

office for **youth**

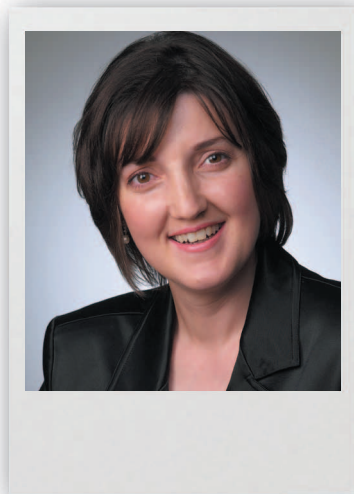
good practice guidelines

for supporting young people
who are homeless



Government
of South Australia

Office for Youth



Evidence shows that a high-quality service organisation that works with the young person to find a suitable solution is a key factor to a successful transition.

All young people deserve to feel positive about their health and wellbeing, to be safe from harm and to have access to secure and affordable housing.

The responsibility for assisting young people to transition out of homelessness is shared across government and the community. We all have a role to play. These guidelines have been developed in partnership with the youth sector to not only provide some benchmarks that all youth homelessness organisations can work towards, but also to recognise the excellent work that is currently being delivered across the sector.

It is anticipated that through the adoption of these guidelines, and the provision of consistent, high-quality services, any young person who may experience homelessness does so for only a short time.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hon Grace Portolesi'.

Hon Grace Portolesi

Minister for Youth

acknowledgments

We would like to thank the following organisations and their representatives who willingly gave their time and expertise to oversee the development of the Good Practice Guidelines for Supporting Young People who are Homeless:

- Aboriginal Family Support Services
- Centacare
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services – Adolescent Services Enfield Campus
- Multicultural Youth SA
- Service to Youth Council
- The Minister’s Youth Council (MYC)
- Uniting Care Wesley Adelaide
- Department of Education and Children’s Services – Child and Student Wellbeing Unit
- Department for Families and Communities – Homelessness Strategy Branch
- Department of Premier and Cabinet – Social Inclusion Unit

We also offer our thanks to the many individuals from community organisations and local and state government agencies who participated in the consultation workshops.

Finally, a special acknowledgement and thanks to the young people who shared their experiences of the homelessness service system and to the organisations that made it possible for them to participate in this process.

Until now service responses to young people who are homeless in South Australia have depended largely on the commitment of the organisations who work with young people and the experience, skills and dedication of individual workers.

South Australia's homelessness sector encompasses a rich diversity of knowledge and approaches across services and individual workers. These guidelines seek to document and formalise the high-quality practices and procedures which have been developed by many youth organisations and their staff and to establish a benchmark of agreed good practice.

The guidelines comprise information that will strengthen organisational responses, and support the vital role performed by workers who work daily with young people who are homeless. They aim to reflect the diverse range of needs and backgrounds of young people and support responses appropriate to their needs.

The Good Practice Guidelines were developed by the Office for Youth, Attorney-General's Department. The guidelines have been informed by consultation with young people, adults, government agencies and the non-government organisations working directly with young people who are homeless, along with a review of the literature on best practice.

Purpose of the Guidelines

The Good Practice Guidelines will:

- Establish an agreed benchmark for good practice through 29 practice standards
- Provide clear guidelines to young people and other stakeholders on what can be expected from a service
- Support organisations in delivering consistent high-quality services for young people
- Increase understanding of the needs of young people who are homeless
- Improve the quality of responses to young people who access the homelessness service system.

Young people who are homeless are one of the most powerless and marginalised groups in society. Becoming homeless has serious negative impacts on the physical and mental health of young people.

Homelessness is very stressful and places a young person in an extremely vulnerable and potentially unsafe situation. It can cause major disruptions to a young person's schooling which can have life-long consequences. Many young people who are homeless are also dealing with issues such as grief and loss, trauma, sexual assault and domestic violence, as well as managing all the physical, cognitive and emotional developmental changes that occur during adolescence and young adulthood.

Many situations can lead a young person into homelessness, from high rent or unemployment through to more complex and compounding issues. Family breakdown, domestic and family violence, abuse and trauma, poor health, mental illness and substance abuse are common, and homeless young people often have multiple and complex needs. Those young people who have previously been under the Guardianship of the Minister are particularly vulnerable to becoming homeless as they are often without extended family networks to offer shelter and support when required.

