



Guidelines
Social Regulatory Standards

Office-Based Services offered to
**PERSONS WITH DRUG, ALCOHOL
AND GAMBLING RELATED PROBLEMS**

Comments and Feedback from the General Public

We appreciate feedback about this draft proposal for the Guidelines on the Social Regulatory Standards for Office-Based Services offered to Persons with Drug, Alcohol and Gambling related Problems. This document may be viewed on www.konsultazzjoni.gov.mt or www.scsa.gov.mt. The general public is invited to provide its feedback on the proposed Guidelines for service providers and submit any other suggestions or comments. These can be submitted by email on feedback.scsa@gov.mt , or by mail at the following address: Regulation and Standards Office, Social Care Standards Authority, 469, Bugeia Institute, St Joseph High Road, Santa Venera, SVR 1012. The general public may also phone on 2549 4444 for any help on how to send feedback.

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Introduction to the Guidelines

These guidelines establish the level of the service that is expected to be delivered by service providers. They guide the service provider to take decisions in relation to:

- the sufficiency of office-based services;
- the choice of workers, who should be adequate and competent to carry out the work entrusted to them; and
- the manner in which these services should be managed.

Principles on which the Standards and Guidelines are based

These regulatory standards are being established with the understanding that whoever makes use of such services has the right for access to quality care. This should be based on the following basic principles: dignity, privacy, right for choice, safety, realising potential, equality, individuality and diversity.

This means that all individuals are able to:

- be treated with respect at all times;
- enjoy meaningful relationships;
- have their privacy and property respected;
- live their life without unnecessary intrusion;
- make their own choices;
- get information on all options available to them;
- feel safe and secure in an environment free from abuse and discrimination;
- reach their goals and make full use of available resource;
- be treated equally to others irrespective of ethnic background, language, culture, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability and faith;
- be valued for who they are;
- develop their abilities; and
- complain responsibly without being intimidated.

Glossary

‘Agency’ means the entity providing a service.

‘Competent person’ means a person who has the appropriate theoretical and/or practical knowledge and/or experience which render him/her capable and/or authorised to undertake specific activities, in line with national legislation, standards or directives issued by the applicable authorities.

‘Holistic assessment’ means the process in which staff members identify the needs and aspirations of the individuals availing of the service. Such an assessment identifies aspects of the individuals’ health, personal, cognitive, behavioural, emotional, spiritual and psychological care, protection, social networking, and family support. This helps to determine what services should be delivered to satisfy these needs and aspirations.

‘Independent representative’ means a person who is independent from any aspect of the service and from any agency involved in the provision of service, working in the name of the person availing of the service or in his/her interest. The representative carries out such work after having been formally appointed to do so by the individual in whose name the representative is acting or (if the individual is not in a position to do so) as stipulated by law.

‘Individuals’ means persons having a drug, alcohol or gambling related problem who seek assistance and support from a service provider offering therapeutic and support services on this regard.

‘Key worker’ means a worker responsible for co-ordinating the individuals’ action plan.

‘Management’ means a person or persons who act on behalf of the service provider to provide leadership to staff and to oversee and control the proper functioning of the services provided.

‘Performance indicator’ means an active descriptor of what service providers need to do to ensure service outputs that support the quality indicators.

‘Policies and procedures’ means a set of rules or guidelines issued by the management/service provider, which regulate all operations within office-based services.

‘Quality indicator’ means a statement that sets out the requirements to achieve compliance with a standard.

‘SCSA’ means Social Care Standards Authority, as established by virtue of Article 5 of the Social Care Standards Authority Act (Cap.582).

‘Service provider’ means a person who, or organization that provides support through a range of services to individuals who are seeking help for their drug, alcohol or gambling related problems.

‘Staff members’ means persons engaged by the service provider to offer support and care to individuals availing of the service. Different staff members assume different roles including, providing assistance in personal care, supporting individuals during activities, and providing advice and support on life skills and other aspects in one’s own life. Other staff members offer professional specialized care as part of a therapeutic service.

Standard 1: Identification of needs and support interventions

Standard Statement:

A holistic, individualised assessment is undertaken so that needs, goals and individual aspirations are identified.

Quality Indicators:

1. Individuals are able to identify and discuss aspects of their life they feel they need to be assisted in and staff should give the necessary support for them to realize their aspirations.
2. All individuals are entitled to any information that they may find relevant to them and this should be given in a complete, timely, and unconditional manner.

