Meeting of Users' Expectations, Ensuring Quality of Social Services

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Abstract

In recent decades the quality of social services primarily means the very clients' evaluations of and satisfaction with services (Zalimiene, 2006). Therefore, in order to ensure quality of social services, it is important to meet users' expectations. Today no researches on meeting the expectations of users of social services are carried out because all scientific researches in the area of management of quality of social services so far have been carried out within the limits of one service institution, municipality or focusing more on separate users' groups. This article aims to highlight how users' expectations are met when ensuring quality of social services in Lithuania. To achieve this aim, methods of content analysis and expert (interview-based) are employed.

Keywords: social services, quality of services, users' expectations, social policy.

Introduction

Research problem, novelty and relevance. In modern economy services turned into a dominating type of activity both in terms of quantity and their impact on people's daily life. As a result, the area of services is one of the most promising and rapidly developing areas of economy. This is declared in "A New Strategy for Social Cohesion" approved by the Council of Europe (2004). It suggests implementing social rights following one of the principles that is directed towards quality services that are available to everyone.

Many countries try to approach social services to people when responsibility is transferred to regional and local authorities. Increasingly more often the governments of various countries acknowledge that the best way of providing social services is partnership with civil society; i.e. its involvement, ensuring quality.

As life quality and social welfare are increasingly more often discussed, it is necessary to emphasize that quality of social services directly influences life quality of separate and most vulnerable groups of society and at the same time of the whole society of Lithuania (A New Strategy for Social Cohesion, 2004).

According to Zalimiene (2003), encouraging and developing the idea of mixed market of social services in the recent decade, opportunities are searched to create such market of social services which would enable the client to choose and receive best quality services for the lowest costs both for him/her and the state.

Previously the user had to accept such quality of services which would be provided according to established standards. In the recent decades the quality social service in the first place means the very clients' evaluation and satisfaction with services (Zalimiene, 2006). Therefore, in order to ensure quality of social services, it is important to meet users' expectations.

There are quite many criteria for ensuring quality of social services, but one of them is meeting users' needs (Mikalajauskiene, Tijunaitiene, Vekteryte, 2001). According to the authors, the user is given a particular status because it is more difficult to evaluate quality of services compared to quality of goods. According to Lydeka, Stanaityte (2002), Vitkiene (2004), Bagdoniene, Hopeniene (2005) the user's involvement in the service provision process is one of the key peculiarities that ensures quality.

Currently there are no researches that would analyze how the expectations of users of social services are met because so far all scientific researches in the area of management of quality of social services have been carried out within the limits of one service institution, municipality or focusing more on separate users' groups. Svedaite-Sakalauske (2007), Zalimiene (2003, 2006), Ruzevicius (2007) elaborated on management of quality of social services; Kazlauskiene, Ostrauskiene (2010) highlighted evaluation of quality of social services in Lithuania, clarifying quality conceptions and evaluation criteria. Bagdoniene, Hopeniene (2005) investigated the peculiarities of service providers and users, which influence quality of service; Marcinkeviciute, Petrauskiene (2007) analyzed development of social services in rural townships. The role of non-governmental organisations in the provision of social services was generalized by Kliuceviciute (2006); Cepinskis, Kanisaus-

kaite (2010) analyzed development of social services in Lithuania with regard to the peculiarities of residents' aging in municipalities.

There are no researches that would generalize the situation countrywide and serve as a basis for systematic ensuring of quality of social services. This research is one of the first works aiming to provide a general review of the factor that ensures quality of social services – meeting of users' expectations. It was planned that this research would answer the following problem questions: How are the researches on users' expectations in the context of quality of social services carried out? How and in what ways are users involved in planning, supervision of social services? How is availability of information for users ensured, meeting their expectations?

Research aim: to highlight meeting of users' expectations, ensuring quality of social services.

Research methods:
- Content analysis.
- Expert method (based on interviews).