Young people who are migrants or refugees face additional challenges including learning a new language and making sense of a new culture. They may also have long-term health issues that have not been adequately addressed, as well as having a limited knowledge or understanding of the homelessness service system. Young refugees have often experienced trauma and as a result may also be experiencing a range of mental health issues.

Although each young person's experience and circumstance are unique, all young people share some common needs. These include the need for a stable home environment, supportive friends, good health and wellbeing, being cared about by others, access to educational support, receiving help when they need it, and being able to rely on the adults in their lives.

The responsibility for assisting young people to move on from homelessness is shared across government and the community: we all have a role to play. When young people receive quality services and support to assist them to move out of homelessness quickly, it reduces their risk of becoming homeless in their adult lives, and assists them to reach their full potential as active, happy and productive community members.

the good practice principles

The practice guidelines are based on ten principles. These principles come from *youthconnect*, South Australia's Youth Strategy 2010-2014.

The guidelines expand on each principle and include an expected outcome, an identified practice standard and minimum practice guidelines.

- 1 Safe and secure** The safety, security, health and wellbeing of young people is a priority.
- 2 Strengths-based approach** Programs and services build on young people's individual assets, culture, skills, interests, abilities and competencies to enhance protective factors and build resilience.
- 3 Respect and empowerment** Young people are treated with dignity. Their knowledge, culture, experience, strengths and choices are respected.
- 4 Participation and engagement** Young people's connection with their family and community is recognised and youth participation is central to the design and delivery of policies, programs and services.
- 5 Recognising diversity** Responses to young people are inclusive and tailored to each individual's unique needs, experiences, beliefs, culture, interests, talents and abilities.
- 6 Privacy and confidentiality** Young people's confidentiality is respected. They are informed how their information will be shared and of situations where confidentiality is limited.
- 7 Access and equity** Programs and services are physically, technically and financially accessible and culturally safe to all young people, recognising the diversity of urban, regional and remote needs.
- 8 Co-ordination and integration** Young people's needs are responded to holistically. Government and non-government organisations work in partnership with the community to provide co-ordinated, integrated responses.
- 9 Quality outcomes** Young people receive quality responses from appropriately skilled workers. Programs and services undergo regular and transparent performance monitoring, review and evaluation.
- 10 Adaptability** Service delivery strategies are designed to be easily adapted in response to the changing needs of young people, the organisation and the emergence of new technology.

principle 1.

safe and secure

The safety, security, health and wellbeing of young people is a priority.

Access to safe and secure accommodation and support is essential for young people to experience positive health and wellbeing, to engage with their community socially, recreationally and economically and to move on from homelessness. Young people need access to a consistent and stable home environment where they can feel good about themselves and be accepted and valued for who they are. Organisations offer young people a safe and secure place that is free from violence and abuse, bullying and harassment and has a positive influence on young people's physical and mental health.

Organisations work to establish positive relationships with young people and recognise young people's previous life experiences may significantly impact on their capacity to build relationships with others. Workers assist young people to regulate their own behaviour by responding to emotional outbursts in a calm, warm and supportive manner. Staff utilise non-violent crisis prevention intervention techniques to identify and diffuse potentially hostile situations between residents to prevent them from escalating into violence.

- All young people have the right to be safe from violence, abuse and exploitation and from the threat of violence at all times. Organisations recognise that domestic and family violence is one of the main causes of all homelessness. Young people who are homeless as a result of domestic violence from a parent or partner may be more unsafe once they have left the situation than previously.
- Programs and services work with young people to identify any immediate safety concerns and respond appropriately in accordance with their needs.

Expected Outcome:

- Young people are safe and experience positive health and wellbeing.

1.1

The organisation's premises are physically secure.

Minimum Practice Guidelines

- 1.1.1 The service has adequate security in place to meet the safety needs of young people and workers.
- 1.1.2 Young people have a safe place to secure their own belongings.
- 1.1.3 Young people can access the organisation's mail box address and phone number.
- 1.1.4 Young people can contact appropriate after-hours support if required.
- 1.1.5 The organisation's emergency procedures are clearly displayed.

