

HOMELESSNESS ASSISTANCE SERVICE STANDARDS REVISED SIGNPOSTS – January 2007

SECTION 1 Upholding and promoting rights	
1.1.1	The organisation's written documents demonstrate a clear commitment to the rights of consumers.
1.1.2	The organisation has documented systems for working ethically.
1.1.3	People are consistently informed of their rights and responsibilities under the Consumer Charter and the information is presented in an appropriate and accessible way.
1.1.4	The organisation has involved consumers in the development of responsibilities and includes consumers in regular reviews.
1.1.5	The organisation uses a range of strategies to assist people to exercise their rights.
1.1.6	The organisation monitors its work around upholding a rights-based approach.

SECTION 1 Upholding and promoting rights	
1.2.1	The organisation's written documents reflect a strong commitment to enabling consumer participation.
1.2.2	The organisation regularly seeks ongoing feedback from consumers and consults them whenever it is considering major changes to service delivery.
1.2.3	People are informed about how they can contribute to and participate in the organisation's decision making.
1.2.4	The organisation has identified and addressed barriers that may limit participation in the organisation.
1.2.5	The organisation supports staff to work effectively with consumers.
1.2.6	The organisation monitors the level of consumer participation and evaluates how consumer feedback is used in decision making and planning activities.

SECTION 1 Upholding and promoting rights	
1.3.1	The organisation has documented systems that make it easy to raise issues, make a complaint or appeal a decision and ensure people are dealt with promptly, respectfully and fairly.
1.3.2	People are given easy access to clearly written information about how to raise issues, make a complaint or appeal a decision.
1.3.3	People are informed of how to access advocacy organisations or individual advocates to help them to complain or make an appeal.
1.3.4	All staff members understand the complaints policies and procedures, respond to complaints openly and respectfully, and know how to address complaints to the right person.
1.3.5	The organisation uses complaints and appeals to find opportunities to make improvements in services.
1.3.6	The organisation regularly monitors and improves the effectiveness of the complaints and appeals system.

SECTION 1 Upholding and promoting rights	
1.4.1	The organisation has written documents that outline how it will uphold people's privacy and confidentiality.
1.4.2	The organisation has a privacy policy and relevant Acts available for people accessing services.
1.4.3	The organisation provides people with written information advising them on how they can access their files or other information the organisation holds about them.
1.4.4	The organisation uses a private place for collecting personal information.
1.4.5	The organisation informs people about how it will manage information about them.
1.4.6	The organisation only releases de-identified personal information for evaluation purposes except where informed consent has been given.
1.4.7	The organisation has effective information management systems which enable organisational communication and decision making.
1.4.8	When disclosing information about a person that could identify them, the organisation does it with the consent of that person (unless there are legal reasons for not gaining consent).
1.4.9	Where people cannot give consent to information being shared, the organisation considers how it can best protect privacy and confidentiality.
1.4.10	The organisation respects the privacy of the personal living space and belongings of people to whom it provides accommodation.
1.4.11	The organisation stores all consumer files in a secure manner and gives consumers access to information they are keeping about them. Files are destroyed in a confidential manner.
1.4.12	The organisation regularly reviews staff and organisational practices to ensure consumer privacy is maintained.

SECTION 2: Access to support for people experiencing homelessness	
2.1.1	The organisation has documented its commitment to proactively assisting people at risk of or experiencing homelessness or family violence to access the services they need.
2.1.2	The organisation provides people with appropriate documentation about the service system and how to access services.
2.1.3	The organisation has documented systems that provide adequate guidance to staff in providing housing information, advice and referral.
2.1.4	The organisation helps all people seeking assistance to gain access to the service system.
2.1.5	The organisation provides up-to-date and accurate information about its own services and how to access them, to other parts of the homelessness services system.
2.1.6	The organisation actively participates in service networks to create coordinated pathways for people accessing services.
2.1.7	Relevant organisational staff demonstrate extensive knowledge of local and state-wide funded organisations, including organisations who deliver secondary responses
2.1.8	The organisation has operating systems that ensure people have timely access to assistance.
2.1.9	The organisation monitors its ability to find suitable responses to people's needs.
2.1.10	The organisation monitors the level of access people have to its programs and services.

