



Sonas® Programme Quality Standards

Engaging Dementia (formerly Sonas apc) oversees the delivery and quality assurance of the Sonas Programme.

One of the purposes of Sonas® Programme Quality Standards (SPQS) is to establish and maintain standards of conduct amongst practitioners and management of Nursing Homes in which the Sonas® Programme is being delivered. Sonas Programme Quality Standards will help ensure consistently high quality in the delivery of the Sonas Programme. These standards, together with any guidelines and policies published by Engaging Dementia from time to time, are intended to provide a common standard of conduct and guidelines for Sonas Programme Licensed Practitioners (SPLP) and management to follow.

Standard One: Delivery of the Sonas® Programme

- 1.1 The Leader of the Sonas programme shall be a Sonas Programme Licensed Practitioner (SPLP).
- 1.2 The SPLP shall have at least one helper during the Sonas Group Session.
- 1.3 The SPLP identifies and decides which residents are suitable for inclusion in the Sonas programme. This is done as per Sonas Programme training and in consultation with staff and/or family members.
- 1.4 The SPLP establishes, from the residents identified, one or more Sonas groups, each of which shall have a maximum of eight participants.
- 1.5 The SPLP ensures that consent for involvement in Sonas sessions is sought from any potential participant.
- 1.6 The Safety and Other Considerations Assessment must be completed for all Sonas Session participants and updated on a three to four monthly basis, as per HIQA Standards (HIQA 2016).

- 1.7 The SPLP and helper(s) should be allocated a minimum of 1½ hours, to include the delivery and documentation of the Sonas Group Session. The allocated time should be 1 hour for the Sonas Individual Multi-sensory Session (SIMS) and Relaxing Individual Sessions.
- 1.8 Sonas Group Sessions should be held regularly i.e. one or more times per week.
- 1.9 When carrying out SIMS or the Relaxing Individual Session, the SPLP should be aware of and adhere to all HIQA Standards (2016), in particular Theme 3.
- 1.10 The SPLP ensures that the guidelines on delivery of the Sonas Programme, as taught at the Sonas Course, are adhered to.
- 1.11 Sonas Programme materials (Sonas CDs, USB stick etc.) are only to be used by SPLPs.
- 1.12 The SPLPs and helpers should adhere to the centre's own policies.
- 1.13 The SPLP ensures that Sonas Group Sessions are scheduled into the centre's Activities Time-table and noted in participants' care plans.
- 1.14 The SPLP ensures that the Sonas sessions and progress of participants are documented, as per Sonas training and current Sonas Programme guidelines.
- 1.15 The HIQA Standards (2016) themes that are particularly relevant when implementing the Sonas Programme, and must be borne in mind by the SPLP and helper, are: Theme 1 (Person-centred Care and Support), Theme 2 (Effective Services), Theme 3 (Safe Services), and Theme 4 (Health and Wellbeing).

Standard Two: Documentation

- 2.1 The SPLP should adhere to the documentation and evaluation protocols of Engaging Dementia and the centre. HIQA Standards (2016) are also particularly relevant here.
- 2.2 The Safety and Other Considerations Assessment should be completed for all Sonas session participants and updated on a three monthly basis.
- 2.3 The SPLP and helper(s) should, at a minimum, complete a Sonas Group Record Sheet (where applicable) for each Sonas Group Session and also the Threadgold Communication Tool (TCT) when required. The SPLP should complete the TCT for a person following SIMS, and the Relaxing Individual Session evaluation form following that session.
- 2.4 The SPLP ensures that all documentation relating to the Sonas session participant is kept in his/her care plan/personal file, in line with the HIQA Standards (2016), Theme 2, Standard 2.1.

- 2.5 The SPLP ensures that information gained from the Sonas session, into effective methods of communication with each participant, is conveyed to staff and integrated into the individual's care plan. This is done with reference to the HIQA Standards; Theme 2, in particular Standard 2.3, Theme 4, in particular Standard 4.1. (2016).
- 2.6 The line manager should ensure that an individual care plan includes consideration of the SPLP(s)' documented recommendations from the Sonas sessions.

Standard 3: SPLP Training and Sonas Licence renewal

- 3:1 The candidate SPLP must work with or care for older people who have dementia or condition involving a significant cognitive/communication impairment.
- 3.2 The candidate SPLP must attend the three day Sonas Course.
- 3.3 The candidate SPLP must complete the required work-based learning, as assigned by the Sonas Tutor(s) during the Sonas Course.
- 3.4 On successful completion of the Sonas Course, the candidate SPLP is issued with a Sonas Licence, which is valid for two years.
- 3.5 Sonas Programme Licence renewal is by means of an e-module or attendance at an upskilling day. Engaging Dementia will keep the SPLP informed of the renewal method applicable to them in advance of renewal.
- 3.6 The SPLP shall ensure that the Sonas programme is delivered professionally and its integrity maintained.