Standard 1: Identification of needs and support interventions

Quality Indicator 1

1.0 Quality Indicator: Individuals are able to identify and discuss aspects of their life they need to be assisted in and staff should give the necessary support for them to realize their aspirations.

Performance Indicators:

The service provider ensures that:

- 1.1 A staff member is appointed to meet individuals in a regular manner to identify and choose the most suitable approach to care for them.
- 1.2 The key worker should acquire relevant information on the individuals. This information would guide decision making practices that lead to a more holistic action. Information is gathered on various aspects of the individuals' life such as:
 - a) Learning and development of new skills to avoid addictive behaviours and minimizing the risk of relapsing;
 - b) The possibility of accessing external services such as training and employment schemes to enhance job prospects;
 - c) Identifying support networks that can be meaningful for the individuals; and
 - d) Information on family members and peers so as to determine suitability of their involvement as well as their ability to offer the required help.
- 1.3 In consultation with the key worker, the individuals establish goals which enable them to work on the issues for which they are seeking help and which they will achieve whilst availing of the service. This would be part of a plan of action devised for every individual.
- 1.4 Efforts should be made to ensure that transition from one service to another is smooth and does not cause unnecessary risks to the individuals involved.

- 1.5 Staff members working in community-based services or outreach programmes shall adopt proactive approaches. They should ensure that individuals requesting their services are regularly followed so as to sustain the impact of the therapeutic intervention.
- 1.6 The management and staff members should ensure that prevention programmes are regularly evaluated to assess their validity and ensure that they reach the population that mostly requires them. Such programmes should promote active learning and acquisition of necessary skills.

Standard 1: Identification of needs and support interventions

Quality Indicator 2

2.0 Quality Indicator: All individuals are entitled to any information that they may find relevant to them and this should be given in a complete, timely, and unconditional manner.

Performance Indicators:

The service provider ensures that:

- 2.1 Individuals are provided with information about all options and services available to them including community, residential, and other therapeutic services.
- 2.2 If the agency offers family support services such as counselling and educational programmes, individuals seeking support should be informed about this and should be assisted if any of such services are requested.
- 2.3 Staff members shall explain the risks associated with taking drugs, and the consequences on the individuals and persons close to them. They also explain available support to reduce or eliminate such risks and the help offered to improve the physical, emotional, and psychosocial wellbeing of the individuals.
- 2.4 If the best option would be to continue getting treatment/care in a residential service, after establishing an agreement with the same individuals, the key worker/staff member shall ensure that all the required information on the service is provided to the individuals.

Standard 2: Exercising Rights in a Therapeutic and Empowering Environment

Standard Statement:

Individuals are treated with respect and are ensured a holistic and dignified approach to care. The service provider encourages individuals' autonomy in decisions pertaining to the care provided.

Quality Indicator:

1. The service provider and all staff respect the dignity, rights, and individuality of all persons and help them realize their potential.

Standard 2: Exercising Rights in a Therapeutic and Empowering Environment

Quality Indicator 1

2.0 Quality Indicator: The service provider and all staff respect the dignity, rights, and individuality of all persons and help them realize their potential.

Performance Indicators:

The service provider ensures that:

- 1.1 The individuals' talents, preferences, and aspirations are acknowledged and respected.
- 1.2 Staff members always address individuals in a way as desired by the latter.
- 1.3 Individuals can discuss their needs with the staff members in a confidential and private manner.
- 1.4 The key worker should be available to the individuals under his/her care and should ensure that enough time is allocated for every individual encounter.
- 1.5 If individuals have experienced any form of abuse or trauma during their lifetime and they wish to speak about it, appropriate and specialised support is given.
- 1.6 All individuals are treated with respect and dignity in every aspect of their life.
- 1.7 Individuals have reasonable time to consider their choices, take decisions and express their feelings.
- 1.8 Individuals are supported to discuss with authorized persons the possibility of changing their key worker. Support is given to help them understand any limiting factors related to this choice.

Standard 3: Safeguarding the individuals' safety and security in all aspects of service provision

Standard Statement:

The physical, emotional and mental well-being and safety of the individuals shall be safeguarded at all times.

Quality Indicators:

1. The service provider promotes systems that ensure overall safety and security of all staff and individuals availing of the service.
2. The service provider responds in an effective and timely manner whenever the individuals express concerns or submit a complaint.