SECTION 2: Access to support for people experiencing homelessness

2.2.1	The organisation has a documented system for responding to requests for assistance and for matching people's needs with service capacity in a timely manner.
2.2.2	The organisation has a documented approach to dealing with unaccompanied young people under 15 years of age.
2.2.3	Organisations with Housing Establishment Funds have written guidelines about how funds can be used and how to access the funds.
2.2.4	The organisation treats people with respect and dignity and in a non-judgemental manner at initial and subsequent contact.
2.2.5	The organisation ensures that a staff member with appropriate skills undertakes the initial assessment.
2.2.6	Initial assessment seeks to understand the <i>immediate</i> needs of the person seeking assistance and what level of risk they face.
2.2.7	Where the initial assessment indicates the need for <i>immediate</i> assistance, the organisation supports the person to have those needs met.
2.2.8	The organisation has effective assessment systems in place to determine what resources or services are required to meet the needs of the individual or family.
2.2.9	The organisation seeks information and the involvement of other key parties, as appropriate, in order to better assess or understand the person's situation.
2.2.10	The assessment process encourages and supports people to be actively involved in identifying their needs, risk factors and preference for service responses.
2.2.11	The organisation regularly monitors client outcomes by reviewing its screening and initial assessment processes.

SECTION 2: Access to support for people experiencing homelessness

2.3.1	The organisation has a documented process for making referrals to ensure people have smooth access to appropriate support.
2.3.2	The organisation has documented protocols and agreements for cross-referral with a range of key agencies that can assist people.
2.3.3	People who are not offered an immediate service are fully informed about alternative options and offered an active referral as appropriate.
2.3.4	People seeking assistance are encouraged to act independently and to advocate on their own behalf wherever possible, but staff will advocate for them when requested and appropriate.
2.3.5	The organisation always assists unaccompanied young people under 18 years of age and other more vulnerable people to access services from agencies to which the organisation refers them.
2.3.6	The organisation has effective systems to guide use of financial assistance to people seeking assistance.
2.3.7	The organisation monitors its referral systems to ensure it offers people an appropriate range of support and people can easily access what they need.
2.3.8	The organisation monitors allocations of financial assistance to people.

SECTION 3 Direct service delivery and case management

3.1.1	The organisation has policies and procedures that reflect a commitment to providing equitable support to the full range of people within their target group and fair ways of deciding whether to accept a referral for support.
3.1.2	The organisation's offices, venues and activities are accessible to its potential and current consumers.
3.1.3	The organisation has operating hours that meet the needs of the range of people seeking assistance and people know what to do if they have concerns after hours.
3.1.4	The organisation provides people with clear information about the organisation, the support it offers and any limitations of that support.
3.1.5	The organisation monitors the outcomes of referrals and requests for support it receives, to ensure it is providing equitable and accessible services.

SECTION 3 Direct service delivery and case management

3.2.1	The organisation has a documented system for case planning which reflects a commitment to flexible and consumer-centred approaches.
3.2.2	The organisation's documented system for case planning includes ongoing assessment and uses an assessment tool that encourages people to consider their needs within a holistic framework.
3.2.3	The organisation's planning documentation clearly identifies how case coordination occurs both internally between programs and externally with other providers.
3.2.4	The organisation guides the delivery of direct services to all people by providing staff with written information on relevant legislation, regulations, policies and procedures.
3.2.5	Skilled and knowledgeable staff conduct consumer assessments.
3.2.6	Staff use a range of strategies in order to build rapport and trust with people.
3.2.7	Each person is supported to actively participate in the case planning process.
3.2.8	People have access to a copy of their support plan.
3.2.9	Coordination of services with other agencies is explored and negotiated in development of case plans.
3.2.10	The organisation provides people with written information about other services that might assist them.
3.2.11	The organisation regularly reviews its assessment and case planning processes to ensure they are consumer-focused and address immediate and longer term needs.