1.2

The organisation creates a relaxed, comfortable and welcoming environment that promotes safety and security for young people.

Minimum Practice Guidelines

- 1.2.1 Workers demonstrate youth-friendly values and attitudes.
- 1.2.2 The organisation provides a safe and secure home environment that is welcoming to young people, and offers age-appropriate furnishings, resources and activities.
- 1.2.3 The organisation provides a culturally sensitive and inclusive environment. Relevant information for specific groups is available and displayed, including for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and young migrants and refugees.
- 1.2.4 The organisation responds to young people's immediate needs and provides food, clothing and footwear, personal hygiene, health, bedding and educational requirements as required.
- 1.2.5 The organisation works with the young person to identify suitable long-term secure accommodation options.

1.3

Safety risks for young people are identified and responded to.

Minimum Practice Guidelines

- 1.3.1 The organisation has a safety and risk assessment process in place to identify potential risks to the young person's safety and wellbeing. The worker assists the young person to develop a safety plan and regularly reviews the plan.
- 1.3.2 The organisation has a policy for reporting suspected child abuse and neglect.
- 1.3.3 The organisation has a policy for reporting the disclosure of serious criminal offences committed against the young person.
- 1.3.4 The organisation ensures staff have a clear understanding of the nature of domestic and family violence and sexual assault, and are trained to respond appropriately to disclosures of abuse and violence.
- 1.3.5 The organisation has established referral networks with health organisations, domestic violence organisations, sexual assault organisations, child protection, and police.
- 1.3.6 Workers engage in non-violent crisis prevention intervention techniques between residents to diffuse situations that could escalate into violence between residents.
- 1.3.7 In the event of violence between residents or a threat of violence, staff will make an effort to ensure the safety of young people and others.

1.4

The organisation provides an environment that encourages good health through promoting the benefits of healthy eating and exercise, reducing alcohol, tobacco and other drugs and providing support for quitting smoking.

Minimum Practice Guidelines

- 1.4.1 The organisation makes available fresh, healthy and nutritious food, promotes drinking water and encourages young people to make healthy food choices and to consume a variety of foods from each of the five food groups daily.
- 1.4.2 The organisation encourages safe physical activity including sport and recreation.
- 1.4.3 The organisation provides opportunities for staff to participate in training to enable them to be competent in responding to young people's concerns related to tobacco, alcohol and other drug use and its potential for reduction of harm.

1.5

Organisations recognise that young people's connection to their families and support systems are important.

Minimum Practice Guideline

- 1.5.1 Organisations will work with young people to re-engage with parents, families, carers and significant others where appropriate.



Notes

Programs and services build on young people's individual assets, culture, skills, interests, abilities and competencies to enhance protective factors and build resilience.

Organisations will utilise a strengths-based approach that recognises each young person has unique strengths, skills and abilities and the capacity to determine their own needs and goals. Case management is a collaborative process between the young person and the worker, that encourages young people to identify and develop their strengths and assets. Each young person has abilities and capacities that can be valued, fostered and encouraged.

Workers assist young people to identify their aspirations enabling the young person to focus on what they are interested in. Workers come to an agreement with the young person about the best way to achieve those goals.

The organisation recognises each young person will have different strengths and unique needs and acknowledges the existence of any barriers that may be preventing a young person from achieving their goals.

Expected Outcome:

Young people are resilient and confident with positive self-esteem.

2.1

Organisations will encourage, support and implement a strengths-based approach that fosters the skills, capabilities and assets of young people.

Minimum Practice Guidelines

- 2.1.1 Staff build quality relationships with young people and deliver a strengths-based approach that focuses on young people's strengths, celebrates past achievements and recognises their current and future needs.
- 2.1.2 Organisations support the training and development of staff to ensure workers have the necessary skills required to develop successful relationships with young people within a strengths-based model.
- 2.1.3 Organisations support young people through transitions recognising successes and assisting in preparing the young person for new challenges ahead to enable them to move successfully out of supported accommodation.

2.2

Each young person has the opportunity to actively participate in the case management process that is strengths-based and emphasises long-term solutions.

