



Summary: The Rape Crisis National Service Standards



for services working with women and girl survivors of any form of sexual violence

The Rape Crisis National Service Standards (RCNSS) were developed in recognition of the need to have in place service standards that are specific to sexual violence services, provide a benchmark for excellence and that set out what it is that makes Rape Crisis services different from non-specialist support services. Much of what distinguishes a Rape Crisis approach relates not only to the quality of the services provides, but to the value base and feminist ethos which underpins all of the work.

The RCNSS were piloted by three Rape Crisis Centres and were the subject of a robust consultation process with the network of member Centres. An online self-assessment tool has been designed and built to support Rape Crisis Centres as they work towards meeting the RCNSS. This was also piloted by three Centres.

Core principles underpinning the standards

- ▶ Understanding sexual and domestic violence and its impact. Organisations demonstrate an appropriate and informed approach, relevant to their service users, that recognises and understands the dynamics and impact of sexual violence, within an equalities and human rights framework.
 - ▶ Safety, security and dignity. Organisations ensure that all interventions prioritise the safety, security and dignity of service users and staff/volunteers.
 - ▶ Diversity and fair access to services. Organisations respect the diversity of service users and positively engage in anti-discriminatory practice, and service users are supported and assisted to access services on an equitable basis.
 - ▶ Advocacy and support. Organisations provide independent institutional/individual advocacy and/or support to promote the needs and rights of service users.
 - ▶ Empowerment and participation. Organisations promote empowerment and self-help to enable service users to take control of their lives and inform the delivery and development of services.
 - ▶ Confidentiality. Organisations respect and observe service users' right to confidentiality and all service users are informed of situations where that confidentiality may be limited.
 - ▶ A co-ordinated, multi-agency response. Organisations operate within a context of relevant inter-agency cooperation, collaboration and coordinated service delivery.
 - ▶ Challenging social tolerance of sexual and domestic violence and holding perpetrators accountable. In all aspects of what they do, organisations challenge social tolerance of sexual violence and work from the core belief that it is preventable.
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- ▶ Accountability and governance. Management is effective so that users receive a high quality service from appropriately skilled staff.

The RCNSS are divided into nine sections:

1. Organisational requirements

Relates to key areas of an organisation's compliance with the law.

2. Values

About the principles and ethos that underpin the organisation's work with service users and the wider community.

3. Strategy and governance

About longer-term planning and financial sustainability for the whole organisation.

4. Managing services

About planning, defining, monitoring and evaluating individual services.

5. Working with service users

Describes ways of working with individual service users and how Rape Crisis values and principles are incorporated.

6. Protecting service users and staff/volunteers

About taking steps to safeguard those who use and deliver your services and how you handle information about them.

7. Diversity, equality and access

About how the organisation works with diverse service users and staff/volunteers in ways that maximise accessibility of its services.

8. Service user involvement and participation

About responding to feedback from service users and involving service users in decision-making in order to develop services, policy or practice and influence social change.

9. Developing the organisation

Covers role definition, training, support, supervision and appraisal of staff and volunteers, both individually and collectively.