



RAPE CRISIS

National Service Standards

Summary information for partners, funders and commissioners

PREFACE

The Rape Crisis National Service Standards (RCNSS) represent a joint collaboration between Rape Crisis (England & Wales) and Rape Crisis Scotland. Our aim is to ensure that no matter where in the UK a survivor lives, she will receive a consistent and high quality response from any Rape Crisis Centre she approaches for support.

Rape Crisis Network Ireland generously shared their Standards of Best Practice and there are many points of crossover between the two sets of Standards.

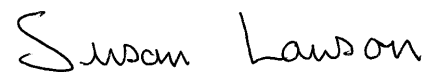
We also wanted to set out what it is that makes our services different from non-specialist support services. Much of what distinguishes a Rape Crisis approach relates not only to the quality of the services we provide, but to the value base and feminist ethos which underpins all of our work. Values and principles are crucially important to our model for working with survivors of sexual violence.

The RCNSS reflect the high quality of services being provided throughout the UK and are the culmination of a long process of research, reflection, consultation and definition. They have been developed in full consultation with Rape Crisis Centres which means they are informed by the collective experiences of frontline practitioners and the voice of the survivor.



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Introduction to Rape Crisis (England and Wales)

Introduction to Rape Crisis National Service Standards

Rape Crisis (England and Wales) is the national umbrella organisation for a network of affiliated Rape Crisis Centres which provide crisis and longer term specialised counselling, support and independent advocacy to women and girls of all ages who have experienced any form of sexual violence.

We promote the needs and interests of women and girls who have experienced sexual violence, ensure the provision of local, specialist services and work towards the elimination of sexual violence. We do this by:

- Campaigning continuously to raise awareness of the prevalence and impact of sexual violence and to challenge public attitudes about the social tolerance of sexual violence
- Working to improve the response of Government and other organisations by providing a voice for survivors and member Rape Crisis Centres
- Supporting the development and provision of specialist, high quality services to meet the diverse needs of survivors including new Rape Crisis provision
- Providing our members with advice, support, policy information, training and links to national and regional networks to share expertise

We believe that sexual violence is a cause and consequence of gender inequality and are proud to call ourselves a feminist organisation. We offer women-only services because that is what women and girls tell us they want.

Member groups of Rape Crisis (England and Wales) aim to encourage all women to be involved in and contribute to the direction and priorities of their Centre and work within the principle that a Centre's strength comes from the diversity of the women and girls who work there and use its services.

Introduction to Rape Crisis Scotland

Rape Crisis Scotland is the national office for Rape Crisis Centres in Scotland. The Rape Crisis movement in Scotland is part of an international social and political movement that exists not only to provide support to survivors of sexual violence but also to challenge attitudes and structures within society that contribute to a culture which too often seems to condone or legitimise sexual violence against women. Across Scotland, Rape Crisis Centres provide free confidential support and information for women and girls who have experienced any form of sexual violence.

The aims of Rape Crisis Scotland are:

- To help develop the Rape Crisis movement in Scotland
- To work with member Centres to ensure survivors are offered consistent, high quality support
- To assist in the development of new Rape Crisis provision around Scotland
- To provide a national helpline to offer support to survivors of sexual violence across Scotland
- To raise awareness about the extent and reality of sexual violence
- To work to challenge any prejudicial attitudes towards survivors of sexual violence

Introduction to the Rape Crisis National Service Standards






The Rape Crisis National Service Standards (RCNSS) have been developed in recognition of the need to have in place service standards that are specific to sexual violence services and provide a benchmark for excellence. We also know that in a climate of commissioning and tendering, commissioners increasingly require re-assurance and evidence of the quality of the services they are purchasing and the value for money.

The RCNSS are underpinned by a set of core principles agreed by Women's Aid England, Rape Crisis (England and Wales) and the Women's National Commission. These are outlined in full on page 9. They have also been mapped against other quality assurance frameworks including:

- Supporting People Quality Assessment Framework
- British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy
- PQASSO
- The Centre against Sexual Assault (CASA)
- NASASV Practice Manual for Services Against Sexual Violence
- The Helplines Association Quality Standard
- Council of Europe Minimum Standards for Violence against Women Support Services

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. The RCNSS and the online self-assessment tool were launched on International Day against Violence against Women in November 2011.

The RCNSS are divided into nine sections:

-  Organisational requirements
-  Values
-  Strategy and governance
-  Managing services
-  Working with service users
-  Protecting service users and staff/volunteers
-  Diversity, equality and access
-  Service user involvement and participation
-  Developing the organisation

Introduction to the Rape Crisis National Service Standards

Each section contains up to 12 standards and there are 79 standards in total. The implementation process includes a period of self-assessment. It is intended that this is followed by external assessment and accreditation.

