



Frequently Asked Questions

Independent Accreditation Programme: Quality Standards for Services Supporting Male Victims/Survivors of Sexual Violence

Q1. What is the Independent Accreditation Programme?

LimeCulture's Independent Accreditation Programme provides an independent assessment and verification for service providers seeking to demonstrate that they are meeting the following Quality Standards:

- Male Survivors Partnership Quality Standards for Services Supporting Male Victims/Survivors of Sexual Violence
- Quality Standards for Independent Sexual Violence Adviser (ISVA) Services

The Programme provides a consistent evaluation of service performance against the published Quality Standards, enabling clients, commissioners, funders and service providers to be assured of the service's standards of delivery.

Q2. What happens when a service provider demonstrates they meet the Quality Standards?

Upon meeting the relevant Quality Standards, service providers will be awarded a Quality Mark, as well as certification that can be displayed at the service provider's premises and digital logos for use on marketing materials, e-mail signatures, websites and funding applications.

Q3. Why is LimeCulture the independent accreditor for the Male Survivors Partnership (MSP) Quality Standards for Services Supporting Male Victims/Survivors of Sexual Violence?

After the MSP developed the Quality Standards for Services Supporting Male Victims/Survivors of Sexual Violence, the development of an Accreditation Programme was required for commissioners, service providers and clients to understand where services have been assessed as meeting those standards. The MSP decided that, to ensure their Quality Standards are consistently applied, there should be a single external accreditor. They appointed LimeCulture to this role.

Q4. How does LimeCulture ensure they are accrediting service providers consistently and fairly?

LimeCulture is committed to objectivity, fairness and transparency at each stage of the accreditation process:

- Each enrolled service is allocated to one of our Accreditation Managers who is responsible for all elements of the accreditation.
- A process of management audit is applied to every service, involving a review of a sample of evidence to verify the assessment made by the nominated Accreditation Manager.
- Randomly selected group interview sessions will include a member of the LimeCulture Senior Management Team to ensure the accreditation process is being carried out fairly, consistently and transparently.

Q5. Can we appeal to LimeCulture if our service is not awarded the Quality Mark?

LimeCulture has an appeals process in place to review the decisions taken by your Accreditation Manager and, where necessary, to re-review the evidence submitted during the accreditation process. A copy of our appeals process can be requested by emailing accreditation@limeculture.co.uk.

Q6. Is it mandatory that we meet the Quality Standards?

Applying either of the Quality Standards in your service is entirely voluntary, however, service providers are increasingly recognising the benefits of meeting the Quality Standards and displaying the Quality Mark. Additionally, an increasing number of commissioners and funders are incorporating this requirement into service specifications. You should discuss this with your commissioner if you are unclear about whether they expect your service to join the Independent Accreditation Programme.

Q7. We are a member of an umbrella organisation that has its own standards which we adhere to. Is this enough to demonstrate we are achieving these Quality Standards?

While we recognise there are other service standards available to members of umbrella organisations, these do not demonstrate that your service has achieved the Quality Standards for Services Supporting Male Victims/Survivors of Sexual Violence or the Quality Standards for ISVA Services. Only LimeCulture can offer accreditation against these standards.

Q8. How much support will LimeCulture give me/my service to reach the standards?

To maintain the independence of the programme, the level of assistance LimeCulture can offer to individual services to achieve the Quality Standards is limited. We will always try and make suggestions about where you may source relevant advice or guidance, but cannot provide substantive support.

Who can join the Male Quality Standards Accreditation Programme?

Q9. Which service providers can join the Independent Accreditation Programme for the Quality Standards for Services Supporting Male Victims/Survivors of Sexual Violence?

The Quality Standards apply to any service working with adult (18+) male victims/survivors of sexual violence. To date, charitable/voluntary, statutory and private sector providers delivering specialised therapeutic, ISVA and helpline services as well as Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) and universities have enrolled on the programme.

Q10. Can we join the Independent Accreditation Programme for both the Male Quality Standards and the ISVA Quality Standards?

Yes, if your service provides an ISVA service to adult male victims/survivors. However, as the Quality Standards are different in scope and focus, you will need to demonstrate that you meet both sets of Quality Standards separately.

Q11. We provide a service for adult male victims/survivors, but we do not provide an ISVA service. Can we join the Independent Accreditation Programme?

Any service supporting adult male victims/survivors of sexual violence can apply to join the Independent Accreditation Programme for the Quality Standards for Services Supporting Male Victims/Survivors of Sexual Violence.

Q12. We support female and male victims/survivors – can we join the Independent Accreditation Programme?