Minimum Practice Guidelines

- 2.2.1 The organisation actively encourages each young person to participate in the development of their own case plan in collaboration with significant others. This may include family, parents, carers and education representatives and provide any supports necessary to enable their participation.
- 2.2.2 The organisation regularly reviews the case plan and goals with the young person and it is updated accordingly.
- 2.2.3 The organisation acknowledges the strengths and skills of parents and families and where appropriate supports them to increase their confidence and capacity to respond to the needs of the young person.
- 2.2.4 Organisations provide opportunities for young people to participate in programs and activities which develop their strengths and increase their confidence, skills and self-esteem.



Notes

principle 3.

respect and empowerment

Young people are treated with dignity. Their knowledge, culture, experience, strengths and choices are respected.

Respect is essential to building positive relationships with young people. Young people have a right to be treated with dignity and respect. Organisations recognise that each young person is an individual with unique experiences, backgrounds, culture, knowledge, and their own history with other organisations.

Organisations hold a genuine positive regard for young people. Workers actively work to build respectful relationships with each young person so they feel comfortable, welcomed, valued, cared for and understood.

Workers are aware of the how their own beliefs, values and cultural identities may influence their work with young people. Workers avoid making assumptions about the beliefs of others and respect their right to have views that differ from their own. Workers demonstrate respect in their interactions with young people and their families and seek to promote their dignity, individuality, rights, responsibilities and culture.

: Organisations are committed to upholding each
: young person's right to self-determination. Young
: people are encouraged to make their own choices
: and are given appropriate information so they may
: make informed decisions about issues related to
: their own wellbeing and the choice of services they
: wish to access. Organisations ensure all information
: provided to young people is accurate, timely, relevant
: and easy to understand so the young person can
: make their own informed decisions.

Expected Outcome:

: Young people are empowered to make informed
: decisions about their future and positive life choices.

3.1

Young people experience empathetic, accepting and non-judgmental service delivery.

Minimum Practice Guidelines

- 3.1.1** Workers build a positive rapport with young people to encourage the young person's confidence and trust in the worker.
- 3.1.2** Workers treat young people with respect and dignity at each and every contact.
- 3.1.3** Workers show compassion for the young person and acknowledge and validate the young person's experience.

3.2

Young people are treated as individuals and are not stereotyped according to their cultural background, sexual preference, religious or other affiliation, or individual needs or differences.

Minimum Practice Guidelines

- 3.2.1** The organisation ensures workers receive training on working with young people with diverse needs.
- 3.2.2** The organisation's policies and processes reflect a commitment to providing culturally competent services.
- 3.2.3** The organisation has clear information about its services available in relevant community languages and it is presented in a culturally appropriate way.
- 3.2.4** Workers have knowledge of the different social and cultural groups represented in the local community and understand the social and historical factors relevant to their current circumstances.

3.3

Young people are provided with information to meet their needs and are assisted to identify their preferred option.

Minimum Practice Guidelines

- 3.3.1** The organisation maintains an up-to-date file of information and resources available.
- 3.3.2** Staff use interpreters as required with the consent of the young person.



Notes



principle 4.

participation and engagement

Young people's connection with their family and community is recognised and youth participation is central to the design and delivery of policies, programs and services.

Young people have a right to voice their opinion, have their views listened to and to be taken seriously. The organisation is committed to involving young people in the development of services and provides opportunities for young people to participate.

Staff work collaboratively with young people through the case management process to identify their goals and aspirations and provide clear information to assist them to make decisions about which services they receive and organisations they choose to access.

Organisations work to reduce isolation for young people that is associated with homelessness by working with young people to create connections with the community. Organisations provide young people with information about services available in their local area, for example libraries and shops. Organisations assist young people to participate in their communities through sporting activities, education, training and employment, community events, and after-school activities such as youth groups and cultural activities.

Expected Outcome:

Young people are connected to their families and communities, and their views and opinions are considered in all aspects of decision-making that affect them.

4.1

The organisation's mission and values reflect a commitment to youth participation.

Minimum Practice Guidelines

- 4.1.1 The organisation has a written policy that outlines a commitment to youth participation.
- 4.1.2 Young people are actively encouraged and supported to participate in the development, monitoring and review of their case plan.
- 4.1.3 The organisation consults with young people about changes to service delivery that directly affect them.
- 4.1.4 The organisation actively engages, involves and empowers young people in the development of organisational participation strategies. Young people are compensated adequately for participating in organisational development.
- 4.1.5 Young people are informed about ways they can contribute to and participate in the organisation's decision-making. Barriers that prevent or limit young people from participating are identified and resolved.