SECTION 3 Direct service delivery and case management	
3.3.1	The organisation has a documented system for ensuring people gain support that is flexible to meet their needs.
3.3.2	The organisation's documentation reflects a strong commitment to meeting the needs of each person through the least intrusive support solutions.
3.3.3	The organisation has documented systems to ensure service delivery is guided by an ethical framework.
3.3.4	Group work programs offered as part of service delivery are well documented.
3.3.5	The organisation encourages people to drive decision making within their case plan.
3.3.6	The organisation gives people clear explanations about what services can be provided, service limitations, and the other resources available to them in the community.
3.3.7	The organisation provides practical assistance and support within the agreed time frame or communicate any changes in arrangements in a timely manner.
3.3.8	The service the organisation provides is flexible and adapted to the person's changing circumstances and capacity.
3.3.9	Staff understand and give appropriate consideration to duty of care issues in all aspects of service delivery.
3.3.10	All staff have regular opportunities to meet with each other in order to exchange information relevant to the provision of good service delivery.
3.3.11	The organisation monitors the quality and outcomes of its service delivery practices.
3.3.12	The organisation evaluates its group work to improve the way it is designed and delivered.
3.3.13	The organisation monitors and reviews its case coordination processes to ensure they are efficient and effective.

SECTION 3 Direct service delivery and case management	
3.4.1	The organisation has a documented process for exit planning and case closure that involves people concerned and is integrated with other case management processes.
3.4.2	The organisation gives each person whose support it terminates, a clear explanation and information on the circumstances in which it will reinstate support.
3.4.3	Each person is given the opportunity to review achievements, with a focus on maintaining them in the future, and to identify future goals and action plans.
3.4.4	Staff actively encourage and support people to achieve greater independence and social connectedness to their community.
3.4.5	People with high level or complex needs have appropriate ongoing support arranged before they exit the service.
3.4.6	People are informed about the steps necessary to re-access the organisation or other relevant housing, family violence or homelessness services.
3.4.7	The organisation monitors and reviews its exit planning and case closure processes to ensure people are actively involved and appropriately supported in the processes.

SECTION 3 Direct service delivery and case management

3.5.1	The organisation has a documented system for recording and managing case files.
3.5.2	Personal files contain appropriate and adequate information to assist good case management.
3.5.3	All case plan entries are accurately documented, signed and dated in a timely manner.
3.5.4	Information recorded about people is written objectively and respectfully.
3.5.5	Staff record notes on the case file about critical incidents as soon as practicable to enable debriefing and accountability and to meet any external needs.
3.5.6	The organisation regularly audits its client file system to ensure consistency in approach and quality of what is recorded.

SECTION 4 Direct service delivery to specific groups

4.1.1	The organisation's written documents demonstrate a clear commitment to the rights of children accompanying parents or carers.
4.1.2	The organisation has documented policies that comply with statutory requirements and guide contemporary practice for staff who work with children.
4.1.3	The organisation has documented systems to support staff in carrying out their statutory responsibilities for care and protection of children.
4.1.4	The organisation has documented systems for case management that include identifying and meeting the needs of children and youth within the context of the family.
4.1.5	The organisation has a comprehensive resource guide to assist referrals for children, youth and families.
4.1.6	The organisation supports children to participate in developing their own case planning process in collaboration with their parents.
4.1.7	Assessment and planning for children and young people considers their educational, health, cultural, social and emotional needs.
4.1.8	The organisation acknowledges the skills of parents and families and assists them to increase their confidence and capacity to meet the safety, stability and developmental needs of their child or youth.
4.1.9	The organisation gains parents' written consent for children to participate in activities or excursions when the parents are not present.
4.1.10	With the parents' knowledge, the organisation consults children and youth about decisions that will affect them.
4.1.11	The organisation provides a safe, culturally appropriate and nurturing environment for children and youth.
4.1.12	The organisation develops relationships with key agencies in order to refer and advocate for the needs of children and youth.
4.1.13	The organisation ensures that staff are trained in child focussed, family centred practice.
4.1.14	Staff demonstrate application of appropriate competencies to support the case management of children who are experiencing grief, loss, trauma or low self-esteem.
4.1.15	The organisation has a budget for responding to children's needs.
4.1.16	The organisation monitors its work with children and young people to ensure it gives them a high quality service consistent with the organisation's policy framework.