Research methodology is based on the following essential conceptions and approaches:
- The *approach* is followed that service providers and users may understand quality of service differently. The client often comes with pre-established expectations regarding a certain service and further usage of services will strongly depend on whether the client's expectations will be met. Therefore, the provider has to seek correspondence of services to the client's expectations or to inform him/her so that the client forms his/her expectations in parallel with received services (Lovelock, 2001; Gronroos, 2000).
- The research is based on the *conception* of the service that encompasses orientation towards both the person, his/her individual needs and general features of quality of service, which in market economy conditions means "the best product with the lowest costs" (Daft, 1997). Therefore, suitability of the service is defined through its aims, content and forms of providing this content, which in terms of social services mean availability, reliability of information, and its suitability (application). Besides, the service is perceived as exceptional as it is orientated not to material but to ideal product of culture, creation of which is a long-term process and requires efforts from both the service provider and the service user because the user is not a passive receiver of these services. The user is a creator who together with the provider participates in the processes of quality of service. Therefore, the network of relations between the user and the provider has to be permanently developed and maintained at mezzo (the level of ideas), macro (the level of institutions) and micro (the level of the interaction of groups and personalities) levels.
- The research is grounded on the phenomenological conception that is based on the conception of phenomenology of Mickunas, Stewart (1994), according to which individuals' experience is described through perception of the phenomenon. Phenomenological research employs the interview method (Kvale, 1996), which discloses people's experiences and perception best. As mentioned above, this research employed the interview method, which enables to approach construction of people's perception, of meanings of the phenomenon and of reality.

Research Sample and Process

Expert method (based on interviews). The sample of the research consists of 7 experts. Experts' selection was carried out so that all institutions that according to the law are responsible for ensuring quality of social services are represented. In addition, the factor that the expert should know the situation in the investigated area best was also important. Experts' sample consists of the following represented institutions:
- Ministry of Social Security and Labour – 1 expert,
- Department of Supervision of Social Services – 1 expert,
- Municipality – 4 experts,
- Methodical Centre – 1 expert.

Two municipalities were chosen for the research. One of them represents one of three major cities with the developed system of infrastructure for social services and the other is the municipality of a small district, which has only one institution providing social services, namely general, social supervision and social care services, founded by the municipality. At each municipality 2 experts were interviewed. These were the representative of administration of the municipality, in the area of social support represented by social support department, and the representative of main social service providers – social support centres, which provide general and social supervision services.

The representative of the Methodical Centre was involved in the research because staff qualification and spread of good practice is one of the factors ensuring quality of services.

Counties were not investigated in the research because according to the programme of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania it is planned to liquidate counties this year (2010), delegating part of functions to other institutions.

Method of content analysis. The sample of the research is social services plans of all municipalities of Lithuania (60 in total). The research used social services plans that are obligatory for municipalities and must be made every year. One of the aims of making these plans is to improve quality of social services. The latest social services plans were used for the analysis.

To reveal availability of user information on the Internet, websites of municipalities were analyzed (websites of 60 municipalities in total).

Surveys on User Expectations as a Means of Ensuring Quality of Social Services

Survey, discussion, receiving and provision of information enable to form adequate expectations of users and encourage their involvement in service provision; both of these conditions improve quality of services.

The performed content analysis allows to state that the survey of users' needs and expectations is foreseen in legal acts: methods for preparation of social services plan recommend applying methods of local residents' interviewing, questionnaire, data analysis, projection, SWOT and other methods, use of data of residents' questionnaires, information provided by social services providers and other institutions.

