

Section 5: Working with the community

Standard 5.1	Building partnerships and integrated networks
Standard 5.2	Advocacy and community education

This Section has been renumbered to Section 5. The draft version of the Homelessness Assistance Service Standards dated January 2005 includes this Section and the standards therein as Section 6.

Overview of issues in this section

Organisations that work collaboratively with government and other providers will develop an enhanced understanding of emerging consumer and broader community needs. The development of integrated planning and shared partnership approaches between organisations may lead to improved service capacity and better outcomes for consumers.

In addition to the delivery of direct services, all organisations have a role to play in understanding and responding to systemic housing and homelessness issues. Good organisational practice should include regularly contributing to or participating in policy debate and broader advocacy and community education activities. Organisations that undertake and promote service system advocacy and community education work more effectively to challenge, represent, promote and respond to the rights and needs of all people who have been disempowered and isolated by the experience of housing crisis, family violence or homelessness.

Standard 5.1: Building partnerships and integrated networks

The organisation works to build strong partnerships and integrated networks to better support people experiencing or at risk of homelessness or family violence.

There is a direct link between providing quality services to people and working well with other organisations and services within the community.

The following features and examples are not meant to be exhaustive or prescriptive, but rather give some guidance to services in how to achieve this standard.

Documentation that can support good practice

Signposts of good practice

5.1.1

The organisation's written documentation reflects a commitment to building strong links and partnerships with other relevant organisations.

Further explanation and examples

Reflecting the commitment to partnership in documentation

The organisations mission and value statements, policies, procedures and planning approaches should demonstrate a commitment to building partnerships and alliances with other organisations. This may also be demonstrated by:

- protocols or memorandums of understanding with other organisations to define roles and responsibilities for direct service delivery or the development of new programs or research projects
- protocols or agreements for the delivery of shared resources, or co-located services
- development of joint funding submissions for new programs or resources
- development of regular publications, newsletters or reports.

Processes that can support good practice

Signposts of good practice

5.1.2

The organisation collaborates with other agencies to build partnerships that allow for improved services.

Further explanation and examples

Collaboration

The organisation may demonstrate collaboration by leading or participating in:

- local area network planning and implementation processes
- regional integrated family violence partnership approaches
- state peak body projects, meetings or consultations
- projects or activities
- mentoring or supporting like organizations
- development of collaborative business approaches and systems to increase financial efficiencies
- co-location of services or resources.

5.1.3

The organisation works to build a more integrated service system through partnerships with other agencies and through strategic networks.

Integrated networks

The organisation demonstrates participation in relevant service alliances, partnerships and networks with like organisations, peak bodies and other sectors (as appropriate).

Measuring outcomes to support good practice

Signposts of good practice

5.1.4

The organisation monitors and reviews the scope and effectiveness of organisational collaboration with other providers, groups or networks.

Further explanation and examples

Reviewing collaborative effort

This may include reviewing:

- frequency of organisational representation at meetings, working groups, reference groups or consultations processes
- how information from meetings or other projects and activities is shared with staff and other stakeholders
- the mechanisms for staff input into policy, program development, regional needs analysis or strategic planning processes
- outcomes from partnership or network planning processes, submissions and projects
- frequency of organisational representation at DHS regional meetings
- frequency of organisational representation at peak body consultations.

Standard 5.2: Advocacy and community education

The organisation advocates broadly for the needs of all people experiencing housing difficulties, including those people who are at risk of, or experiencing homelessness or family violence.

Organisational and service system capacity will be enhanced when organisations actively advocate for and promote community awareness of the needs of all people who are experiencing housing crisis, homelessness or family violence.

The following features and examples are not meant to be exhaustive or prescriptive, but rather give some guidance to services in how to achieve this standard.

Documentation that can support good practice

Signposts of good practice

5.2.1

The organisations documentation reflects a commitment to advocating broadly for the needs of people through active representation of issues at a local and Statewide level.

Further explanation and examples

Policies on advocacy and education

The organisation should demonstrate the capacity to identify and advocate on issues that affect all people who access the service, in addition to issues that affect certain groups of people, i.e. youth, people with disabilities or single parents. The organisations policies and procedures should reflect commitment to an ethical framework that guides advocacy activities.

Documentation may also include:

- organisational publications, reports and newsletters
- media comment, including media releases
- policy analysis and feedback to government
- research or needs analysis.

Signposts of good practice

5.2.2

The organisation works to engage the support and understanding of local communities in order to better assist people experiencing or at risk of homelessness or family violence.

5.2.3

The organisation is well informed of current policy developments and broader systemic issues in the homelessness, family violence and social housing sector.

Further explanation and examples

Building community support

The organisation may demonstrate this through:

- developing partnerships with local businesses and other community or service groups
- building a volunteer base
- developing a relationship with local and national radio broadcasting stations
- undertaking print media exercises and public speaking engagements
- working with State Government to provide policy comment and advice
- working with Local Government and Housing Associations or other housing providers to develop strategic planning processes or new developments
- participating in community education activities to highlight specific calendar events i.e. NAIDOC week, International Day For The Elimination of Violence Against Women, Refugee Week, Homelessness Sleep Out etc.
- facilitating conferences, forums or training opportunities.

Keeping informed about homelessness, family violence and social housing

The organisation may demonstrate this through:

- memberships of peak bodies and participation in specific forums or meetings
- regular attendance at housing, homelessness and family violence networks
- regular attendance at DHS consultations and planning days
- contributions to policy and program development and analysis
- subscriptions to newsletters or journals
- development of a library for current research and reports
- participation in state and national conferences
- involving consumers in focus groups or consultation processes.

Signposts of good practice

5.2.5

The organisation monitors the impact of its advocacy and community education efforts.

Further explanation and examples

Monitoring impact

Monitoring could include analysis of:

- regional or Statewide media coverage
- policy feedback or submissions completed and outcomes
- attendance at relevant meetings
- representation on relevant working groups
- donations received
- new funding received
- corporate partnerships or sponsorships
- guest speaking or training activities undertaken
- strategic projects or planning initiatives
- consumer and key stakeholder feedback
- allocation and use of staff resources.