RC(EW) and RCS wish to implement the RCNSS in a way which promotes learning and development. We intend the process to be inclusive and mutually beneficial for the wider networks and to this end, we have put measures in place to support and enable Rape Crisis Centres to share learning, resources and best practice.

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.

Accountability and governance

Management is effective so that users receive a high quality service from appropriately skilled staff.



This section relates to key areas of an organisation's compliance with the law. The requirements are not specific to Rape Crisis services.

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| 1.1 | The organisation provides trustees with information about their legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities under the Charities Act 2006 (covering England and Wales), the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and/or Companies Act 2006 as applicable to the legal form of the organisation |
| 1.2 | The organisation has policies to govern the lawful and relevant use and control of its funds |
| 1.3 | All premises from which the organisation carries out its work are covered by Public Liability Insurance. If the organisation has employees, it also has Employers' Liability Insurance |
| 1.4 | The organisation has a written health and safety policy (if it has five or more employees) and takes action to provide and maintain a safe place of work, safe systems of work, safe appliances and equipment, access and procedures. Action includes robust risk assessment and management in order to protect staff, volunteers and service users from harm |
| 1.5 | If the organisation collects and stores personal data about service users, it notifies the Information Commissioner's Office and establishes and maintains its registration as a 'Data Controller' |
| 1.6 | The organisation's equality and diversity policy and practice are compliant with the Equality Act 2010 |
| 1.7 | The organisation carries out checks on all staff/volunteers and trustees in line with the Criminal Records Regulations 2002 and 2006 and the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 |
| 1.8 | The organisation has procedures to protect staff/volunteers who 'blow the whistle' to an independent body if they have reasonable belief to disclose to that body that the organisation has committed a criminal offence, breached a legal obligation, endangered the health and safety of any individual, caused damage to the environment or deliberately covered up information in relation to any of the above |

2 Values



This section is about the principles and ethos that underpin the organisation's work with service users and the wider community.

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| 2.1 | The organisation has a clear, written statement of its values |
| 2.2 | The organisation's values support the belief that sexual violence is a cause and consequence of gender inequality |
| 2.3 | The organisation's values support the belief that gender-based violence requires an evidence-based, gender-specific response |
| 2.4 | The organisation's values promote the human rights of women and support the ability of women to have greater control and choice in their lives |
| 2.5 | The organisation promotes awareness of the impact of sexual violence and works to challenge misperceptions and social tolerance of sexual violence in its wider community |
| 2.6 | The organisation shares its statement of values with staff/volunteers and service users |



This section is about longer-term planning and financial sustainability for the whole organisation.

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| 3.1 | The organisation has a clear written statement of its purpose and shares this statement with staff/volunteers and service users |
| 3.2 | The organisation's primary purpose is to meet the needs of women and girls who have experienced sexual violence |
| 3.3 | Key positions of responsibility are held by women |
| 3.4 | All trustees receive an induction into the values and services of the organisation, in sexual violence and into their duties, roles, responsibilities and liabilities |
| 3.5 | The organisation provides trustees with the information that they need to govern effectively |
| 3.6 | Trustees undertake strategic planning at least every two years and this includes reviewing and responding to relevant external developments and identifying, assessing and taking steps to mitigate organisational risks |
| 3.7 | Trustees involve stakeholders in strategic planning |
| 3.8 | The governing body consults and draws on relevant external sources of professional advice where appropriate |
| 3.9 | The organisation's values support sustainable development to include environmentally-friendly working practices and social justice |
| 3.10 | The governing body periodically reviews and improves its own efficiency and effectiveness |

4 Managing services



This section is about planning, defining, monitoring and evaluating individual services.

| | |
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| 4.1 | The organisation assesses the prevalence of sexual violence in the community that it serves and the specific and diverse needs of that community in relation to sexual violence |
| 4.2 | The organisation utilises information from their assessment of prevalence to identify local need and strives to meet that need |
| 4.3 | Each service is clearly defined in terms of what is being offered and to whom and complements other local services |
| 4.4 | The organisation operates an effective plan to keep services open as advertised |
| 4.5 | The organisation develops productive partnerships with other organisations to deliver services |
| 4.6 | The organisation identifies outcomes for its service users which are meaningful to those users and to funders/commissioners |
| 4.7 | The organisation monitors progress towards service user outcomes and uses monitoring methods which give opportunities for service users to express themselves in their own words |
| 4.8 | The organisation uses the results of outcomes monitoring to inform service development |
| 4.9 | The organisation identifies other relevant success criteria for its services |
| 4.10 | The organisation monitors its achievement of success criteria, regularly analyses the monitoring information and improves services as a result |
| 4.11 | Relevant parties receive reports about service performance to an agreed timescale |
| 4.12 | The organisation periodically reviews and amends its success criteria in the light of the changing needs of stakeholders |

