



TST National Service Standards

Introduction and Implementation Process

Introduction

TST Service Standards have been developed to provide a template through which specialist rape and sexual abuse services can evidence their good practice, sound management and effective service delivery. We have aimed to make the Standards relevant for all member agencies, and sought to take into account differing agency structures, operational styles and gender focus. Feedback received so far strongly indicates that TST National Service Standards have been greatly welcomed by our member agencies.

Over the past two years there has been an increasing emphasis on the need for specialist services to evidence to all stakeholders that they are working in accordance with nationally recognised service standards. The benefits of this are threefold:

1. It ensures that the people using specialist services have the best experience possible in an environment that is safe and supportive for all;
2. It ensures that members of staff, volunteers and trustees, are supported by appropriate governance, management and supervision structures;
3. It ensures that services monitor, evaluate and evidence the good work they are doing and the positive outcomes they are achieving.

Service Standards provide a framework through which members of staff, volunteers, trustees and paid employees alike, are supported by management and human resources structures that are sensitive to the demands of working day-to-day with trauma. In terms of the health of the service itself, a template is provided that will help services to strengthen and continually assess their operational and service delivery activities.

Key Themes and Overarching Principles

In developing the Standards we have felt it important to use as our starting point the nine Key Themes and Overarching Principles which were agreed in collaboration with Women's Aid, Rape Crisis (England and Wales), Forward and the Poppy Project during the development process for Women's Aid National Service Standards. The same themes and principles underpin Rape Crisis (England and Wales) Service Standards.

1. Understanding domestic and sexual violence and its impact
2. Safety, security and dignity
3. Diversity and fair access to services
4. Advocacy and support
5. Empowerment and participation
6. Confidentiality
7. A co-ordinated multi-agency response
8. Challenging social tolerance of domestic and sexual violence and holding perpetrators accountable
9. Accountability and governance

In addition, we have adhered to the principles set out by the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers on Assistance to Crime Victims. In particular the need for effective recognition of, and respect for, the rights of victims with regard to their human rights; respect for the security, dignity, private and family life of victims; provision of services to victims/survivors without discrimination and access to services which is not dependent on involvement with criminal justice processes.

In developing the Service Standards, we have also considered the following:

- Promoting the needs of victims/survivors
- Promoting the specialism within the sexual violence and abuse sector
- Setting the benchmark for safe and effective practice
- Ensuring consistency of service delivery
- The need to ensure standards are appropriate to the size and nature of the service being delivered
- The opportunities and challenges presented by a 'Big Society' model of delivering services, in particular the need for specialist services to be ready to enter into service delivery agreements
- The need for specialist services to be able to demonstrate the professionalism and effectiveness of their work
- Time and resource implications for member organisations (already under pressure)
- Support available for instituting the specialist service standards
- Promoting essential criteria for membership of The Survivors Trust as approved providers of specialist rape and sexual abuse support services

Structure of TST Service Standards

TST Service Standards provide a framework for delivering specialist rape and sexual abuse services. The Standards are presented under 13 Section Headings.

The following sections are included:

1. Governance
2. Management
3. Planning

4. Finance
5. Empowerment and Creating a User Centred Service
6. Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection
7. Staff/Volunteers, Recruitment, Training and Development
8. Specialist Service Delivery
 - 8.1 Core Principles
 - 8.2 Counselling and Support
 - 8.3 Online Counselling and Support
 - 8.4 Crisis Services
 - 8.5 Group Work
 - 8.6 Helplines
 - 8.7 Advocacy
 - 8.8 Children and Young People's Services
 - 8.9 Justice Processes
 - 8.10 Services for Service Users with Learning Disabilities
9. External Training
10. Independent Sexual Violence Advisors
11. Networking, Partnership and Representation
12. Service Outcomes
13. Equality and Diversity

We have also included information on further guidance available and developed sample tracking forms which agencies can use to monitor management activities.

Implementation Process

The Service Standards will initially be implemented via a self assessment procedure. The self assessment procedure will be supported by a TST administered verification process. From the date of the Service Standards launch member agencies will have up to six months in which to carry out their self assessment process and if necessary produce a plan outlining the steps they will take to ensure they meet the standards.

TST Development Managers (DMs) will seek to provide support to agencies that are experiencing difficulties during this period and will work to gauge the ability of member agencies to meet the standards.

It is anticipated that the initial implementation period will take up to 12 months, dependant on whether an agency has already adopted a quality assurance system, for example PQASSO (Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations) or other service standards, for example, Rape Crisis (England & Wales) or Women's Aid. At the end of the 12 month implementation period, TST will be seeking a confirmation letter from the chair of the trustees to confirm that their agency has adopted and is working in accordance the Service Standards as they apply to their specific agency.

Membership renewal processes from January 2011 will include an option for member agencies to confirm that they are working towards TST National Service Standards. Agencies choosing this option will be issued with a TST membership certificate for the year 2011.

From January 2012, the TST membership renewal processes will include a requirement for agencies to confirm that they have adopted and work to TST specialist service standards, subject to external verification, before they can be issued with their annual membership certificates.

At present TST envisages the standards self assessment procedure being reviewed annually. As previously stated TST will operate robust change control processes so that member agencies can regularly submit suggested amendments for future inclusion.

Support for Member Agencies Working Towards the Standards

TST recognises that there are resource implications for organisations in implementing any quality assurance system. Developing or collating the evidence for procedures needed to meet the standards is potentially daunting, especially at times of financial uncertainty when scarce resources are pressurised.

TST is committed to helping member agencies to overcome any problems that may arise as they implement the standards. Support for member agencies working towards meeting the standards will be available in two forms:

1. The Standards will contain advice, resources and signposting designed to help member organisations meet the necessary requirements.
2. The TST Development Team and Liaison Officer will work with member agencies to help align their practice with the standards that apply to individual agencies. A designated standards email address has already been set up for this purpose.

**For any enquiries relating to TST National Service Standards,
please contact:**

servicestandards@thesurvivorstrust.org