act
until women & children are safe

National Service Standards for Domestic and Sexual Violence

November 2008

Deborah McIlveen
Policy & Services Manager
Women's Aid (England)

Introduction

Women's Aid Federation of England:

- National domestic violence coordinating body
- 370 local organisations running 500 services
- Up to 50,000 women and children stay in refuges (shelters) each year
- 320,000 women and children receive help and support

Women's Aid strategic aims:

- To improve the **protection** available to women and children by ensuring their needs and experiences inform law, policy and practice.

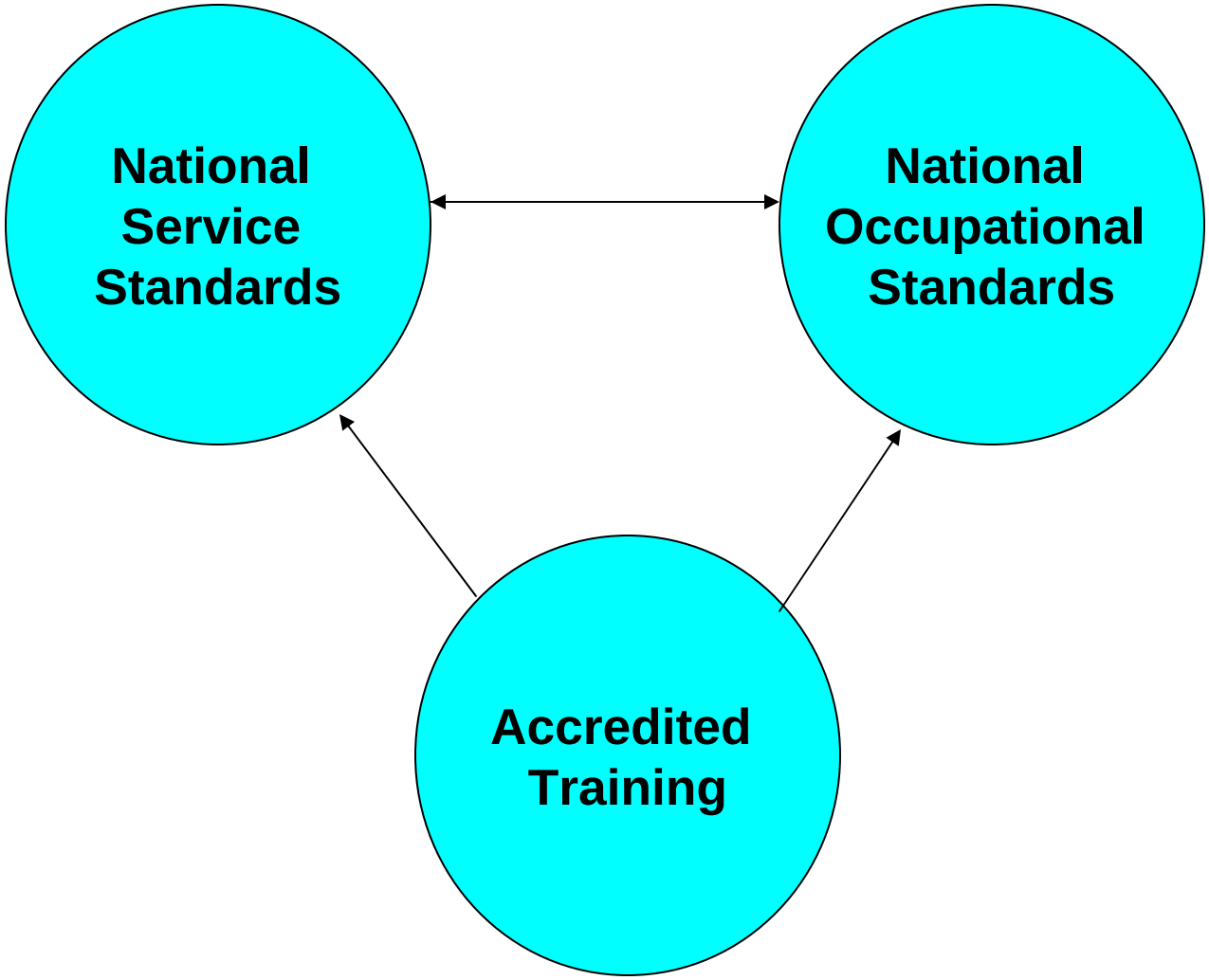
- To work towards the **prevention** of domestic violence (DV) through public awareness and education

- To ensure the **provision** of high quality services for abused women and children