Any service supporting adult male victims/survivors of sexual violence can apply to join the Independent Accreditation Programme for the Quality Standards for Services Supporting Male Victims/Survivors of Sexual Violence, regardless of whether the service also supports females and/or children.

Q13. I am an individual therapist supporting adult male victims/survivors of sexual violence. Can I join the Independent Accreditation Programme?

The Quality Standards for Services Supporting Male Victims/Survivors of Sexual Violence are intended for organisations providing services only. The Quality Standards stipulate that the service provider is an incorporated legal entity with a robust governance structure and has defined aims and objectives.

How long does the Programme take to complete?

Q14. How long does the Independent Accreditation Programme take to complete?

The Independent Accreditation Programme involves a robust, six-stage process and it typically takes up to 12 months to achieve the Quality Mark. However, some service providers do achieve their Quality

Mark in a shorter period – specific timescales depend on many factors, and your Accreditation Manager will work closely with you to support you throughout the process.

Q15. If we take longer than 12 months to demonstrate that we are meeting the Quality Standards, will we fail the accreditation?

In the interest of fairness, we discuss expectations around timescales with all services upon joining the programme. Your Accreditation Manager will support you to work within the agreed timescales where possible. In exceptional circumstances, you may request an extension through your Accreditation Manager.

Q16. What flexibility does the Independent Accreditation Team have when interpreting the Quality Standards and the decision to award the Quality Mark?

While we provide examples of evidence services may wish to submit, service providers can demonstrate they are meeting the Quality Standards in several different ways. LimeCulture values the individuality of each service provider, and welcomes new and innovative approaches to service delivery.

Q17. Is there any flexibility around meeting the standards where circumstances may be out of our control?

The Independent Accreditation Team can award a Quality Mark with conditions. This is used where your Accreditation Manager is satisfied that a service has met all the standards, but evidence is not yet available. An example of where an accreditation with conditions could be issued is where a service has updated his marketing materials and had appropriate sign off for the new contents but have not yet received the new materials back from the printer.

Q18. How long can conditions last?

The Independent Accreditation Team will agree a realistic date with you, usually within three months, during which time we will ask you to provide the remaining/outstanding evidence to LimeCulture. Where this is provided, the condition(s) will be removed. Where the evidence is not provided, the Quality Mark will be removed.

How much does the Independent Accreditation Programme cost?

Q19. How much does it cost to join the Programme?

The cost of joining the Independent Accreditation Programme is currently £3,500 + VAT. This is the cost for one service, based at a single site, and includes the accreditation workshop, evidential review, action planning, group interviews and, where successful, a certificate of accreditation and digital/print logos.

Q20. We have more than one location where our staff work. Is there an additional charge for additional sites?

Where services are delivered from more than one site, there will be an additional charge of between £1,000 and £3,500 + VAT depending on circumstances and location. The higher fee is based on the additional work required of our Independent Accreditation Team to ensure the Quality Standards are applied throughout the service's bases.

Q21. On occasion we use third party offices/consultation rooms to see our clients. Does that mean we have to include these sites in our accreditation?

We understand that it may be more convenient for your clients for you to see them at third party locations (such as GP surgeries, in schools, client home addresses) and we will ask you to tell us about them when you are enrolled on the programme and why they are suitable venues for your services. We will not make additional charges for these sites where they are used irregularly and do not fall within the control of your organisation.

Q22. We want to enrol our counselling and ISVA service on the Male Quality Standards programme. What is the cost?

Where service providers deliver more than one service that they wish to enrol on the programme at the same time, for example ISVA and counselling services, these will be treated as two services. Where there is a shared service delivery model (i.e. management arrangements, policies and procedures) and single contract in place covering both services, the accreditation cost for the second service will be reduced if the accreditation is undertaken at the same time as the first service. Depending on circumstances, the additional charge will be between £1,000 and £3,500 + VAT. LimeCulture will discuss these costs with you before you enrol.

Q23. How will the published charges apply to my service?

For a tailored quote for joining the programme, please contact accreditation@limeculture.co.uk. To enable us to quote as accurately as possible, please provide us with a breakdown of service provision within your organisation and an outline of which services you would like to put through the programme. LimeCulture CIC is a social enterprise and does not seek to make a profit. However, we do need to cover the costs of providing the accreditation. This means that, within the accreditation fee, we need to account for the additional work our team must undertake where there is more than one service or site to consider.

Leaving the Programme

Q24. We enrolled on the programme and our workshop is coming up but on reflection think this is not for us. Can we withdraw?

