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### Overview

This standard is about assessing the risks to victims/survivors of sexual abuse/violence where the perpetrator of the abuse/violence has no family relationship with the victims/survivors. It includes involving the victim/survivor, wherever possible, in the assessment and in agreeing the consequent factors and needs to be addressed.

Where an assessment tool is used, this can be paper-based and/or electronic.

The resultant outcomes will then inform the development and implementation of appropriate intervention plans, with this activity being addressed in separate but related units of national occupational standards.

It is recognised that abuse can occur without physical violence, yet can be equally damaging to those affected. Throughout this standard, where the term 'abuse' is used it is taken to include instances also involving physical violence.

#### **There are three elements**

- 1 Gather information regarding the victim/survivor
- 2 Assess the information, agreeing needs and identifying risk
- 3 Agree the victim/survivor's needs from appropriate interventions

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#### Performance criteria

#### Gather information regarding the victim/survivor

*You must be able to:*

- P1 describe clearly and accurately your role and responsibility to the victim/survivor, explaining the information being sought, the reasons for seeking it, and with whom it may be shared
- P2 ensure that the discussion with the victim/survivor takes place in an appropriate and safe environment for the individual
- P3 confirm your organisation's policy relating to confidentiality, including which parties may require particular information, and circumstances where information may be divulged
- P4 confirm that it is acceptable to the victim/survivor to proceed
- P5 explore the victim/survivor's relevant circumstances, including the nature of the abuse/violence, and when and where it occurred
- P6 determine, where possible, relevant information regarding the perpetrator, including the victim/survivor's relationship to the perpetrator, if any
- P7 explore with the victim/survivor their situation and the problems which the abuse is causing, including their emotional and psychological welfare, and the aspects with which they would welcome help
- P8 obtain verification and/or corroboration for the information, where required and where possible
- P9 arrange for an accurate record to be made, where relevant and with the victim/survivor's consent, of any bruising or injuries which they have sustained due to the abuse, in line with your organisation's procedures
- P10 communicate in a manner, and at a pace, appropriate to the victim/survivor and their emotional welfare, and which is free from discrimination and oppression
- P11 allow the victim/survivor to progress at their own pace, treating them with dignity and respect, listening actively and checking for understanding
- P12 maintain accurate and up to date records, setting out details of the victim/survivor's relevant circumstances

#### Assess the information, agreeing needs and identifying risk

*You must be able to:*

- P13 determine the potential risk factors identified from the assessment process, providing evidence to show the basis for your decision, and to explain the strength and nature of the link between a factor and the likelihood of further harm to the victim/survivor and where relevant to their children
- P14 assess the relevant factors, including the victim/survivor's physical, emotional and psychological health and welfare, their dependents, and where relevant their relationship with the abuser

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- P15 use your professional judgement to assess the significance of both the victim/survivor's overall situation and their emotional and psychological welfare, to determine the level of risk, and of particular aspects of their situation, to identify priority areas for interventions and support
- P16 determine correctly the likely outcome(s) of the risks identified, including whether the victim/survivor is vulnerable to harm, and/or there is a risk of harm to others, including their children where relevant
- P17 discuss and agree with the victim/survivor their needs towards assisting them to address the abuse/violence
- P18 identify any circumstances which may mean that the victim/survivor, and/or their children where relevant, are particularly vulnerable
- P19 identify correctly where additional assessments are required, and make the appropriate arrangements promptly, recording your reasons for the additional requirement clearly
- P20 ensure that your risk assessment is placed in the context of the victim/survivor's circumstances, and is defensible
- P21 complete the appropriate assessment fully and correctly, maintaining accurate and up to date records, setting out the risks and protective factors identified, the likelihood of the abuse recurring and the likely imminence and possible severity of such abuse

