
Overview

This standard is about enabling victims and survivors and their children and dependants to access appropriate safe accommodation. This involves working with colleagues in your own and other organisations to support victims and survivors in finding accommodation. Safe accommodation can include refuges, hostels, private rented accommodation, re- housing, sanctuary, or supported housing.

This standard is for practitioners who support those experiencing domestic abuse, which may include instances of sexual violence and abuse in a domestic violence context.

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.

Domestic abuse is frequently perceived as a gendered crime perpetrated by men against women; however this standard is intended for practitioners who support those experiencing domestic violence within any intimate or family relationship, regardless of their social background, age, gender, religion, sexuality or ethnicity.

In some organisations, the terms 'victim' and 'survivor' may be used individually or interchangeably.

There are three elements

- 1 Engage with victims and survivors to determine their accommodation requirements
- 2 Assist providers of accommodation services in supporting victims and survivors
- 3 Provide support to victims and survivors moving into accommodation

Performance criteria

Engage with victims and survivors to determine their accommodation requirements

- You must be able to:
- P1 assess available information to determine victims and survivors' requirements and accommodation needs, including:
 - P1.1 personal details
 - P1.2 current accommodation situation
 - P1.3 associated risks to safety, health and wellbeing
 - P1.4 factors affecting their vulnerability
 - P1.5 consequent requirements for accommodation
 - P1.6 any time constraints for meeting accommodation needs
 - P2 explain to victims and survivors your role and responsibilities in line with organisational procedures and policies, including:
 - P2.1 the role of your organisation
 - P2.2 available services and support
 - P3 agree with victims and survivors their accommodation and support needs in line with your organisation's remit for services
 - P4 provide advice about accommodation to victims and survivors which meet their needs
 - P5 assess the impact of victims and survivors' vulnerability on their requirements for accommodation in line with available guidance
 - P6 identify options for accommodation which address the needs of victims and survivors, and which are:
 - P6.1 suitable
 - P6.2 realistic
 - P7 discuss with victims and survivors their options for accommodation, which explores:
 - P7.1 the advantages and disadvantages of different options
 - P7.2 obstacles to accessing accommodation and support
 - P7.3 how to address obstacles identified
 - P8 provide victims and survivors with information which allows them to make informed choices about options
 - P9 assist victims and survivors to prepare and agree a plan for accessing accommodation services, which identifies:

- P9.1 realistic goals
- P9.2 suitable actions
- P9.3 support required and how this will be accessed
- P9.4 timescales for progressing preferred options
- P10 communicate with victims and survivors in a manner and at a pace which meets their needs, and:
 - P10.1 encourages questions
 - P10.2 confirms their understanding
 - P10.3 promotes victims and survivors' informed decision making
 - P10.4 encourages self-reliance
- P11 maintain accurate and up to date records in line with organisational policies and procedures
- P12 maintain confidentiality in line with statutory, organisational and victims requirements

Assist providers of accommodation services in supporting victims and survivors

- You must be able to:**
- P13 discuss the circumstances and needs of victims and survivors with relevant other organisations in line with organisational policies and procedures
 - P14 identify benefits to victims arising from providing appropriate accommodation and services in line with organisational practices and procedures, including their safety, health and wellbeing
 - P15 confirm providers of services understand your role and responsibilities with regard to victims and survivors' accommodation needs
 - P16 address concerns held by providers about victims and survivors' accommodation needs in line with organisational requirements
 - P17 maintain appropriate contact with providers in line with partnership arrangements, which:
 - P17.1 enables any issues to be identified
 - P17.2 allows requests for feedback against victims and survivors progress
 - P17.3 treats providers as partners in the process
 - P17.4 keeps relevant others informed of progress and outcomes
 - P18 take action when provider issues occur in line with partnership arrangements