SECTION 4 Direct service delivery to specific groups	
4.2.1	The organisation's written documents demonstrate a clear commitment to the rights of young people and indicate priority is given to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the level of independent living skills and how these can be improved to assist the transition to independence if necessary the importance of linking the young person to education, training or employment opportunities the importance of linking young people back to their families or community, where appropriate.
4.2.2	The organisation has documented policies that comply with statutory requirements and guide contemporary practice for staff that work with young people.
4.2.3	The organisation has documented policies to guide its work with young people who are parents.
4.2.4	The organisation has a comprehensive resource guide to assist referrals for young people.
4.2.5	Assessment and planning for young people considers their educational, health, cultural, social and emotional needs.
4.2.6	The organisation provides a young person-friendly environment.
4.2.7	The organisation develops relationships with relevant organisations in order to refer and advocate for the needs of young people.
4.2.8	Staff demonstrate the application of appropriate competencies to support the case management of young people who are experiencing grief, loss, trauma or low self-esteem.
4.2.9	The organisation has a budget for responding to young people's needs.
4.2.10	The organisation monitors its work with young people (including young parents) to ensure it gives them a high quality service consistent with the organisation's policy framework.

SECTION 4 Direct service delivery to specific groups	
4.3.1	The organisation's written documents provide a clear framework for the model of service delivery the organisation uses to support women, children and other people experiencing family/domestic violence.
4.3.2	The organisation has a documented system for ensuring consumers can access appropriate services, including after hours and during periods of potentially high demand, such as public and school holidays.
4.3.3	The organisation has documented security procedures and access protocols appropriate to the service model and level of security required.
4.3.4	The organisation has identified key 'first response' agencies in the area and established clear referral and access pathways.
4.3.5	The organisation ensures that staff have an understanding of the nature of family violence and are appropriately trained in family/domestic violence issues.
4.3.6	The organisation ensures that the safety and ongoing protection of people accessing services is given primary consideration.
4.3.7	Staff explore the full range of options for people to live free from violence.
4.3.8	Women with children are supported to keep their children with them.
4.3.9	Funded specialist family violence organisations provide secondary consultation to other organisations.
4.3.10	The organisation encourages known users of violence to take responsibility for their violent behaviours within the case management process.
4.3.11	The organisation takes an active role in preventing and eliminating family/ domestic violence.
4.3.12	The organisation monitors its effectiveness in responding to the diverse needs of women and their dependents experiencing family/ domestic violence.

SECTION 4 Direct service delivery to specific groups	
4.4.1	The organisation's policies and processes reflect a commitment to providing culturally competent services.
4.4.2	The organisation has clear information about its services available in appropriate community languages or presented in a culturally appropriate way.
4.4.3	The organisation has strategies to ensure it provides services that are culturally competent to people accessing services.
4.4.4	Staff demonstrate knowledge of the social and cultural groups represented in the local community and an understanding of the social and historical factors relevant to their current circumstances.
4.4.5	Organisations use interpreters as appropriate during each element of case management.
4.4.6	Staff link people to culturally appropriate services.
4.4.7	The organisation monitors and reviews service delivery practice to ensure people receive culturally appropriate services.
4.4.8	The organisation monitors and reviews service provision to ensure responsiveness to a multicultural society.

SECTION 4 Direct service delivery to specific groups	
4.5.1	The organisation's policies and processes reflect a commitment to providing responsive tenancy or consumer advocacy services..
4.5.2	The organisation has documented systems that guide contemporary practice for staff in the delivery of advocacy and referral services for individuals and families.
4.5.3	Staff demonstrate appropriate knowledge and competencies with regard to the application of relevant legislation, policies and guidelines to support practice.
4.5.4	The organisation monitors and evaluates its work with individuals and families to ensure provision of quality services consistent with the organisations funding and policy framework.

SECTION 5 Working with the community – Formerly Section 6	
5.1.1	The organisation's written documentation reflects a commitment to building strong links and partnerships with other relevant organisations.
5.1.2	The organisation collaborates with other agencies to build partnerships that allow for improved services.
5.1.3	The organisation works to build a more integrated service system through partnerships with other agencies and through strategic networks.
5.1.4	The organisation monitors and reviews the scope and level of its collaborative work through partnerships and networks.

SECTION 5 Working with the community – Formerly Section 6	
5.2.1	The organisation's documentation reflects a commitment to advocating broadly for the needs of people through active representation of issues at a local and Statewide level.
5.2.2	The organisation works to engage the support and understanding of local communities in order to better assist people experiencing or at risk of homelessness or family violence.
5.2.3	The organisation is well informed of current policy developments and broader systemic issues in the homelessness, family violence and social housing sector.
5.2.4	The organisation monitors the impact of its advocacy and community education efforts.