#### **Agree the victim/survivor's needs from appropriate interventions**

#### *You must be able to:*

- P22 involve the victim/survivor in the risk assessment, explaining the process used and the rationale for the resultant outcomes
- P23 explain clearly to the victim/survivor the impact of the risk identified
- P24 explain the options available to the victim/survivor and recognise and respect their wishes, agreeing with the individual the preferred options and associated actions
- P25 arrange a medical examination for the victim/survivor where appropriate
- P26 determine and acknowledge the victim/survivor's own coping mechanisms, where relevant, and identify and agree coping mechanisms that might be developed
- P27 use agreed procedures and appropriate protocols for multi-agency liaison
- P28 explore and agree with the victim/survivor the way forward in progressing criminal proceedings, referring cases where a potential crime has been committed promptly to the necessary authority with the victim/survivor's consent wherever possible
- P29 ensure that relevant procedures are agreed with the victim/survivor and are in place to provide ongoing support to the victim/survivor, with a frequency appropriate to the level of risk identified
- P30 alert relevant persons promptly where you identify real and particular concerns regarding the risk of harm to the victim/survivor, and/or their

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children where relevant

- P31 ensure that your analysis is justified and defensible, with a clear rationale for your conclusions, associated recommendations and subsequent plans
- P32 provide your report, including all relevant information, promptly to the relevant person(s)

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#### Knowledge and understanding

*You need to know and understand:*

#### Legislative, regulatory and organisational requirements

- K1 legal and organisational requirements which relate to undertaking risk-led assessments of victims/survivors of sexual abuse/violence, and their impact for your area of operations
- K2 legislation, policies and procedures relating to data protection, health and safety, diversity and their impact for your area of operations
- K3 the limits of your authority and responsibility, and the actions to take if these are exceeded
- K4 the role of your organisation and its services relating to tackling sexual abuse/violence, including the provision of support to victims/survivors

#### Key, general requirements in addressing domestic/sexual abuse/violence

*You need to know and understand:*

- K5 what constitutes sexual abuse/violence, and its prevalence in the community
- K6 signs of abuse and the methods used by abusers to gain power and control
- K7 the impact upon all of those affected by sexual abuse, including victims/survivors and children, including the particular emotional and psychological harm which victims/survivors can experience
- K8 typical types of information and areas of support sought by those affected by sexual abuse, and the sources of information available to them
- K9 how cultural, social and gender related aspects impact upon sexual abuse/violence
- K10 the role of the principal external support agencies, and multi-agency arrangements towards providing support and interventions for victims/survivors in your area

#### Requirements particular to assessing needs and risks

*You need to know and understand:*

- K11 the relevant assessment tools and/or process(es) and how to use these
- K12 the information required towards making an assessment of victims/survivors, appropriate to addressing their needs and also the risks to them
- K13 methods of verifying and corroborating the information required
- K14 how to distinguish between directly observed evidence, evidence from reliable sources and hearsay
- K15 factors impacting upon the vulnerability of victims/survivors of sexual abuse/violence
- K16 circumstances requiring additional assessments and how to arrange

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- K17 circumstances where victims/survivors are considered to be at a very high risk, requiring particular support and how to progress such support

#### **Requirements relating to communicating with victims/survivors**

*You need to know and understand:*

- K18 different styles and forms of communication that may be appropriate and the importance of building trust and empathy with victims/survivors, and the methods of achieving this
- K19 the importance of non-verbal communication, such as body language, and how different cultures use and interpret body language in different ways
- K20 possible barriers to communication, their causes, and ways to overcome them, including the feelings and reactions which victims/survivors may have that hinder their ability to discuss abuse
- K21 the importance of being aware of your own values and beliefs, and their impact upon your ability to challenge discriminatory or potentially damaging attitudes and behaviour
- K22 limits of confidentiality applying to your job role, and the circumstances when it is necessary to go against a victim/survivor's expressed wishes, and in such cases the importance of ensuring that they understand what is happening and why

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**Suite** Preventing and tackling domestic and/or sexual abuse/violence

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