4.2

Young people's complaints are addressed quickly, respectfully and fairly without recrimination.

Minimum Practice Guidelines

- 4.2.1 The organisation has a grievance procedure for young people to make a complaint or appeal a decision, and young people are informed about the process.
- 4.2.2 The organisation responds to complaints by young people promptly and respectfully.
- 4.2.3 Young people are informed of how to access support to make a complaint.

4.3

Young people are supported to establish connections with their communities.

Minimum Practice Guidelines

- 4.3.1** Organisations offer information to young people about learning and education pathways and community services and resources available including sporting clubs, community groups, youth groups, and other community organisations.
- 4.3.2** The organisation offers young people assistance with access to transport so they may attend appointments, education, training and employment.
- 4.3.3** The organisation is able to assist young people to complete homework if required.
- 4.3.4** The organisation provides access to the internet and phone.



Notes

principle 5.

recognising diversity

Responses to young people, are inclusive and tailored to each individual's unique needs, experiences, beliefs, culture, interests, talents and abilities.

The organisations culture and values reflect the intrinsic worth of every young person accommodated. Organisations recognise each young person is unique with their own social, economic, cultural, racial, religious and sexual identity and backgrounds. Organisations accept and value the differences between young people and work to create an inclusive, safe and respectful environment where all young people are treated fairly and equally.

Staff work to increase their knowledge of other cultures and acknowledge the cultural connections young people have. Organisations and workers recognise that cultural knowledge, beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviour are not equally shared between people of any culture and so avoid making assumptions about young people's needs.

Expected Outcome:

Young people experience a culturally inclusive environment.

5.1

Young people's Aboriginal cultural, spiritual and religious heritage is respected.

Minimum Practice Guidelines

- 5.1.1** The organisation has a written policy that outlines a commitment to providing culturally appropriate services to Aboriginal young people.
- 5.1.2** Workers are respectful of Aboriginal culture and recognise how it relates to young people's sense of identity and self-esteem.
- 5.1.3** The organisation has developed culturally appropriate ways of working within family and extended family structures and relationships.
- 5.1.4** Workers are aware of how culture and their own racial and cultural identities impacts on their own values and decision-making.
- 5.1.5** The organisation actively confronts racism and discrimination.

5.2

The cultural and linguistically diverse heritage of young people is respected.

Minimum Practice Guidelines

- 5.2.1** The organisation's policies reflect a commitment to provide culturally sensitive services.
- 5.2.2** Workers attend training on cultural awareness and working with interpreters.
- 5.2.3** Young people are able to maintain their dietary customs according to religion or culture.
- 5.2.4** The organisation has guidelines for using a qualified professional interpreter services.
- 5.2.5** The organisation provides information about the services it offers, translated into the appropriate community languages and presented in a culturally appropriate manner.

5.3

The sexual orientation and sexual identity of young people is respected.

Minimum Practice Guideline

5.3.1 The organisation has a written policy that prohibits harassment and discrimination of young people based on their sexual orientation and gender identity.

5.4

The developmental differences between individual young people are considered in service delivery.

Minimum Practice Guideline

5.4.1 The organisation tailors services to ensure developmental differences based on age, skills and life experiences are taken into consideration.



Notes

principle 6.

privacy and confidentiality

Young peoples confidentiality is respected. They are informed of how information will be shared and of situations where confidentiality is limited.

Young people accessing homelessness services have the right to have their confidentiality and privacy respected and to be informed of situations where that confidentiality is limited.

Service providers are required to act in ways that work to increase young people's safety, security, health and wellbeing. It is often legitimate and necessary to exchange and share information between services to protect young people and provide the young person with access to the most appropriate and effective service possible. Organisations inform young people of circumstances in which information about them may be shared. In such situations the Information Sharing Guidelines for Promoting Safety and Wellbeing of Children, Young People and their Families provide guidance on how to share information.

Expected Outcome:

Young people's privacy is protected and young people have a clear understanding of how their personal information will be used by the service and the circumstances in which their personal information is shared.