Additional Sonas Programme Standards relating to Independent SPLPs

- 3.7 The Independent SPLP shall inform the PIC that a condition of delivery of the Sonas programme is that the PIC gives a written commitment to ensuring that the core requirements for programme delivery are met and confirms that s/he has read this document.
- 3.8 The Independent SPLP, in conjunction with the PIC, shall ensure that a structured channel of communication is established to ensure that information from Sonas sessions is incorporated into the residents' care plans (see Standard 2).

Standard Four: Management

- 4.1 The PIC is responsible for ensuring that the optimal conditions for the delivery of the Sonas programme are consistently met. The HIQA Standards (HIQA 2016): Theme 1, Theme 2, Theme 4, Theme 7, in particular Standards 7.2, 7.3 and 7.4 are of particular importance.
- 4.2 The PIC must commit to the standards and guidelines, as set out in this document by Engaging Dementia. This commitment will be given when the Sonas Programme Commitment Form is signed by the PIC.
- 4.3 The PIC should ensure that an appropriate designated space is available for the Sonas Group Session to take place.
- 4.4 The PIC ensures that adequate time and resources are allocated to facilitate the person centred philosophy of the Sonas programme.
- 4.5 The SPLP and helper(s) should be allocated a minimum of 1½ hours, to include the delivery and documentation of the Sonas Group Session. The allocated time should be 1 hour for the Individual and SIMS Sessions.
- 4.6 The line manager ensures that all staff are made aware that the Sonas Group Session(s) are taking place and actively support the resident(s).
- 4.7 The Person In Charge (PIC) ensures that all staff support the SPLP and helper(s) (where applicable) in the delivery of the Sonas session(s). The staff in the centre, in consultation with the SPLP, should assist residents to and from the Sonas Group Sessions
- 4.8 The PIC should participate as a helper in at least one Sonas Group Session every year.
- 4.9 The PIC should co-present a Sonas information session with the SPLP and ensure that time is allocated to enable all staff to attend.
- 4.10 The PIC should provide funding for the purchase of musical instruments and resources (smell/taste items) for the Sonas sessions.

Standard Five: Staff Development in the Care Centre

- 5.1 The SPLP and the PIC must deliver a comprehensive Sonas Information Session, as per guidelines.
- 5.2 The PIC ensures that the Sonas Information Session is attended by every member of staff in

the care centre.

- 5.3 The PIC and SPLP will identify two or more interested helpers to assist with Sonas Group Sessions.
- 5.4 SPLP should ensure that identified helpers are fully informed of their role prior to their first Sonas Group Session.

Standard 6: Sonas Programme Certified Centre (SPCC)

- 6.1 Every care centre that is implementing the Sonas Programme to the Sonas Programme Quality Standards may apply for certification as a Sonas Programme Certified Centre (SPCC).
- 6.2 The centre must fully comply with SPQS and will be subject to an onsite assessment as part of the certification process
- 6.3 Every SPCC must have the following minimum number of SPLPs on its staff, as determined by the size of the centre:
 - Two SPLPs (centres with less than 40 beds)
 - Three SPLPs (centres with 40-79 beds)
 - Four SPLPs (centres with 80 beds or more)
- 6.4 The assessment will involve a formal evaluation of the implementation of the Sonas Programme by a Sonas Programme Assessor from Engaging Dementia. Assessment will cover all aspects of the planning, delivery and documentation of the Sonas Programme.
- 6.5 The centre will receive a report on the outcome of this evaluation within four weeks of the assessment, with findings and recommendations. If the centre meets the required standard, it is then approved as an SPCC. If it doesn't meet the standard, it will be given guidance on how to improve its delivery of the programme and may re-apply for assessment if it wishes.
- 6.6 On approval as an SPCC, a centre will receive an SPCC certificate, which it can display publicly if it wishes. The SPCC may also display the Engaging Dementia Sonas Programme logo, with SQS logo, on its website. Once an SPCC certificate expires, it must remove the logo from its website.
- 6.7 The duration of the certificate is two years.
- 6.8 If the SPCC wishes to ensure that there is no lapse in Sonas Registration, it must apply for renewal of certification no less than three months prior to the expiration of its Sonas Programme Certification.
- 6.9 Upon receipt of a renewal request, Engaging Dementia will schedule a visit by an Engaging Dementia Assessor to re-evaluate the centre.

