minor non-conformances are audit findings that reveal an isolated incident of non-compliance not resulting in a systematic failure and are low risk.

A minor non-conformance must be closed within 12 months of the initial written confirmation. If a minor non-conformance is not closed within this time, it will result in escalation of the minor to a major non-conformance. If this occurs and the major non-conformance is not closed in this time, your certificate will be suspended.

If your audit occurs 12 monthly, the non-conformance may be closed at the next scheduled audit.

7.3 Notifiable issues

In the event your BSI auditor identifies a notifiable issue, the auditor is required to stop the audit and report this issue to the QGSA. The QGSA will advise if the audit can continue. The relevant department will conduct its own investigation. Non-conformances resulting from notifiable issues cannot be closed/downgraded until the relevant department has concluded its investigation and notified BSI.

The JAS ANZ Human Services Scheme Part 1 defines a notifiable issue as "evidence or allegations of a serious health, safety or abuse risk, harm or risk of harm, financial impropriety and/or professional misconduct". In most cases, identification of a notifiable issue will justify raising a major non-conformance.

8 Certification Decision

After non-conformances have been closed out, the findings and recommendations made in the audit report are subject to BSI's technical review process prior to certification being granted. The Technical Reviewer is independent of the audit process.

9 Certificates

Your certificate will be issued electronically.

When copies or elements of the certificate are used in tenders or offered to potential or existing customers, the certificate should be accompanied by the scope of certification document (if issued separately) as it is important for them to understand the scope of activities for which certification has been granted (see 'scope' below).

Incorrect use of the certificate can result in a customer being misled as to the extent of your organisation's certification.

All original certificates remain the property of BSI Group ANZ Pty Ltd and must be returned on request.

The reassessment cycle for this program is three (3) yearly.

9.1 Scope of Certification

The scope of certification fully details the scope of your organisation's certification in terms of:

- Names and addresses of all locations covered by the certification;
- Achievement of certification to the relevant standard(s);
- Service Types for each location covered by the certification (sorted by the department that funds the service type and then the service stream)

Your required scope of certification is based on the services your organisation delivers.

9.2 Refusal of Certification

In the event that your organisation is unable to comply with the requirements of the relevant standard, BSI may refuse to grant certification. The decision to refuse certification, and the grounds for that decision, will be communicated to your organisation in writing.

9.3 Suspension or Refusal of Certification

If your organization has no consumers using its services that are in scope for HSQF, then you can request voluntary suspension.

Your organization can also voluntarily suspend its certification while not in receipt of Department funding.

Voluntary suspension is only permissible for up to six months. Within this time, your organisation is required to demonstrate full conformity with the HSQF scheme requirements. This means your organisation will need to have an audit prior to your six-month suspension end date.

If the organization is not able to demonstrate full compliance with the HSQF scheme requirements then certification will be withdrawn.

If your organisation's certification is suspended or refused, you are required to meet the following requirements for the period that you are suspended:

- Withdraw and cease to use any advertising or promotional material that promotes or advertises the fact that your organisation is certified;
- Ensure that all copies of certificates and scopes of certification are removed from areas of public display; and
- Cease to use the certification mark on stationery and other documents including media and packaging that are circulated to existing and potential clients, or in the public domain.

Your organisation is required to advise BSI in writing of the action taken with respect to the requirements listed above. BSI will advise your organisation in writing of the certification processes that will need to be completed to restore certification. During the period of suspension, your organisation shall continue to pay all fees levied by BSI.

9.4 Accreditation Status

Certification to this standard is accredited to ISO 17065:2012

BSI holds accreditation for this local standard with JAS-ANZ.

10 Use of Logos

You are entitled to use the appropriate BSI 'kitemark' accreditation mark whilst you maintain certification to this program with BSI. For a copy of the BSI "kitemark" logo, visit our website at <http://www.bsigroup.com/en-AU/Our-services/BSI-Assurance-Mark-Logos/>

Use of the logo is subject to Condition and Rules of its application which is stated in the [BSI Assurance Mark Guidelines](#)

Organisations that have been granted certification to the HSQS are also entitled to use the JAS-ANZ Accreditation Symbol. The rules for the use of this mark are governed by JAS-ANZ. The JAS-ANZ Accreditation Symbol is required to be used in conjunction with BSI Accreditation marks.

Specifications and use of the JAS-ANZ Accreditation Symbol are described in the [JAS-ANZ Mark Use Guidelines document](#).

