

Approved Counselling Service

Information Sheet Approved Counsellor Audit Plan

This information sheet provides Approved Counsellors with an overview of Victims Services new approach to auditing Approved Counsellors.

Introduction

Victims Services acknowledges the high level of skills and experience that all Approved Counsellors bring to the Approved Counselling Service (ACS). As part of Victims Services quality assurance practices, we will be regularly auditing Approved Counsellors as part of our Audit Plan.

This Audit Plan will assist Victims Services to:

- Maintain the integrity of the ACS
- Monitor and improve compliance with its business rules, practice guidelines and ethical and clinical standards
- Verify that services are being provided to the requisite standard
- Identify and respond to unprofessional and/or fraudulent behaviour by Approved Counsellors to reduce the risk of such behaviour
- Ensure continuous improvement by identifying systemic issues

What does an audit involve?

The Audit Plan comprises of 4 separate strategies:

Strategy	Approach
Random and targeted Approved Counsellor quality assurance audits	This will involve gathering and considering information about the Counsellor's activity under the ACS to identify any issues. This may include: information in relation to their workload, invoices, and over 22 hours reports; client records; supervision and professional development checks; a sample of their reports; and invoicing practices.
Review of Approved Counsellor reports	Reviews will consider: the timeliness and completeness of reports; the adequacy and appropriateness of reports; the use of non-endorsed clinical approaches or therapeutic approaches which may not be appropriate for that particular client; any professional boundary issues; and any other concerns about practices or compliance with the Operating Guidelines for Approved Counsellors.
Investigation of complaints against Approved Counsellors	As per the Complaints Handling Guidelines.
Monitoring of Approved Counsellors with conditions imposed	The approach will vary based on the particular conditions imposed. It may include: a review of reports; monitoring of professional development and training; and supervision checks.

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Who will be audited?

Any Approved Counsellor with the ACS may be audited.

How will I know if I am audited?

Victims Services will notify all ACs who are the subject of an audit via letter, prior to the audit commencing.

What will be expected of me if I am audited?

Approved Counsellors who are being audited may be asked to provide and verify information relevant to the audit activity.

What are the possible outcomes of an audit?

All Approved Counsellors who are the subject of an audit will be notified of the outcome via letter.

Where less serious issues are identified, Victims Services will notify the Approved Counsellor of the findings and clarify the expected standard.

Where serious issues are identified, Victims Services will notify the Approved Counsellor of the findings and advise them that they will be submitted to the Professional Advisory Panel (the Panel) for their consideration. The Approved Counsellor will be given an opportunity to provide a written response to the audit findings, which will also be considered by the Panel.

Where systemic issues are identified in relation to ACS policies and procedures, improvements will be developed to address these.

For further information, please contact the Victims Services Approved Counselling Programs team:

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