5 Working with service users



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

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| 5.1 | Service users who contact the organisation during opening hours receive a prompt and welcoming greeting |
| 5.2 | Service users who contact the organisation outside opening hours receive information about opening hours and, if appropriate, other sources of help |
| 5.3 | The organisation takes steps to deliver services from settings which promote the privacy and dignity of the service user |
| 5.4 | Service users are informed about the scope, limitations and independence of the services being provided |
| 5.5 | Staff/volunteers are aware of their own personal beliefs and prejudices and put these aside in order to respond to service users respectfully and non-judgementally |
| 5.6 | Needs of and risks to service users are assessed prior to or just after taking up the service and reviews are carried out at regular intervals if appropriate |
| 5.7 | Staff/volunteers are supported to carry out assessments of risk and need and identify and respond to needs within the remit of the service |
| 5.8 | Services are user-led and each service user is an active partner in the services that she receives |
| 5.9 | The organisation operates guidance in relation to the length of contact with service users and how to bring contacts to an end in a timely and appropriate way |
| 5.10 | Staff/volunteers are enabled to signpost or refer service users to organisations which are reliable and appropriate based on information which is up to date |



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

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| 6.1 | The organisation carries out appropriate checks on all staff/volunteers and trustees in line with relevant safeguarding legislation |
| 6.2 | The organisation operates clear policy and guidance on data protection and confidentiality which takes account of relevant legislation |
| 6.3 | Service users receive timely information about the purposes for which personal data may be used and support to help them make informed choices regarding disclosure |
| 6.4 | The organisation operates clear procedures for responding to any potential or actual harm that is reported by service users in relation to children or vulnerable adults |
| 6.5 | The organisation sets out and observes clear boundaries for relationships between service users and staff/volunteers |
| 6.6 | The organisation operates a policy to assess and manage risk for staff/volunteers who are lone working |
| 6.7 | The organisation operates policy and guidance which covers bullying and harassment in the workplace |



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

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| 7.1 | The organisation's diversity and equality policy is in line with current legislation and includes guidance for reporting concerns |
| 7.2 | The organisation recruits and appoints staff, volunteers and trustees in accordance with diversity and equality policies |
| 7.3 | The organisation provides training to staff, volunteers and trustees on diversity, equality and anti discriminatory practice and their application in relation to colleagues and service users |
| 7.4 | The organisation assesses the diverse needs of the community that it serves and takes this into account when planning services |
| 7.5 | The organisation takes positive steps to maximise the accessibility of the services it provides and the settings from which it provides them |
| 7.6 | Services assertively offer a 'women-only' space and the opportunity for women service users to work with a woman |
| 7.7 | Staff and volunteers are clear about service eligibility criteria and referral procedures |
| 7.8 | Service users who fall outside the eligibility criteria of services are signposted or referred sensitively to other appropriate organisations |
| 7.9 | Promotional material contains clear and current information about services provided and is available in relevant formats and languages |
| 7.10 | The organisation conducts equalities monitoring of its staff, volunteers, trustees and service users and takes positive steps to respond to needs identified and under representation within the organisation |

8 Service user involvement and participation



This section is 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

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| 8.1 | The organisation has a policy for actively involving service users in strategic planning for the organisation and in the planning of specific services |
| 8.2 | Service users are informed about a range of opportunities to give feedback on all aspects of the service, and staff/volunteers are aware of these opportunities |
| 8.3 | Service users are informed of opportunities to respond to relevant external consultations and campaigns |
| 8.4 | Service users are informed how and to whom they can complain, how and when the organisation will respond and what to do if not satisfied with the response |
| 8.5 | The organisation takes prompt action to respond to complaints in line with the procedure |
| 8.6 | The organisation develops and improves services in the light of service user feedback |
| 8.7 | Service users are informed of changes made as a result of feedback given |



This section covers role definition, training, support, supervision and appraisal of staff and volunteers, both individually and collectively.

| | |
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| 9.1 | The organisation has clear and current documents which define the purpose, tasks, skills, knowledge and experience related to all staff/volunteer roles |
| 9.2 | All staff/volunteers receive an induction into the organisation and its values, policies, systems and services |
| 9.3 | All staff/volunteers are provided with sufficient initial skills and knowledge training relevant to their role |
| 9.4 | The organisation checks that all staff/volunteers have the skills and knowledge required before they start working with service users |
| 9.5 | The organisation sets clear development objectives for all staff/volunteers, reviews progress against these regularly and takes effective steps to improve performance |
| 9.6 | All staff/volunteers have a regular opportunity to discuss their work and receive support and are offered regular clinical supervision where relevant to their role |
| 9.7 | All staff/volunteers are given opportunities to keep their skills and knowledge up to date in undertaking their roles and in accordance with the requirements of relevant professional bodies |
| 9.8 | The organisation has effective methods of sharing, documenting and using the learning that comes out of the experience of individual staff and volunteers |
| 9.9 | The organisation has effective policies and procedures in place to support the training, development and performance of staff and volunteers |

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