



POLICIES

Risk Assessment and Risk Management

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Stonewall recognises that “risk factors” in a service users’ life increases the chances of that individual being either prone to abuse or of developing one or more behavioural issues. Such behaviour issues include, but are not limited to, self-harming behaviours such as alcohol and other drug use, suicide, and criminal behaviour.
- 1.2. Stonewall is concerned with the healthy development of service users in transition to independence. Therefore Stonewall is concerned with the issues that impede or impact on such transition.
- 1.3. Stonewall believes that the provision of services which are accessible, reliable and flexible, that provide reasonable choice and treat service users with respect, is key to providing excellent customer-focused risk management.
- 1.4. Stonewall believes that developing risk assessments in consultation with service users is essential in implementing our strong customer care ethos.
- 1.5. This document identifies the policies, standards and procedures to be followed by Stonewall Housing’s staff in the provision of risk assessment to tenants and advice service clients.
- 1.6. In respect to risk assessment Stonewall aims to:
 - Provide a customer orientated service that is value driven and puts the customer first
 - Provide a high standard of service within our resources
 - Set and monitor risk assessment procedures and take action to improve services as necessary
 - Be open to our service users’ ideas
 - Provide opportunities for tenants and advice service clients to influence decisions on the type and range of strategies that are offered to effectively tackle identified risks
 - Respect service users’ right to confidentiality
 - Put right errors that come to light or are brought to Stonewall Housing’s attention
- 1.7. Stonewall Housing is resourced to provide support to low - medium risk service users. However, where an existing service user develops high risk behaviours then appropriate risk management will be implemented and the advice and support of external agencies should be sought.

2. The link with the referral and application process

- 2.1. An initial assessment of risk will be carried out as part of the application process when an external agency makes a referral.
- 2.2. If any risk or potential risk has been identified as part of this process a more detailed assessment of risk and risk management plan will be conducted after the service user has been accommodated by Stonewall. Where an assessment has been conducted and the result is that the service user is found to present no or low risk see point 3.3 below.

- 2.3. However, where it is apparent during the referral, application and interview that there is an issue/issues of risk that staff believe is/are significant to an extent that they have doubts about whether an applicant should be provided accommodation, then they may conduct a risk assessment as a follow-on to the interview before making a decision as to whether the applicant should be offered service.
- 2.4. Furthermore, even where no risk has been identified and some become apparent during the course of contact the procedures below can be activated at any time and will be initiated immediately where a perceived risk becomes apparent.
- 2.5. A service user may request at any time that a risk assessment is conducted as they feel appropriate. Staff will treat such request as a priority and will respond within one working day.

3. The format of the risk assessment and risk management and review plan

- 3.1. The Risk Assessment and Management system is the formal basis for identifying and planning how to manage the risks of service users.
- 3.2. The Risk Assessment and Management system is made up of two parts:
 - **An initial Risk Assessment (Appendix 1)** - which aims to identify the risks that a service user may pose to themselves or others. This assessment covers specific areas such as:
 - Use of alcohol, drugs (prescribed or unprescribed) or solvents
 - Mental health history
 - Health
 - Vulnerability
 - History of violence or aggression
 - Offending history
 - Any other risk
 - **A Risk Management and Review Plan (Appendix 2)** - which takes the risks identified in the Risk assessment and sets out how they will be managed, including what support is required and what needs to be done, by whom and when.
- 3.3. Where the service user presents low or no risks as per the Risk Assessment carried out in the initial assessment, then risk management will be carried out as part of the Support Planning process.
- 3.4. The Risk Assessment process may be initiated at anytime if it is believed that the risk behaviour of a service user escalates
- 3.5. A service user may at anytime request a Risk Assessment and Risk Management and Review Plan.

4. Using the risk assessment and management system

4.1. Operational Principles

The Risk Assessment and Management System will operate taking into account the following principles:

- All staff will share responsibility for informing themselves and each other about risk assessment and management information.
- All risk assessment and risk management information pertaining to individual service users will be kept in a locked place on the individual's file when not in use.
- Service users will be offered a copy of their individual Risk Management and Review Plan and may request access to their Risk Assessment.