6.1

Each young person's right to confidentiality and privacy is respected.

Minimum Practice Guidelines

- 6.1.1 The organisation has a confidentiality policy that outlines how young people's privacy and confidentiality will be upheld, and how personal information is shared and under which circumstances.
- 6.1.2 The organisation engages professional interpreting services to protect the confidentiality and privacy of young people for whom English is a second language.
- 6.1.3 The confidentiality policy is explained to young people and is clearly displayed.
- 6.1.4 The organisation informs young people about how it stores and manages their personal information and how they can access their file and other information held by the organisation.
- 6.1.5 The organisation uses an interview room, or a private space, for collecting personal information from young people to ensure privacy.
- 6.1.6 The organisation respects the privacy of the personal living space and belongings of young people accommodated.

6.2

Young people's files are kept secure.

Minimum Practice Guidelines

- 6.2.1 The organisation has a record-keeping policy that outlines who may access client information, how young people can access their own records held by the service, and how and when young people's files will be destroyed.
- 6.2.2 The service keeps all client information, files, records and client data secure, including information stored electronically, and client files are destroyed in a confidential manner.

6.3

Workers understand their own legal and ethical obligations and responsibilities in relation to information sharing.

Minimum Practice Guidelines

- 6.3.1** The organisation adopts the Information Sharing Guidelines for Promoting Safety and Wellbeing of Children, Young People and their Families and has a policy in place that outlines the circumstances in which information is shared between external services and government agencies, and how the information is to be shared.
- 6.3.2** The organisation has agreed formal processes and structures in place with other external organisations about how information is shared between services.
- 6.3.3** The organisation seeks informed consent for information sharing except if doing so would place another person at risk of harm.



Notes

principle 7.

access and equity

Programs and services are physically, technically and financially accessible and culturally safe to all young people, recognising the diversity of urban, regional and remote needs.

Access to safe and secure accommodation is every young person's right. Organisations promote their services widely and utilise strategies that specifically target young migrants and refugees. Organisations participate in youth networks to build their knowledge base of the programs, services, and supports available within specialised agencies, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups and multicultural organisations, disability services, mental health services, alcohol or substance abuse services and domestic violence agencies.

Organisations provide a warm and welcoming environment that is physically accessible to all young people in the target group, and services are provided on a fair and equal basis. Organisations recognise the needs of young parents and provide a child-friendly play space and toys for children. The organisation recognises young migrants and young refugees face additional barriers to accessing services and are less likely to have knowledge of the homelessness service system or how to access services available.

To ensure accessibility to young migrants and refugees, organisations provide regular outreach to places young people frequent, including schools, community groups, health services and Centrelink.

Young people are informed about how they can access other services in the homelessness service system and are supported in the transition to adult services if required.

Organisations will adopt a 'no wrong door' approach to accepting referrals. In situations where the needs of the young person are not able to be met by the organisation, the organisation will work with the young person to locate suitable alternative accommodation. Organisations recognise the issues leading to homelessness are complex and young people may require accommodation and support on more than one occasion. Any young person who may have left the service previously under negative circumstances will be considered for accommodation and support, and the appropriate mechanisms will be put in place to enable this.

Organisations endeavour to recruit staff from diverse backgrounds that reflect the cultural backgrounds, gender and age of the young people accommodated. Staffing hours are responsive to the hours young people are likely to require support.

Expected Outcome:

Young people have equitable access to the accommodation and support they need when required.

7.1

The organisation is physically accessible to young people.

Minimum Practice Guidelines

- 7.1.1** The organisation's premises are linked by public transport and are physically accessible by wheelchair and pram.
- 7.1.2** The organisation's operating hours and staffing roster reflect the needs of young people seeking assistance.

7.2

The organisation makes its services accessible to all young people within the target group.

Minimum Practice Guidelines

- 7.2.1** The organisation has a clearly written access and equity policy that reflects a commitment to providing equitable support to young people.
- 7.2.2** The organisation has clear admission criteria for accepting referrals that is fair, and does not discriminate or exclude particular young people.
- 7.2.3** In situations where the needs of the young person are not able to be met by the organisation, the organisation will assist the young person to locate alternative suitable accommodation and support.
- 7.2.4** The organisation has a written policy on equal employment opportunity and seeks to recruit staff from backgrounds that reflect the client group, including gender, age, race, ability, and cultural background.
- 7.2.5** The organisation works in partnership with Aboriginal organisations and services for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and disability services and workers have knowledge of the services available.