Having analyzed experts' interviews, it can be stated that the major city municipality employs surveys in order to find out users' needs and expectations (*"In 2009, the Social Support Department plans to carry out the interview of service receivers although the Social Services Centre of the municipality has been doing this for many years"*). According to the experts, interviews are intended for separate users' groups (*"separate questionnaires compiled by the department according to groups of social services are used: one questionnaire for receivers of short-term social care; others for receivers of other services"*). The above-mentioned interviews are planned to be carried out systematically (*"We are planning to carry out such interviews systematically: to interview service receivers once a year. We compile certain questionnaires for separate groups of clients: the homeless, the visitors of day care centres, the visitors of day care centres for people with intellectual disabilities. During surveys interviews both for staff and clients are planned"*).

The experts mention that interviews are planned when organisational issues are surveyed and when personnel (*"in this survey we shall analyze qu-*

ality in two aspects: in the aspect of organisation of services, communicating with personnel and mangers, and we hope that we shall spot where we as the Social Support Department of the municipality could make certain organisational decisions") and service receivers (*"and in the second aspect: interviews of services receivers. The Social Support Department, as I mentioned, would not do this earlier. It was the practice of the Social Support Centre to interview its clients or the groups they would choose or buying a service"*) are interviewed. It can be stated that so far users' needs in the municipalities of major cities have been surveyed at the level of separate institutions (in this case the Social Support Centre) but not at the level of the whole municipality. It is planned that since 2009 users' needs will be surveyed at the level of the municipality as well.

At the municipality of a small district survey possibilities are not clearly expressed either in the aspect of the subject of the interview or systematicity (*"We measure quality during interviews; i.e. when we are preparing a social services plan. However, here we focus more on finding out residents' needs. And as to quality, we have carried out neither the survey nor the interview. All we can evaluate is via residents' feedback"*). The experts could not evaluate whether surveys were carried out at the level of the municipality or of a separate institution.

After completion of the analysis of social plans of municipalities, it can be stated that 92 percent of municipalities did not carry out residents' surveys when evaluating quality of social services.

The analysis of these social services plans of municipalities, which provide information about surveys carried out by municipalities (8% of the total number of municipalities), of interviews and other means disclosed that surveys carried out by municipalities differed. There were municipalities which limited themselves to the analysis of certain documents *"...with the analysis of the documents of residents' social groups of the municipality, which receive social support"*. Experts mention that *"persons do not use all services provided"* and conclude that *"provided information is still insufficient"*. Being asked, how the providers know that the corresponding information reaches the users, they name various means of informing (*"Information about social services is provided by the administration of the district municipality at the Social Support Department and elderships. Persons and their families learn about social services from social workers, read in press or hear on TV"*) and generalize obtained proposals (*"we have received wishes to expand provision of day social care services to children with disabilities, disabled persons and the elderly both at home and at the institution"*).

In other municipalities surveys were directed to a certain group of clients: social risk families, lonely disabled persons (*"Several social surveys were carried out. One of them is the survey of social risk families. During another survey carried out in 2008, 154 lonely disabled people were visited and orally interviewed...."*) or senior age residents *("... During the interview carried out by the staff of the Department of Social Support and Child's Rights 100 senior age residents of the municipality were interviewed...).* Experts were positive about such interviews because quite a lot of residents' proposals were received. All the above mentioned interviews disclosed that users were not satisfied with the current situation: *"it was found that current quality and quantity of social services provision did not satisfy them. All respondents emphasized that it was necessary to expand the spectrum of provided services"*.

Meeting of Users' Expectations, Involving into Planning and Supervision of Social Services

According to the recommendations of legal acts and methods of planning of social services, users' needs have to be found out; the latter proposes *to involve community as users of social services into planning, discussions and supervision of social services.* It also says that the municipality invokes community members, representatives of an organisation for preparation of the draft of the social services plan, has to allocate period of not less than 2 months for public discussion of the draft of the social services plan, providing for the possibilities for the society to get familiarized with it, express opinion and give proposals, organize their discussions with the society, organisations during the meetings and public discussions.

After analysis of the process of making social services plans, it can be stated that the above mentioned procedure is implemented in very different ways. The composition of people preparing municipal social services plans varied from one specialist of the Social Support Department to the working group consisting of the representatives of several municipalities, budgetary institutions providing social services, non-governmental organisations; in some places other organisations such as Labour Market were involved.

