

Service Performance, Quality & Standards Monthly Update

November 2023



**Money &
Pensions
Service**

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Monthly Overview

November 2023 Update Summary

As a brief overview, here is what you will find in our November SPQS update:

Advice Services

- A reminder on the [submissions SLA](#) for December 2023 and January 2024 to accommodate the holiday period.
- A reminder that the [quality KPI will increase](#) to 83% from 1st February 2024.
- A reminder to complete the [annual self-attestation](#) for the Control Self-Assessment.
- The latest updates for the [Advice Assessor Toolkit](#) which is being developed to support debt advice assessments. This includes updates on:
 - The toolkit feedback spreadsheets,
 - The outcome of toolkit testing and appeals, and
 - An amendment made to the wording of 1h in the toolkit.
- An update on [appeals](#) being open to all delivery partners regardless of KPI achieved for November 2023 to continue the toolkit testing.
- An update on the [root cause analysis work](#) being completed by the SPQS team.

Guidance Services

- There are no guidance updates for this month. Please continue to check future SPQS updates for further information.

Previous Updates

If you have missed any of our previous updates, you can find them here on our quality website:

[MaPS SPQS Quality Website - Latest Quality Updates](#)

Queries & Feedback

Please continue to send queries and feedback to the MaPS Quality email address: mapsquality@maps.org.uk or speak to your MaPS Quality Manager.

Thank you for your continued support.

The Service Performance, Quality and Standards Team

Debt Advice Updates

Submissions SLA December 2023 & January 2024

As a reminder, the submissions SLA for December and January has been adjusted due to the Christmas period.

The submissions week for **December submissions** commences on [Monday 27th December 2023](#) and ends on [Wednesday 13th December 2023](#). This is to ensure that IQAS can complete their assessments prior to the Christmas break to enable reporting by COB on 2nd January 2024, in line with the reporting SLA.

January submissions are staggered commencing [Wednesday 4th January 2024](#) and ending on [Wednesday 22nd January 2024](#) to accommodate the Bank Holiday Monday on 1st January. This means that submissions are spread over 4 weeks in January, as opposed to the usual 3 weeks.

Quality KPI from February 2024

Please be reminded that the Quality KPI for MaPS Contracts and Grants increases from 80% to **83%** from **1st February 2024**. Your designated MaPS Quality Managers can answer any queries in relation to this scheduled change.

CSA Self-Attestations

As part of the requirement to be compliant with the MaPS Standards, there is a necessity to complete an organisational summary and self-attestation for your control self-assessment (CSA). As well as keeping your CSA and controls up to date, the self-attestation is also due to be updated annually.

Emails have now been sent to delivery partners where self-attestations are now due, with a deadline of [Friday 15 December 2023](#).

Advice Assessor Toolkit Updates

Toolkit Feedback Spreadsheets

You will be aware from our previous communications that we have reinstated the feedback process enabling delivery partners to feed their queries via the SharePoint spreadsheets.

MaPS has scheduled time prior to the end of November to review the feedback provided throughout the past month. On completion of the review, responses will be recorded on the spreadsheet and shared with all delivery partners for consistency. We will continue this practice for the foreseeable future.

Outcome of Toolkit Testing & Appeals

Since the introduction of the Advice Assessor Toolkit in September 2023, we have had 2 rounds of appeals. All feedback from September appeals has been shared with respective delivery partners, and the outcome of October appeals is being shared as it is concluded.

Testing of the toolkit commenced concurrently with delivery partners and IQAS so all learning around clarified assessment approaches was happening at the same time. This is why the appeals process is important as it ensures that the clarification from appeals informs learning across all services including IQAS.

MaPS is pleased with the outcomes so far. Where changes to the toolkit have been necessary as a result of feedback and appeals, this has been done and released in [Version 2](#), with an interim version in October. The next review is planned in time for the start of the new calendar year and will continue beyond as necessary.

Where appeals have been upheld, communication lines with IQAS ensure that assessors receive feedback to inform their future assessment decisions. Where the original assessment decision is upheld, delivery partners are receiving detailed feedback to clarify why a standard is still deemed to be unmet.

In some cases, MaPS is providing additional feedback on the expectations to meet a standard, particularly where there seems to be a common interpretation issue.

Appeals in September totalled **72 standards** across all cases, in October this reduced to **29 standards** across all cases. This is an extremely positive direction of travel and MaPS is currently considering extending the opportunity for delivery partners to appeal in the next assessment round.

The learning from appeals is proving invaluable and we recognise that some of the scenarios and situations underpinning appeals are continuing into the subsequent assessment round. We are handling these situations as they arise and recognise that changes in the way both delivery partners and IQAS are assessing, will take time to embed.

We are acutely aware that repeated issues will have a one-month lag between the month of appeal and the month in which we can expect to see change. We anticipate that the November assessment round will demonstrate significant positive change for all parties.

Advice Assessor Toolkit Correction

An error has been identified on the Advice Assessor Toolkit in relation to [Standard 1h](#). The second bullet point currently reads:

- If the practitioner supports the **advisor** with using digital tools (regardless of the consumer's capability), this would be assessed as met.

This should read:

- If the practitioner supports the **consumer** with using digital tools (regardless of the consumer's capability), this would be assessed as met.

Although it is clear that this is an error, MaPS would like this information to be shared with all assessors for clarity, until the next update of the Toolkit when the correction will be made.

Appeals November 2023

MaPS has taken the decision to open up appeals once again in November 2023 so please feel free to commence gathering the appeals information in preparation of the Appeals SLA. Please check your calibration report email for the November appeals deadline.

Root Cause Analysis Update

The SPQS team continues to review the Customer-Facing Standards assessments, with particular focus on the 'Not Met' data, to establish root cause.

The SPQS team are focusing their efforts on the three standards with the highest Not Met rates, establishing the most common themes based on the updated Advice Assessor Toolkit and using this data to identify the root causes.

There is a particular focus on the following standards:

- **2a-iii** (exploration),
- **2a-vii** (debt options), and
- **2b-iii** (maintaining a detailed case record).

This is because these are the standards with the highest level of non-compliance. Focusing on these standards will enable us to have the most positive impact on outcomes for customers, while also

helping improve compliance with the standards and KPIs for the delivery partners.

With the recent changes to the Advice Assessor Toolkit, the SQPS team have made the decision to adjust our timelines to ensure we take into consideration the changes the updates will have on the outcomes.

With this in mind, the SQPS team will be reviewing the submissions from November and December before releasing the Root Cause Analysis to our delivery partners. The analysis so far has given the SQPS team valuable insight into some of the causes of the Not Met standards and the team is looking forward to sharing this with the delivery partners in due course.

Once the current themes for the Not Met standards have been fully identified, we will introduce an updated Microsoft form which will allow for the input of root cause by delivery partners during the submission of assessments.

The updated Microsoft form will add the root cause to the three standards mentioned (**2a-iii**, **2a-vii** and **2b-iii**), utilising the current selections within the Microsoft form which asks for reasoning for any N/A or Not Met standards. The updated form will require minimal additional input time and will provide clear benefits to identifying areas of improvement.

We will continue to provide delivery partners with updates on this in due course.

Many thanks,

The Service Performance, Quality and Standards Team

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