It is at the discretion of each service if they choose to enrol on the programme. We strongly urge you to read the relevant standards document and our Terms and Conditions carefully before submitting your application to join the programme. If you think you may want to withdraw, we suggest you speak to an Accreditation Manager as soon as possible to discuss your circumstances.

Q25. We've attended a workshop but we're no longer sure it's for us.

Speak to your Accreditation Manager as soon as possible to discuss your circumstances. In many cases an Accreditation Manager will be able to reassure you of any concerns that you may have and discuss ways forward, considering your individual circumstances. Please note that once you have attended the workshop and have therefore started the Independent Accreditation programme, no refund can be made under our Terms and Conditions.

Q26. Our commissioner has paid our fees. Can we withdraw?

Where a commissioner has funded a place on the programme, we maintain a dialogue with them about the service's progression towards accreditation. As part of this, we will discuss potential and actual withdrawals from the programme with the commissioner. In accordance with our Terms and Conditions, there can be no refunds where services decide not to continue. Your commissioner may wish to discuss the implications of your withdrawal with you; this is not something LimeCulture is involved in.

FAQ about specific Quality Standards

Q27. Quality Standard 1.3 refers to having policies and procedures in place specifically supporting adult male victims/survivors. Do we have to create a separate set of policies and procedures for those clients?

We do not expect service providers to create separate policies and procedures for male clients where they do not already have these in place. However, to meet this Quality Standard we will need to see processes, procedures and/or working practices included within the relevant documentation that reflect the differing needs of male victims/survivors. For example, where a service provider adopts a different or unique approach to supporting their male clients, we would expect this to be documented. This may include specific referral pathways or engagement strategies for male victims/survivors.

Q28. Quality Standard 1.6 refers to a visible male presence across the organisation. We don't have any male employees at present – can we still meet this Quality Standard?

We believe that services can demonstrate a visible male presence across the organisation in several ways, whether they have male employees or not. For example, you could incorporate images and information about males on your website and in published materials. Your client areas could feature support materials, furnishings and fixtures which will help your male clients feel welcome and valued. You should also think about how you can demonstrate to us and your clients that the organisation at all levels is taking on board the views and suggestions of males to ensure that the service is able to meet their needs.

Q29. Quality Standard 2.3 refers to equitable access to all services and premises for all clients, regardless of gender. We provide a women-only service on specific days – can we still meet this Quality Standard?

When considering this Quality Standard, it is important to understand the difference between equitable and equal access:

- Equal access – the access is the same, regardless of the individual.
- Equitable access – the access is tailored to the individual needs of the client.

Broadly we know male and female victims/survivors may require different types of support and we also know that each victim/survivor, regardless of their gender, has their own individual needs. While, for example, this can include female-only spaces on certain days or extended opening times for male victims/survivors, it is the responsibility of the service provider to identify the individual needs of the clients to ensure they are providing equitable access for all.

Q30. Quality Standard 3.5 refers to providing a choice of gender of support worker for male clients. Does this mean we have to employ males to meet this Quality Standard?

We recognise that some service providers have single gender staff teams and do not have the capacity or resources to recruit additional professionals of the opposite gender to meet this Quality Standard. In this case, we would expect to see that the service provider has put arrangements in place to ensure they can offer a choice of gender of support worker. This could be a secondment or partnership arrangement with another service provider, use of sessional or self-employed professionals, or other arrangements to ensure a choice is offered. Either way, choice must be offered and respected to meet this Quality Standard.

Q31. We can provide our clients with a choice of gender of professional, but our male professional only works part-time so is not always available. Is this a problem?

No. We do not expect any staff member to be available at all times, male or female, and recognise there may be times when male staff members are unavailable. To meet this Quality Standard, we are looking for evidence that services can offer their male clients a choice of gender for the professional who will support them. If the client is unable to access the support of their preferred gender of professional immediately, then it is acceptable for the service to provide the client with information about when the professional will be available to enable the client to make an informed decision about who will support them.

Q32. Quality Standard 4.2 refers to implementing a client consultative group. Do we have to set up a service user panel just for male clients?

To meet this Quality Standard, we are looking for evidence that services consult with male service users to elicit their views, experiences and suggestions about key aspects of service provision. We therefore expect service providers to demonstrate that they are engaging with former or current male service users to meaningfully consult with them about the service they receive(d). This can be achieved in several ways, including setting up a male-only service user panel, and ensuring male representation on a standing service user panel. The formality, formation and frequency of the service user groups is for the service provider to determine and could range from engaging with male clients on an *ad hoc* consultation basis about specific themes through to formal boards of service users.