Such municipalities where the plans were prepared only by the specialists of the Social Support Department stated that information had been provided by other departments, the draft had been shown to other organisations involved in social area (*"important information for preparation of the plan was given by senior specialists and social workers of the Department of Social Support and Child's Rights as well as the chairman of the Association of the Disabled of the municipality, the director of the Day Care Centre. The draft of the plan was presented to municipal non-governmental organisations, the Day Care Centre."*). The above mentioned municipalities provided information on the website as well (*"Information about preparation of social services plans was placed on the website of the municipality"*).

To sum up information of those who prepared social services plans, it can be stated that:

- in 19 municipalities (32%) the social services plan was prepared only by the staff of the Social Support Department;
- in 14 municipalities (24%) the representatives of budgetary institutions providing social services contributed as well;
- in 9 municipalities (15%) the plan was prepared solely by administration of the municipality: most often the departments of protection of the child's rights, of strategic planning, finances, sometimes the deputy director of administration of the municipality were involved;
- in 15 municipalities (25%) the representatives of users of social services were involved in the preparation of the plan as well;
- in 2 municipalities (4%) budgetary organizations of various areas were involved.

Although methodical recommendations on preparation of the social services plan create good preconditions to form expectations of users of social services in every municipality, involving their representatives in the plan preparation process or receiving wide feedback from existing and potential users during public discussions, content analysis disclosed that municipalities are not inclined to use this. The compilers of the plan find it more acceptable to work in groups, which consist of the staff of the same department or other departments of the municipality.

Users are not involved in public discussions of social services plans. None of the municipalities planned to do this and no municipality indicated that it had been doing this. Some municipalities would commit to discuss the results of the above mentioned plans with the head of the municipality, non-governmental organisations (*"The results of evaluating the social services plan are discussed at the meeting attended by responsible persons of administration of the municipality, heads of institutions providing social services, non-governmental organisations that provide social services, heads and persons who are responsible for implementation and supervision of the social services plan"*).

Meeting of Users' Expectations, Ensuring Availability of Information

Formation of users' expectations is also influenced by availability of information. The analysis of

social services plans in the aspect of *presentation of information to users* discloses that there are different attitudes towards publicising the above mentioned plans.

The analysis of websites demonstrates that only one municipality presented social services plans of 2008 and 2009 and reports on implementation of the plans on its website. Ten municipalities have not even placed their social services plans on the website: they were available only upon calling the Social Support Department which sent the plans via e-mail after they found out the number of the decision of the council of the municipality, and similar inconveniences. On other 14 websites of municipalities only the plan for 2008 was announced.

To sum up, it can be stated that during the research 45 municipalities either approved the social services plan or submitted the social services plan to the council of the municipality for approval.

There were such municipalities that did not have the social services plan at all: they only had a social services programme approved by the municipality. After attending to the Social Support Department of the above mentioned municipality, the reply was that the plan was prepared long ago but the mayor refused to submit it to the council of the municipality.

Conclusions

1. The performed content analysis allows to state that the survey of users' needs and expectations is foreseen in legal acts, methods for preparation of social services plans, which recommend application of local residents' interview, questionnaire, data analysis, projection, SWOT and other methods, use of data of residents' questionnaires, information provided by social services providers and other institutions, involving users into planning and supervision processes.
2. Upon completion of the analysis of social plans of municipalities, it can be stated that 92% of the municipalities do not carry out residents' surveys when evaluating quality of social services. The municipalities that carried out surveys employed content analysis and interview methods that were directed only to a certain clients' group (social risk families, lonely disabled persons, senior age residents). Most often users' needs would be surveyed at the level of separate institutions but not at the municipal level. To sum up the expert interviews, there were such municipalities which were planning to carry out surveys next year in order to identify users' needs at the municipal level as well.
3. Although methodical recommendations for making social services plans create good precondi-

tions in every municipality to form expectations of users of social services through involvement of their representatives into the plan preparation process, municipalities are not inclined to use this opportunity. The compilers of the plan find it more acceptable to work in groups which consist of the staff of the same department or other departments of the municipality.