Standard 3: Safeguarding the individuals' safety and security in all aspects of service provision

Quality Indicator 1

1.0 Quality Indicator: The service provider promotes systems that ensure overall safety and security of all staff and individuals availing of the service.

Performance Indicators:

The service provider ensures that:

- 1.0 The premises from which the services are offered are safe, welcoming, physically accessible¹, and well maintained.
- 1.1 If the premises from which the services are offered are going to be upgraded, the SCSA shall be informed with immediate effect.
- 1.2 Individuals are not discriminated against on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, age, race/ethnic origin, religion/belief and gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics, language, family responsibilities or disability. Allegations of discrimination are fully investigated according to established procedures.
- 1.3 Regular evaluations of the service are performed to ensure that this remains in line with the needs of individuals at any point in time. Individuals are given the opportunity to participate in these evaluations, should they wish to do so.
- 1.4 Certificates and other documents confirming service registration with SCSA are displayed around the premises, in a location which is easily visible to all individuals availing of the service and visitors.

¹ The premises should conform to building regulations as stipulated by the Planning Authority and the Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability.

Standard 3: Safeguarding the individuals' safety and security in all aspects of service provision

Quality Indicator 2

2.0 Quality Indicator: The service provider responds in an effective and timely manner whenever the individuals express concern or submit a complaint.

Performance Indicators:

The service provider ensures that:

- 2.1 Individuals are able to discuss any concern they might have, at an appropriate time, without fearing retribution. This can be done with different people including the key worker, the management or a higher authority if required.
- 2.2 Individuals are informed on how to submit a complaint or how to comment to the service provider about the service being provided. They are also informed about the procedure to submit a complaint directly to the Social Care Standards Authority.
- 2.3 The management acknowledges all concerns and complaints put forward by individuals or other persons and informs the complainants of the proceedings and outcomes of any investigation following a complaint.

Standard 4: Promoting an effective system for the safekeeping of documentation and information dissemination

Standard Statement:

The service provider abides with data protection measures when it comes to using, processing, retaining, and disseminating confidential information about individuals availing of the service.

Quality Indicator:

1. The service provider ensures safe keeping and sharing of information pertaining to the individuals in line with respective laws and regulations.

Standard 4:

Promoting an effective system for the safekeeping of documentation and information dissemination

Quality Indicator 1

1.0 Quality Indicator: The service provider ensures safekeeping and sharing of information pertaining to the individuals in line with respective laws² and regulations.

Performance Indicators:

The service provider ensures that:

- 1.1 All confidential information about individuals availing of the service is securely stored and is only shared with others with their consent, unless the law requires otherwise.
- 1.2 Staff members inform individuals of the reasons why certain information cannot be kept confidential and who has access rights in accordance with the policies and procedures of the service.
- 1.3 All individuals availing of the service understand and respect boundaries with regards to confidentiality.

² Data Protection Act (Chapter 586 of the Laws of Malta)

Standard 5: Establishing and maintaining external relations

Standard Statement:

The service provider shall ensure comprehensiveness and continuity of care by being proactive towards maintaining positive collaborative relationships with persons close to the individuals as well as different professionals who can provide the necessary care.

Quality Indicators:

1. The service provider communicates with significant persons close to the individuals and retains such contact if it is in the best interest of the same individuals.
2. The service provider collaborates with third parties including professionals and support bodies so as to enhance the therapeutic experience of the individuals availing of the service.

Standard 5: Establishing and maintaining external relations

Quality Indicator 1

1.0 Quality Indicator: The service provider communicates with significant persons close to the individuals availing of the service and retains such contact if it is in the best interest of the same individuals.

Performance Indicators:

The service provider ensures that:

- 1.1 Families and persons significant to the individuals are respected and provided with the necessary support.
- 1.2 Individuals can ask their family or representative to support their own key worker and other staff members in communicating with them in the most appropriate manner and at their own pace.
- 1.3 The individuals' family or other representatives can discuss their concerns with staff members in private. Staff members value the opinion of these persons, acknowledge their expectations of the service and provide information on how their concern will be dealt with.

Standard 5: Establishing and maintaining external relations

Quality Indicator 2

2.0 Quality Indicator: The service provider collaborates with third parties including professionals and support bodies so as to enhance the therapeutic experience of the individuals availing of the service.

