

Implementation guidelines
for **Non-government
Community Services**

2010

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The revision of the National Standards for Mental Health services and the development of the corresponding Implementation Guidelines were funded by the Australian Government.

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Contents

This implementation guide for non-government community organisations accompanies the ten National Standards for Mental Health Services:

Standard 1. Rights and responsibilities

Standard 2. Safety

Standard 3. Consumer and carer participation

Standard 4. Diversity responsiveness

Standard 5. Promotion and prevention

Standard 6. Consumers

Standard 7. Carers

Standard 8. Governance, leadership and management

Standard 9. Integration

Standard 10. Delivery of care

10.1 Supporting recovery

10.2 Access

10.3 Entry

10.4 Assessment and review

10.5 Treatment and support

10.6 Exit and re-entry

The guide provides more detail about the implementation of the National Standards and how they apply to your service. It is one of three guideline documents developed by and for different sector groups. The other two are for:

- public mental health services and private hospitals
- private office based mental health services.

The guidelines were developed with input and recommendations from:

- the alcohol, tobacco and other drugs (ATOD) sector
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) community sector
- mental health consumers and carers.

The recommendations from these groups have been incorporated into the three implementation guidelines.

An electronic copy of the implementation guideline documents as well as the *National Standards for Mental Health Services* can be downloaded from the Mental Health Standing Committee website:

➤ <http://www.health.gov.au/mhsc>

What the guide contains

This implementation guide has been developed to help non-government providers of community mental health services across Australia to understand the National Standards for Mental Health Services (National Standards) and to assist them in implementing them.

It has three sections:

Section 1 is the introduction. It provides an overview to the history of standards for mental health service delivery in Australia, and the development of the revised National Standards.

The section contains the Principles of Recovery oriented mental health practice and the principles that underpin the National Standards.

It briefly examines the application of the National Standards in the non-government community mental health service sector context and explains why the National Standards are important for people with mental illness, their carers and families, the sector and the whole of the service system. It discusses the relationship between the National Standards and service accreditation. It includes discussion of how meeting the National Standards can be more than a compliance obligation, and that they can help in developing a quality assurance framework appropriate to the size, complexity and service types of an organisation.

Section 2 discusses each standard and its associated criteria from the perspective of the non-government community mental health sector. The National Standards and their associated criteria are designed for the whole of the mental health service system; however, for the non-government community mental health sector, some of the criteria may not apply and others may apply to only some service types.

Section 2 identifies the criteria associated with each standard, and explains whether they are applicable to all or only parts of the sector. It provides guidance about the intent of each standard, suggestions for evidence that might be used to demonstrate compliance and examples of practices and policies that will support compliance.

Most of the National Standards and their associated criteria are linked to others. The final part of Section 2 provides a cross referencing table to assist service providers to identify the links and avoid duplication in the development of evidence and policies and procedures.

Section 3 addresses the practical issues of implementation—who needs to be involved, what must be done and how it might be done.

It includes some practical suggestions on how to conduct a baseline assessment of current status against the National Standards. Tools are provided to assist service providers to assess their current practices against the National Standards and review progress during implementation. The use of these tools is not obligatory.

Section 3 also discusses how the initial assessment can identify opportunities for service improvement and be the basis for an ongoing commitment to, and development of, a culture of continuous quality in service management and delivery. This can involve boards, staff, consumers, carers, service delivery partners and funding bodies.

Note: These guidelines do not relate to publicly funded specialist community mental health services.