4. Formation of users' expectations is also influenced by availability of information. The analysis of social services plans in the aspect of presentation of information to users discloses that municipalities have different attitudes towards publicising the above mentioned plans. In many municipalities social services plans are not made public on the websites or the plans of previous years are found. There were such municipalities that did not have the social services plan at all; they only had a social services programme approved by the municipality.

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Vartotojų lūkesčių tenkinimas užtikrinant socialinių paslaugų kokybę

Santrauka

Šiuolaikinėje ekonomikoje paslaugos yra tapusios dominuojančia veiklos rūšimi tiek kiekybine išraiška, tiek savo poveikiais kasdieniam žmonių gyvenimui. Todėl paslaugų sfera yra viena perspektyviausių, sparčiai besiplėtojančių ūkio (ekonomikos) sferų. Tai deklaruoja Europos Tarybos patvirtinta „Nauja socialinės sanglaudos strategija" (2004). Joje socialines teises įgyvendinti siūlo vadovaujantis vienu iš principų, nukreiptų į visiems prieinamas kokybiškas paslaugas.

Ne vienoje valstybėje socialines paslaugas stengiamasi priartinti prie žmonių, kai perduodama atsakomybė regioninės ir vietos valdžios institucijoms. Vis dažniau įvairių šalių vyriausybės pripažįsta, kad geriausias socialinių paslaugų įgyvendinimo būdas yra partnerystė su pilietine visuomene, t. y. jos įtraukimas užtikrinant kokybę.

Reikia pabrėžti, kad vis dažniau kalbant apie gyvenimo kokybę ir visuomenės gerovę, socialinių paslaugų kokybė tiesiogiai sąlygoja atskirų ir labiausiai pažeidžiamų visuomenės grupių ir kartu visos Lietuvos visuomenės, gyvenimo kokybę (Nauja socialinės sanglaudos strategija, 2004).

Žalimienės (2003) teigimu, pastarąjį dešimtmetį skatinant ir vystant mišrios socialinių paslaugų rinkos idėją, ieškoma galimybių sukurti tokią socialinių paslaugų rinką, kuri leistų klientui rinktis ir gauti geriausios kokybės paslaugas mažiausiomis sąnaudomis tiek jam pačiam, tiek valstybei.

Anksčiau vartotojas turėdavo priimti tokios kokybės paslaugas, kokias jam teikdavo pagal nustatytus standartus. Pastaraisiais dešimtmečiais kokybiška socialinė paslauga pirmiausia reiškia paties kliento vertinimus ir pasitenkinimą paslaugomis (Žalimienė, 2006), todėl užtikrinant socialinių paslaugų kokybę, svarbu patenkinti vartotojų lūkesčius.

Siekiant, kad būtų užtikrinta socialinių paslaugų kokybė, yra nemažai kriterijų, tačiau vienas jų yra vartotojų lūkesčių tenkinimas (Mikalajauskienė, Tijūnaitienė, Vekterytė, 2001). Kaip teigia autorės, vartotojui suteikiamas ypatingas statusas, nes paslaugų kokybę sudėtingiau įvertinti nei prekių. Pasak Lydekos, Stanaitytės (2002), Vitkienės (2004), Bagdonienės, Hopenienės (2005) vartotojo įtraukimas į paslaugos teikimo procesą yra vienas pagrindinių ypatumų, užtikrinančių kokybę.