- 7.2.6** The organisation assists young parents to access appropriate childcare to enable them to access support, groups, counselling and other activities.
- 7.2.7** The organisation has a child-friendly space available for children equipped with toys and activities to accommodate the needs of young parents.
- 7.2.8** The organisation distributes information about services provided to other community organisations, health services, local schools and youth networks.
- 7.2.9** The organisation provides regular outreach to places young people frequent, including other services, schools, health services and Centrelink.



Notes

principle 8.

co-ordination and integration

Young people's needs are responded to holistically. Government and non-government organisations work in partnership with the community to provide co-ordinated, integrated responses.

Young people frequently enter the homelessness service system with other issues that need to be addressed. Organisations recognise young people with particularly high and complex needs may require support from other specialist agencies, and will work to develop inter-sectorial partnerships to ensure young people's needs are responded to holistically. This may require organisations with differing knowledge bases and professional practices to communicate with one another, share information and plan for co-ordinated service delivery and an agreed plan for case management, to ensure appropriate support is provided and smooth transition between services.

Expected Outcome:

Young people have access to a range of relevant services and support.

8.1

The organisation develops relationships with key agencies in order to refer and advocate for the needs of young people.

Minimum Practice Guidelines

- 8.1.1** The organisation's policies and procedures reflect a commitment to building partnerships with other organisations.
- 8.1.2** The organisation participates in local service networks and inter-agency activities to stay informed about current programs on offer to young people. The organisation provides updated information about their services to other agencies.
- 8.1.3** The organisation has an up to date resource list to assist when making referrals for young people and their families.

8.1.4 Workers have knowledge of the other services and resources available in the community and how to refer young people when required, including but not limited to:

- Culturally specific services and services for refugees
- Services for Aboriginal young people
- Domestic and family violence organisations
- Sexual assault organisations
- Police
- Community legal services
- Court
- Child protection services
- Mental health services
- Counselling and support
- Health services
- Maternal health
- Drug and alcohol services
- Problem gambling
- Centrelink
- Childcare
- Educational programs and employment services
- Recreation and sporting facilities.

8.2

The organisation's policies and procedures clearly identify how case coordination occurs both within the organisation and outside between external service providers.

Minimum Practice Guideline

8.2.1 The organisation has clearly documented and agreed procedures internally and with external service providers on how coordination and case management practices will occur and may include:

- Memoranda of understanding between agencies
- Interagency protocols
- Clear referral guidelines
- Guidelines for shared case management
- Guidelines for managing grievances.



Notes

principle 9.

quality outcomes

Young people receive quality responses from appropriately skilled workers. Programs and services undergo regular, and transparent performance monitoring, review and evaluation.

Working with young people in crisis can be very rewarding, however it can also be incredibly demanding. For organisations to continue to provide high-quality services to young people it is essential frontline staff working with young people are supported in their role and have the skills necessary to enable them to respond to the diverse needs of young people.

A supportive work environment and positive workplace culture builds the morale of workers and helps to increase staff retention rates, keeping knowledge in the organisation, improving organisational performance and effectiveness, and enhancing outcomes for young people. The responsibility for positive organisational culture and wellbeing of staff is shared between individual workers and the organisation. Organisations offer access to training and professional supervision to enable workers to increase their knowledge and skills, and to actively reflect on their practice, assess their own effectiveness, gain support, address organisational and practice issues, and identify professional education requirements.

- Organisations undertake ongoing monitoring, evaluation and review of services to improve and enhance the quality of existing programs. Monitoring and evaluation provide evidence to support their performance and help organisations to assess program effectiveness and improve or develop a new program.

Expected Outcome:

- Young people receive a high standard of service provision.

9.1

Organisations recognise the importance of professional development for staff and are committed to providing opportunities for staff to participate in training.