11 Standard Owner Information

The Standard owners of this scheme are Queensland Government Departments: Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors, Department of Child safety and Queensland Health. All reports and non-conformities are reported to QGSA as required by the scheme requirements.

11.1 Notification to the Standard Owner

Where BSI has concerns about your organisation's capacity to meet the HSQS on an on-going basis, BSI may seek agreement from the relevant department to increase or vary the audit frequency.

BSI is required to advise the QGSA immediately if there is evidence that your organisation has put a person accessing its services at risk of significant harm.

BSI may be requested to provide further details relating to non-conformances raised at HSQS audits.

12 Confidentiality

BSI will treat all information in accordance with the *Child Protection Act 1999*, the *Disability Services Act 2006*, the *Information Privacy Act 2009* and the *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012*.

BSI is required to obtain consent from the department before disclosing information about a child in care.

BSI may provide information about the care provided to children in care under the Child Protection Act 1999 to the department without seeking consent.

BSI can request the organisation to de-identify records including the files of people using the services to allow sampling if the need arises. For example: to investigate complaints or when there is a lack of consent for file access.

BSI will not list the address of identified 'safe houses' on your HSQF certificate.

13 Additional Obligations

Following certification, there are a number of managerial responsibilities which your organisation will need to observe to maintain your certification. These include:

- Continue compliance with the relevant standard(s) and scheme requirements at and the conditions of certification at all times;
- Comply with the BSI Standard Commercial Terms and Conditions and obligations as specified in this document as well as other guidance documentation that may be specifically provided from time-to-time;

- Implement appropriate changes as communicated by BSI in a time appropriate manner;
- Conduct regular internal reviews of your system, with appropriate documentation of such reviews and of any subsequent corrective actions;
- Advise BSI of any changes without delay to circumstances that may affect certification including significant changes in the structure (key responsibilities and management system), ownership and operations of your organisation to enable the impact of such changes on the certified ownership system to be evaluated;

Other examples of such changes include but are not limited to:

- Authorised Representative
- Business name (Legal entity) and Trading Name (where applicable), ABN
- Ownership
- Key management responsibilities
- Contact details
- Location, site addresses
- Business activity/ies, scope of certification
- Number of employees, covering all shifts and sites
- Major management system changes and capability information
- Billing Details
- Notify BSI of any litigation or serious events or matters that relate to the scope of your certification
- Notify BSI immediately if your organisation's funding ceases or the responsible body revokes funding for any reason

13.1 Changes to your Organisation

Your organisation is required to advise BSI without delay of any changes listed above. Some changes to these details may impact on your certification.

BSI will re-confirm these details when booking your next assessment. These details are used to determine the sites, audit duration and number of assessors required for the audit activity.

14 Observers

From time to time BSI requires an Observer to be in attendance at an audit. This may be related to training of new staff and witness assessment of existing staff. It is a requirement of BSI's accreditation that your organisation allows these activities to occur.

Failure to allow this activity to occur may result in cancellation of your certification.

BSI will, at all times, ensure that the use of observers is kept to a minimum and your organisation will be advised prior to the assessment activity.

The Observer does not take an active part in an assessment.

15 Misleading Statements

Your organisation is not permitted to use its certification in a manner that could bring BSI into disrepute. This includes making misleading or unauthorized statements. If you are unsure if a statement could be misleading you are advised to contact BSI prior to making the statement. Statements include but are not limited to the use of the logo on non-certified product, advertising (including your website) and internal communication.

If your organisation is required to provide copies of your certification documents these must be reproduced in its entirety. Failure to do so may be misleading to the recipient as to the scope of certification.

16 Complaints and Appeals

BSI takes complaints relating to our service delivery seriously and all complaints will be investigated and the originator of a complaint will be advised of the outcomes, as appropriate.

BSI will also investigate legitimate documented complaints, relevant to operation of the system, from customers of your organisation. Organisations shall, at all reasonable times, provide representatives of BSI with access to its premises and records for the purposes of investigating such complaints.

If your organisation's application for certification has been refused, or your organisation's certificate has been suspended, cancelled, or reduced in scope, you may appeal against the decision to a Review Committee.

BSI shall include a CTE in each appeal hearing.

Should your organisation or consumers wish to raise a complaint with regard to your BSI experience or in the event your organisation wishes to appeal the audit findings or audit outcome please contact:

General Manager - Technical and Operations

Email: technical.anz@bsigroup.com

Phone: 1300 730 134

Whilst we prefer complaints and appeals to be in writing, BSI will accept complaints and appeals from a variety of platforms.