Šiandien pasigendama tyrimų, kuriuose būtų analizuojamas socialinių paslaugų vartotojų lūkesčių tenkinimas, nes visi iki šiol atlikti mokslo tiriamieji socialinių paslaugų kokybės vadybos darbai buvo vykdomi vienos paslaugų įstaigos, savivaldybės ribose ar labiau orientuojantis į atskiras vartotojų grupes. Švedaitė-Sakalauskė (2007), Žalimienė (2003, 2006), Ruzevičius (2007) gilinosi į socialinių paslaugų kokybės valdymą. Kazlauskienė, Ostrauskienė (2010) išryškino socialinių paslaugų kokybės vertinimą Lietuvoje aiškinantis kokybės sampratas ir vertinimo kriterijus. Bagdonienė, Hopenienė (2005) tyri-

nėjo paslaugos tiekėjų ir vartotojų ypatumus, kurie veikia paslaugos kokybę. Marcinkevičiūtė, Petrauskienė (2007) analizavo socialinių paslaugų vystymąsi kaimiškose seniūnijose. Nevyriausybinių organizacijų vaidmenį teikiant socialines paslaugas apibendrino Kliucevičiūtė (2006). Čepinskis, Kanišauskaitė (2010) analizavo socialinių paslaugų plėtrą Lietuvoje atsižvelgiant į gyventojų senėjimo ypatumus savivaldybėse.

Pasigendama tyrimų, kurie apibendrintų situaciją visos šalies mastu, kurių pagrindu būtų siekiama sistemingai užtikrinti socialinių paslaugų kokybę. Šis tyrimas – tai vienas pirmųjų darbų siekiant bendrai apžvelgti socialinių paslaugų kokybę užtikrinantį veiksnį – vartotojų lūkesčių tenkinimą. Šiuo tyrimu siekta atsakyti į šiuos probleminius klausimus: kaip yra vykdomi vartotojų lūkesčių tyrimai socialinių paslaugų kokybės kontekste? Kaip ir kokiais būdais vartotojai įtraukiami į socialinių paslaugų planavimą, stebėseną? Kaip užtikrinamas informacijos prieinamumas vartotojams tenkinant jų lūkesčius?

Tyrimo tikslas – išryškinti vartotojų lūkesčių tenkinimą užtikrinant socialinių paslaugų kokybę.

Tyrimo metodai:
- Dokumentų turinio (angl. *Content*) analizė.
- Ekspertų metodas (interviu).

Tyrimo metodologija remiasi šiomis pagrindinėmis sampratomis ir požiūriais:
- Laikomasi *požiūrio*, kad paslaugų teikėjai ir vartotojai gali nevienodai suprasti paslaugos kokybę. Klientas dažnai ateina jau turėdamas iš anksto suformuotus lūkesčius dėl konkrečios paslaugos ir nuo to, ar kliento lūkesčiai bus patenkinti, ypač priklausys tolesnis jo naudojimasis paslaugomis. Todėl tiekėjas turi siekti paslaugų atitikimo klientų lūkesčiams arba jį informuoti taip, kad klientas savo lūkesčius formuotų lygiagrečiai gaunamoms paslaugoms (C. Lovelock, 2001; Grönroos, 2000).
- Tyrimas yra grindžiamas paslaugos *samprata* apimančia orientaciją ir į asmenį, individualiuosius jo poreikius bei bendruosius paslaugos kokybės požymius, kuri rinkos ekonomikos sąlygomis reiškia „geriausią produktą mažiausiomis sąnaudomis" (Daft, 1997). Todėl paslaugos tinkamumas yra apibrėžiamas per jos tikslus, turinį ir šio turinio pateikimo formas, kurios socialinių paslaugų prasme reiškia prieinamumą, informacijos patikimumą, jos tinkamumą (pritaikomumą). Be to, paslauga yra suvokiama kaip išskirtinė, orientuota ne į materialų, o į idealųjį kultūros produktą, kurio kūrimas yra ilgalaikis procesas ir reikalauja pastangų tiek iš paslaugų teikėjo, tiek iš vartotojo, nes vartotojas nėra tik pasyvus šių paslaugų perėmėjas. Vartotojas yra kūrėjas, kartu su teikėju dalyvaujantis paslaugos kokybės procesuose. Todėl ryšių tinklas tarp vartotojo ir teikėjo turi būti nuolat plėtojamas ir palaikomas tiek mezo- (idėjų lygmuo), tiek makro- (institucijų lygmuo), tiek ir mikrolygmenyje (grupių ir asmenybių sąveikos lygmuo).
- Tyrimas grindžiamas fenomenologine samprata, paremta Mickūno, Stewart (1994) fenomenologijos samprata, pagal kurią individų patirtis apibūdinama suvokiant fenomeną. Fenomenologiniame tyrime taikomas interviu metodas (Kvale, 1996), kuris geriausiai atskleidžia žmonių patirtis ir suvokimą. Šiam tyrimui atlikti pasirinktas interviu metodas, kuris leidžia priartėti prie žmonių suvokimo, fenomeno reikšmių ir realybės konstravimo.