Performance Indicators:

The service provider ensures that:

- 2.1 If the individuals have an independent representative; staff members listen to what the representative has to say on their behalf, as if they were expressing the views personally.
- 2.2 The staff member/key worker shall establish links with external resources and services (for example employment) in order to establish a safety net for individuals for them to avoid relapsing or engaging in destructive habits. In this way individuals feel more empowered and maintain their peace of mind.
- 2.3 If the key worker/staff member refers the individuals to other services, any contact made or information shared shall be done with the consent of the individuals.
- 2.4 The key worker/staff member shall maintain good communication with any person/professional/entity that is somehow involved in the care of the individuals seeking help.
- 2.5 If individuals have needs that cannot be met by the service provider, then, with their consent, they should be referred to specialised professionals, persons or entities who can give the level and type of care that they need. All entities work together to reach a consensus and deliver a holistic service in the best interest of the individuals availing of the service.

Standard 6: Service Quality Management

Standard Statement:

The management and staff are accountable to deliver quality support and care in the most respectful and transparent manner.

Quality Indicators:

1. The service provider ensures a professional and ethical practice that is safe and appropriate to the emerging needs of the individuals availing of the service.
2. The service provider implements transparent recruitment strategies and plans for the continuous development of its staff.

Standard 6: Service Quality Management

Quality Indicator 1

1.0 Quality Indicator: The service provider ensures a professional and ethical practice that is safe and appropriate to the emerging needs of the individuals availing of the service.

Performance Indicators:

The service provider ensures that:

- 1.0 Staff members and volunteers who work directly with the individuals are supervised by competent persons.
- 1.1 All staff members use methods designed according to up-to-date knowledge and best-practice guidelines in accordance with the service's philosophy and objectives.
- 1.2 The management is continuously striving to improve practice.
- 1.3 The management and staff maintain effective communication between them and ensure continuity in the care provided.
- 1.4 Staff members perform their work according to the Code of Ethics and Practice of their profession and the Code of Ethics drawn up by the management of the service.
- 1.5 Staff shall be culturally sensitive and demonstrate the ability to communicate and interact with all individuals in a comfortable and appropriate manner, irrespective of the individuals' ethnicity or cultural background.
- 1.6 Staff shall use appropriate language when speaking with or about the individuals availing of the service in order to avoid discriminatory jargon.
- 1.7 Staff members and volunteers follow their job description and they do not carry out any tasks which are not within their competencies.

Standard 6: Service Quality Management

Quality Indicator 2

2.0 Quality Indicator: The service provider implements transparent recruitment strategies and plans for the continuous development of its staff.

Performance Indicators:

The service provider ensures that:

- 2.1 All staff members are adequately qualified, trained and/or experienced to carry out their tasks according to current best practice.
- 2.2 Staff members and volunteers working in office-based service provision have been recruited and selected following a thorough process which includes:
 - verification of identity;
 - verification of qualifications;
 - verification of police conduct; and
 - verification that the staff members and volunteers are free from any drug or alcohol related issues. Newly recruited staff members must not have been using drugs or misusing alcohol for at least two years prior to their employment. Any volunteers must not have been using drugs or misusing alcohol for at least one year prior to being allowed to provide their service.
- 2.3 The service has a procedure for the continuous professional development and ongoing training of all staff.
- 2.4 Staff supervision and performance appraisals are also carried out to identify any training needs required by staff members as well as to ensure optimal quality in service delivery.

Annex 1: Useful Reference Material

- ✓ The Social Care Standards Authority Act No. XV of 2018.
- ✓ Occupational Health and Safety Authority Act XXVII of 2000, as amended by Act XXXII of 2007; Legal Notice 426 of 2007; and Act X of 2013.
- ✓ Equality for Men and Women Act I of 2003, as amended by Legal Notice 427 of 2007; and Acts IV of 2009, IX of 2012, XVIII of 2014, and VII and XI of 2015.
- ✓ Data Protection Act No. XX of 2018.
- ✓ Access for All Design Guidelines 2011 (published by the then KNPD).
- ✓ The National Care Standards for Care Homes for people with drug and alcohol misuse problems, issued by the Scottish Care Commission.
- ✓ Provincial Addictions Treatment Standards of Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada.
- ✓ Service Standards for Addiction Therapeutic Communities developed by the Royal College of Psychiatrists and the Association of Therapeutic Communities together with the European Federation of Therapeutic Communities and the Australasian Therapeutic Communities Association.