3 key areas for ensuring quality services for victim/survivors

- National service standards for all domestic and sexual violence services (NSS)
- Occupational standards for staff working in them (the qualified workforce)
- Accredited training/qualifications for staff and volunteers that underpins both these quality frameworks

Quality Service Framework



Key elements to achieve this

- Government commitment and strategic approach to DV and violence against women
- Resources and investment in infrastructure within women's voluntary sector

Development drivers in the UK (England)

From Government

- Quality service standards and skilled workforce
- Commissioning framework for service delivery
- Focus on outcomes
- Strategic policy approaches to DV and VAW
- Government recognition of need for capacity building in voluntary sector
- Aim to end postcode lottery

Development drivers in the UK (England)

From Women's Aid

- Protect and raise service standards
- Complement existing standards on the provision of supported housing (QUAF)
- Ensure appropriate services delivered to abused women and children
- Ensure right knowledge and skills from staff and volunteers

Development drivers in the UK (England)

From Women's Aid

- To meet the challenges of the new Government funding and skills framework
- Ensure continuance/provision of gender-specific and gender sensitive services
- Prevent loss of existing specialist services
- Provide an appropriate commissioning framework

Development of National Service Standards for Domestic and Sexual Violence (2005-2007)

- Government funding stream for capacity building
- Consultation with Women's Aid national network
- Draft standards – issues and challenges
- Further consultation with sexual violence services
- Further consultation on the evidence framework

act
until women & children are safe

CORE SERVICE STANDARDS FOR DOMESTIC & SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Understanding domestic and sexual violence and its impact • Safety • Diversity and equal access to services • Advocacy • Empowerment and a survivor centred approach • Confidentiality • A coordinated community response • Responsibility for the violence and holding perpetrators accountable • Accountability

Supported by Service Specific Standards:

Adult Services
Refuge & community based such as re-settlement, outreach, floating support, drop-in, women's safety services etc

Children's Services
Refuge & community based such as re-settlement, outreach etc

Perpetrator Services
(Respect Standards)

IDVA Services
(CAADA Standards)

Helplines

Further Service Specific Standards to be developed (e.g. sexual violence services)

women's aid
until women & children are safe
www.womensaid.org.uk

act
until women & children are safe

CORE STANDARDS

(Underpinning all services)

act
until women & children are safe

Understanding domestic and sexual violence and its impact

Services demonstrate an appropriate and informed approach to service delivery, which recognises the nature, prevalence, dynamics and effects of domestic and sexual violence

Safety

Services ensure that all intervention prioritises the safety of survivors and of staff

Diversity and equal access to services

Services respect the diversity of survivors and apply anti-discriminatory practice to all aspects of their work; survivors are supported and assisted to access services on an equitable basis

Advocacy

Services provide both institutional and individual advocacy to support and promote the needs and rights of survivors

Empowerment and a survivor centred approach

Services ensure survivors are able to identify and express their needs and make decisions in a supportive and non-judgemental environment; that survivors are treated with dignity, respect and sensitivity; and promote service-user involvement in the development and delivery of the service

Confidentiality

Services respect and observe survivors' right to confidentiality and ensure they are informed of situations where that confidentiality may be limited

A coordinated community response

Services operate within a context of inter-agency co-operation, collaboration and coordinated service delivery, to ensure a culture of intolerance about domestic and sexual violence is developed in communities and by individual

act
until women & children are safe

Responsibility for the violence and holding perpetrators accountable

Services operate within a culture based on the belief that perpetrators are held accountable for their violence

Accountability

Services are managed effectively so that survivors receive a quality service from appropriately skilled staff

Service-specific standards
ADULT SERVICES

- Refuge Services
- Resettlement Services
- Outreach, Advice and Floating Support Services
- Independent Domestic Violence Adviser Services
- Women's Services linked to Perpetrator Programmes
- Helplines – National and Regional

Service-specific standards
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES

- Refuge services
- Outreach, drop-in, advice and floating support services

Standards and evidence

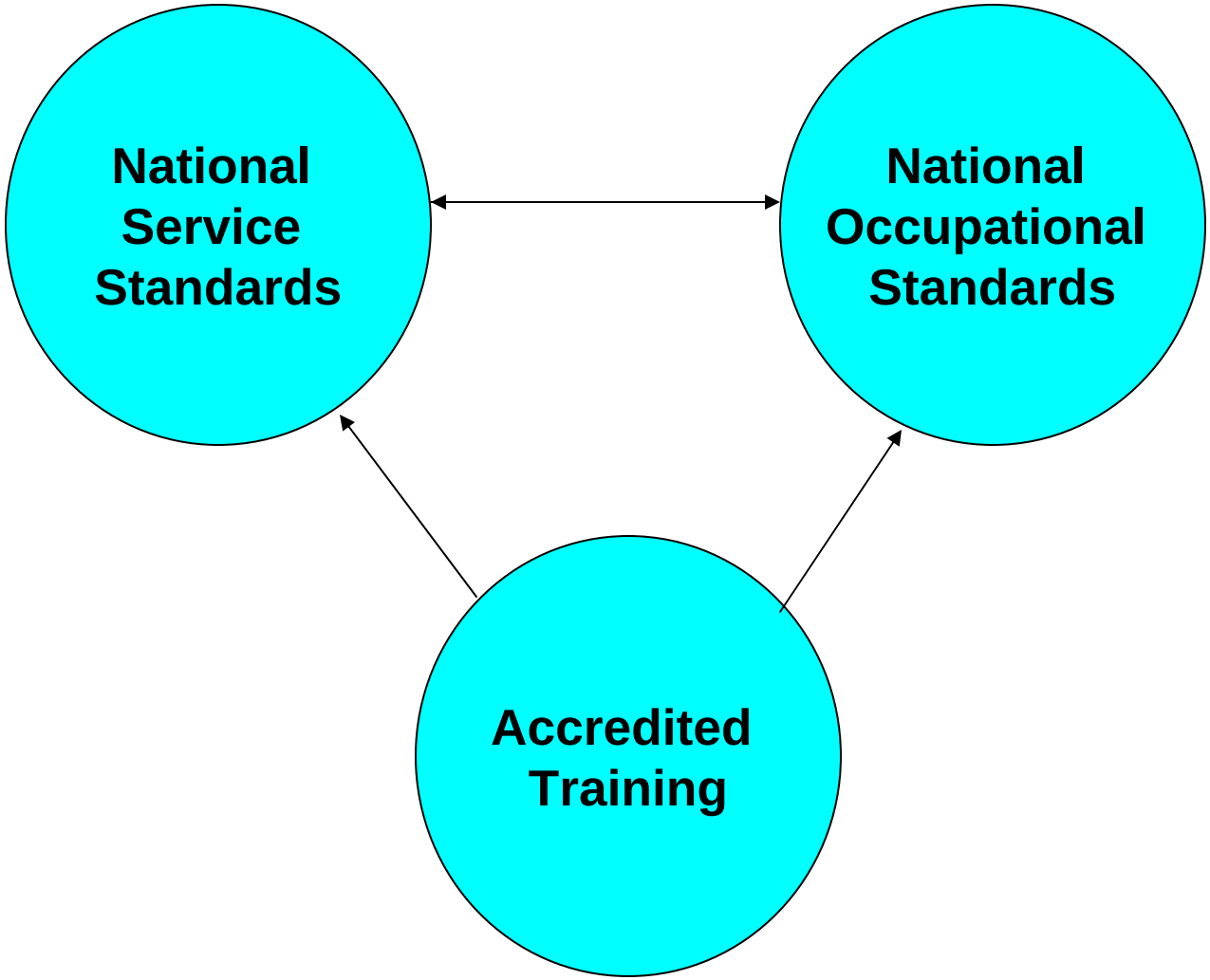
- 9 Core Standards for all services
- Supported by Service Specific Standards
- Each Standard has detailed sub headings with evidence for implementation

See example on next slide

Safety: Services demonstrate that all intervention prioritises the safety of survivors and of staff

Standard	Evidence in policies & procedures	Evidence in practice
Standard 2.1 **Services acknowledge that safety is paramount and that all survivors, their children and staff working with them have a right to be protected from violence and abuse, and will take action in accordance with procedures to ensure this.**	**Agency definition** of domestic & sexual violence **Business Plan** – Mission Statement Referral, Initial Assessment and Application **Policies on:** Health and Safety + lone working Risk Assessment and Risk Management – Service Users Support Planning Protection from Abuse Harassment Confidentiality Induction Training and Development Complaints	**Procedures** for survivors to raise concerns are publicly available and accessible. **Written documentation** where action is taken to protect individuals from abuse. **Records** show that decision making always considers and minimises risk factors. Staff promote and support survivors with a **violent free approach to parenting**. Staff are provided with **support and supervision** to ensure concerns regarding their own or others safety can be raised and action agreed.

Quality Service Framework



act
until women & children are safe

Women's Aid

www.womensaid.org.uk

until women and children are safe

www.thehideout.org.uk

until children are safe

- 0808 2000 247 Freephone
  - 24 Hour National Domestic Violence Helpline
  Run in partnership between Women's Aid and Refuge