Remiantis tyrime taikytais metodais (dokumentų turinio (angl. *Content*) analizė, ekspertų metodas (interviu pagrindu) galima teigti, kad:
- tirti vartotojų poreikius ir lūkesčius bei jų tenkinimą yra numatyta teisės aktuose, *Socialinių paslaugų plano rengimo metodikoje*, kuriuose rekomenduojama taikyti vietos gyventojų apklausos, anketavimo, duomenų analizės, prognozavimo, stiprybių, silpnybių, galimybių ir grėsmių (SSGG) bei kitus metodus, naudoti gyventojų anketinės apklausos duomenis, socialinių paslaugų teikėjų, kitų institucijų pateiktą informaciją, įtraukiant vartotojus į planavimo ir stebėsenos procesus.
- Atlikus šalies savivaldyvių socialinių planų analizę, galima teigti, kad 92 proc. savivaldybių nevykdo gyventojų tyrimų vertinant socialinių paslaugų kokybę. Tose savivaldybėse, kuriose vykdomi tyrimai, buvo naudojami dokumentų analizės ir apklausos metodai, nukreipti tik į tam tikrą klientų grupę (socialinės rizikos šeimos, vieniši neįgalūs asmenys, vyresniojo amžiaus gyventojai). Dažniausia vartotojų poreikiai buvo tiriami atskirų institucijų, bet ne visos savivaldybės lygmenyje. Apibendrinant ekspertų interviu, pastebėta, kad buvo ir tokių savivaldybių, kurios kitais metais planavo vykdyti tyrimus nustatant vartotojų poreikius ir savivaldybės lygmenyje.
- Nors socialinių paslaugų plano sudarymo metodinės rekomendacijos sudaro geras prielaidas kiekvienoje savivaldybėje formuoti socialinių paslaugų vartotojų lūkesčius, jų atstovus įtraukiant į plano rengimo procesą, tačiau savivaldybės tuo pasinaudoti nelinkusios. Sudarant planą rengėjams priimtinesnis darbas grupėmis, kurias sudaro to paties skyriaus arba savivaldybės kitų skyrių darbuotojai.
- Vartotojo lūkesčių formavimui įtaką daro ir informacijos prieinamumas. Analizuojant socialinių paslaugų planus informacijos vartotojams pateikimo aspektu, galima teigti, kad savivaldybėse vyrauja nevienodas požiūris į minėtų planų viešinimą. Daugelyje savivaldybių socialinių paslaugų planai nėra viešinami interneto svetainėse arba randami praėjusių metų planai. Buvo ir tokių savivaldybių, kuriose socialinių paslaugų plano apskritai nebuvo – tik savivaldybės patvirtinta socialinių paslaugų programa.

Pagrindiniai žodžiai: socialinės paslaugos, paslaugų kokybė, vartotojų lūkesčiai, socialinė politika.