Provide support to victims and survivors moving into accommodation

- You must be able to:**
- P19 explain to victims and survivors their responsibilities and obligations associated with accommodation provided in line with accommodation agreements
 - P20 provide support to victims and survivors when moving into accommodation in line with agreed plans, your responsibilities and those of your organisation
 - P21 monitor victims and survivors' progress in accommodation in line with organisational policies and procedures
 - P22 obtain feedback from relevant others about victims and survivors' progress in line with your role and responsibilities
 - P23 address issues arising with victims and survivors' accommodation in line with your responsibilities and those of your organisation
 - P24 provide victims and survivors with accurate information about who to contact for support and assistance
 - P25 keep relevant parties informed of progress in line with statutory and organisational requirements

Knowledge and understanding

Legislative, regulatory and organisational requirements

You need to know and understand:

- K1 legal and organisational requirements for the provision of safe accommodation for victims and survivors of domestic violence and abuse, and their impact for your area of operations
- K2 relevant legislation applicable to your area of work
- K3 relevant others you may need to work with including:
 - K3.1 agencies and organisations
 - K3.2 colleagues
 - K3.3 community representatives
 - K3.4 service users
 - K3.5 stakeholders
 - K3.6 victims and survivors
- K4 your organisation's policies and procedures for:
 - K4.1 registration of cases
 - K4.2 case management
 - K4.3 ensuring confidentiality of information
 - K4.4 disclosure of information to third parties,
 - K4.5 circumstances under which disclosure may be made
- K5 your organisation's remit and services for addressing domestic violence and abuse, including the provision of accommodation and support to victims and survivors
- K6 the limits of your authority and responsibility and actions to take if exceeded

Key, general requirements for addressing domestic violence and abuse

You need to know and understand:

- K7 what constitutes domestic violence and abuse and its prevalence in your local community
- K8 signs of abuse and the methods used by abusers to gain power and control
- K9 the impact of abuse on all those affected, including victims, survivors, children and dependants
- K10 how children and dependants may be used by abusers as part of their abuse
- K11 the types of information and support sought by those affected by domestic and

sexual violence and abuse

- K12 sources of information available to those affected by domestic and sexual violence and abuse
- K13 the role of external support agencies in providing safe, emergency accommodation and support for victims and survivors in your area
- K14 multi-agency arrangements and agreements for providing safe, emergency accommodation and support for victims and survivors in your area

Requirements particular to arranging safe accommodation

You need to know
and understand:

- K15 types and providers of safe, emergency accommodation
- K16 forms of support offered to victims and survivors and how to access these
- K17 benefits and drawbacks of different types of accommodation for victims and survivors with different needs and issues
- K18 factors to take into account when arranging safe accommodation for victims and survivors, including any children, dependants and young people
- K19 victims and survivors' rights in relation to where they may be housed and accommodated
- K20 the duties of local authorities to house and support different groups of individuals
- K21 the benefits available to certain groups of individuals, including:
 - K21.1 funding initiatives
 - K21.2 providing accommodation support
 - K21.3 how to access benefits available
- K22 the importance of evaluating accommodation provided for victims and survivors and your role in this process
- K23 sources of help for victims towards furnishing accommodation
- K24 key factors affecting the behaviour of individuals, including physical, social, psychological and emotional development
- K25 practical and emotional skills that victims and survivors need to be able to live independently
- K26 factors impacting upon the vulnerability of victims and survivors of domestic violence and abuse
- K27 the reasons why some victims and survivors may feel loyalty to their abusers

- K28 particular arrangements required by victims and survivors considered to be at a very high risk
- K29 the importance of progressing arrangements for very high risk victims promptly

Requirements relating to communicating with victims and survivors

**You need to know
and understand:**

- K30 the importance of and methods for building trust and empathy with victims and survivors
- K31 appropriate styles and forms of communication including body language
- K32 how different cultures use and interpret body language in different ways
- K33 the importance of non-verbal communication
- K34 barriers to communication including:
 - K34.1 causes
 - K34.2 feelings and reactions victims and survivors may have
 - K34.3 ways to overcome them
- K35 the importance of being aware of your values and beliefs
- K36 the impact your values and beliefs may have when working with victims and survivors
- K37 how to challenge discriminatory or potentially damaging attitudes and behaviour and the importance of doing

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