Minimum Practice Guidelines

- 9.1.1** Organisations provide training and professional development opportunities to staff to enhance their knowledge and develop the skills to respond appropriately to young people's diverse needs.
- 9.1.2** The organisation has a process for identifying staff training needs across a range of areas that may include the following:
- Crisis intervention skills
 - Aboriginal cultural awareness
 - Cultural competence
 - Working with interpreters
 - Issues for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender and queer (LGBTQ) youth
 - Working with young people with disabilities
 - Working with young people with mental health issues
 - Working with young people affected by domestic violence
 - Substance and drug abuse awareness
 - Post-traumatic stress disorder
 - Grief and loss
 - Self care
 - Access and equity issues.

9.2

The organisation provides staff with adequate supervision and support appropriate to their level of experience and skills.

Minimum Practice Guidelines

- 9.2.1** The organisation monitors and reviews staff caseloads with respect to clients with high or complex needs.
- 9.2.2** The organisation undertakes staff performance appraisals, updates job descriptions and competencies, and ensures appropriate training and professional development opportunities are available as required.
- 9.2.3** Organisations foster cross-program or sector networking opportunities to enhance personal and professional development of staff.
- 9.2.4** The organisation provides regular opportunities for staff to share information.
- 9.2.5** Workers actively participate in supervision with skilled supervisors.

9.3

The organisation monitors and evaluates its work with young people to ensure it provides a quality service.

Minimum Practice Guidelines

- 9.3.1** The organisation regularly reviews policies, procedures and guidelines to ensure it is consistent with current practices and legislative requirements.
- 9.3.2** The organisation encourages young people to participate in the service planning, monitoring and evaluation and provides any support and resources necessary to enable them to participate.
- 9.3.3** The organisation monitors the service culture to ensure young people's rights and responsibilities are promoted and grievance procedures and conflict resolution processes are adhered to.
- 9.3.4** The organisation seeks feedback from other relevant external organisations as part of any evaluation process.



Notes

Lined writing area with horizontal lines for notes.

principle 10.

adaptability

Service delivery strategies are designed to be easily adapted in response to the changing needs of young people, the organisation and the emergence of new technology.

Organisations adopt a client-centred approach and recognise young people's needs are likely to change throughout the support period. The organisation regularly provides opportunities for young people to review and update their goals and case plan in respect to their changing circumstances, recognising the level of support required by young people is likely to change over time in response to their changing individual needs and circumstances. Services provided to young people are flexible and responsive, and are able to adapt as needed within the scope and financial capacity of the service.

Organisations recognise technology plays a huge role in the lives of young people providing access to information, knowledge, employment opportunities, skill development, improved education, social participation and communication with one another. Organisations keep up with young people's use of technology.

Expected Outcome:

Young people receive support that reflects their individual needs and circumstances.

10.1

Young people receive support that is flexible and responsive to their needs.

Minimum Practice Guidelines

- 10.1.1** Organisations have policies and procedures for case management planning and review.
- 10.1.2** Organisations consider alternative methods of working if a young person is not willing to engage, such as changing case workers or offering a group work model.

10.2

Young people are able to access technology and the internet.

Minimum Practice Guideline

- 10.2.1** Organisations recognise young people's need to access technology and the internet and where possible provide access to computer technology.

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

- The International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination
- The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

- Declaration on the Rights of the Child
- Declaration on the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons
- Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons
- Declaration on the Elimination of all Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief

Legislation to the Above Covenants and Declarations

- *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*
- *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1992*

Other Legislation

- *Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1994*
- *Domestic Violence Act 1994*
- *Disability Services Act 1986*
- *Anti-Discrimination Act 1977*
- *Social Security Act 1991*
- *Housing Assistance Act 1996*
- *National SAAP Standards 1996*

Other Frameworks

- National Affordable Housing Agreement and National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness
- **youthconnect** – South Australia's Youth Strategy 2010-2014

Other Resources and Useful Links

- Eat Well Australia
- The Australian Dietary Guidelines
- The Physical Activity Guidelines for Australians
- Information Sharing Guidelines
- Guidelines for Promoting the Safety and Wellbeing of Children, Young People and their Families (2008) The State of South Australia
- Translating and Interpreter Service National



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Office for Youth

contact us

The Good Practice Guidelines were developed by the Office for Youth, Attorney-General's Department, South Australia, published in April 2011.

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