4.2. Undertaking the initial Risk Assessment

- Where a risk has been identified as part of the referral, application and interview process a Risk Assessment should be completed prior to acceptance onto the waiting list.
- As stated above it may also be initiated at any point where a risk becomes apparent.
- A member of staff will complete the Risk Assessment in conjunction with the service user.
- It is important that the Risk Assessment is carried out thoroughly but in a positive and sensitive way that reassures and affirms the service user.
- The line manager must sign the completed Assessment and Plan as soon as practically possible. The service user should also be asked to sign the completed Risk Assessment. Their signature will confirm:
 - That they agree with the information contained on the form (if they do not agree or have other comments they wish to make, there is space on the form to record this).
 - That they give permission for Stonewall Housing to gather any additional information or contact any other agency, that the service user has identified in the assessment, to seek further information about the risks identified. The applicant must also be advised that any sharing or disclosure of information on risks will be undertaken within the bounds of the organisation's Confidentiality and Data Protection Policies.

4.3. Completing the Risk Management and Review Plan

- A staff member will complete the Risk Management and Review Plan in conjunction with the service user.
- A service user may have an advocate or other person present to support them in the development of their Risk Management and Review Plan.
- In developing a Risk Management and Review Plan, particular emphasis needs to be placed on the service users' strengths and how they can participate in lessening the risks for themselves and others, whilst at the same time ensuring that the Plan is comprehensive and supportive.
- The timescales within which a Risk Management and Review Plan must be completed are:
 - Within 1 working day following the completion of an Assessment where a service user has been identified as having high risk.

- Within 3 working days following the completion of an Assessment where a service user has been identified as having low - medium risks.
- The line manager must sign the completed Plan as soon as practically possible. The service user should also be asked to sign the completed Risk Management Plan. Their signature will confirm:
 - That they agree with the information contained on the form (if they do not agree or have other comments they wish to make, there is space on the form to record this).
 - That they give permission for Stonewall Housing to gather any additional information or contact any other agency, that the service user has identified in the assessment, to seek further information about the risks identified. The applicant must also be advised that any sharing or disclosure of information on risks will be undertaken within the bounds of the organisation's Confidentiality and Data Protection Policies.
- Thereafter, the service users' assigned Housing Support Worker will monitor and review the service users' Risk Management and Review Plan.
- The Review will be carried out at the following intervals:
 - Fortnightly - High risk individuals
 - Monthly - Medium risk individuals
 - As part of the normal support planning processes for service users with low risks.

5. Suicide and self-harm Risk Management

- 5.1. All acts of self-harm, including all suicidal threats and gestures, must be taken seriously by Stonewall Housing staff and reported immediately to their line manager. Any service user who demonstrates suicidal or self-harm behaviours will be considered as being high risk.
- 5.2. Risk of suicide or self-harm is often related to an immediate crisis or may be an inappropriate form of regulating emotions. Providing strategies that include access to effective counselling, advice, and intervention should reduce the likelihood of a service user feeling that their situation is "out of control" and that they must face them alone
- 5.3. The provision of interventions for any suicidal or self-injurious behaviour will be made in an early, prompt, and appropriate manner. This response must involve an assessment of the service user's needs and feelings, including the service user's need for psychiatric help, counselling or behaviour management. Appropriate external professional mental health assistance and advice must be sought.
- 5.4. The line manager will ensure that a meeting of all appropriate support services that the service user is involved with is arranged. This meeting should address:
 - Current risk and identification of at-risk behaviour and predisposing factors
 - Identification of support needs and corresponding strategies to keep the service user safe
 - Appropriate intervention and management strategies

- 5.5. Those staff providing direct work with a service user who is at risk of suicide or self-harm may be posed with a situation that affects their own personal health and safety. Their direct line manager will closely monitor such situations.
- 5.6. Knowledge of self-harming and suicidal behaviour is an identified staff training and education requirement and suitable training options will be made available where appropriate.