



# 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 independent assessment and verification for service providers seeking to demonstrate that they are meeting one of the following sets of 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 Quality Standards, enabling clients, commissioners, funders and service providers to be assured of a 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, an accreditation programme was needed to enable commissioners, service providers and clients to understand which 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. LimeCulture subsequently developed its Independent Accreditation Programme.

#### **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 and, as such:

- Each enrolled service is allocated to a named Accreditation Manager 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 named Accreditation Manager.
- Randomly selected group interview sessions will include a member of LimeCulture's 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 enable review of decisions taken by your Accreditation Manager and, where necessary, to re-review evidence submitted during the accreditation process. A copy of the appeals process can be requested from [accreditation@limeculture.co.uk](mailto:accreditation@limeculture.co.uk).

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

Applying the Quality Standards within 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 the Quality Standards 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. 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 our service join both the Independent Accreditation Programme for the Male Quality Standards and the ISVA Quality Standards at the same time?

Yes, if you provide a relevant service. 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 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.

### Q12. I am an individual therapist supporting adult male victims/survivors of sexual violence. Can I join the Independent Accreditation Programme?

No. 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?

### Q13. How long does the Independent Accreditation Programme take to complete?

The Independent Accreditation Programme involves a robust six-stage process. It typically takes up to 12 months to achieve the Quality Mark, although 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.

### Q14. 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.

### **Q15. What flexibility does the Independent Accreditation Team have when interpreting the Quality Standards and the decision to award the Quality Mark?**

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

### **Q16. 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 marketing materials and had appropriate sign off but has not yet received the new materials back from the printer.

### **Q17. How long can conditions last?**

The Independent Accreditation Team will agree a reasonable timeframe 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.

### **Q18. How long is the Quality Mark valid for?**

The Quality Mark is valid for 3 years starting from the date of the Accreditation Workshop. Should services successfully achieve reaccreditation by the end of the 3 year period, the Quality Mark will be renewed for a further 2 years.

## **How much does the Independent Accreditation Programme cost?**

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

The cost to join the Independent Accreditation Programme is £3,500 + VAT. This is the fee for one service and includes the Accreditation Workshop, evidential review, action planning, group interviews and, where successful, a certificate of accreditation and digital/print logos. Additional services from the same service provider will incur an additional fee - see Q20 below.

LimeCulture will provide bespoke quotations for large or complex multi-site provision.

**Q20. We want to enrol our counselling and ISVA service on the Male Quality Standards programme. What is the fee?**

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 fee for the additional service will be between £1,000 and £3,500 + VAT. LimeCulture will discuss these costs with you before you enrol.

**Q21. How will the published charges apply to my service?**

For a tailored quote for joining the programme, please contact [accreditation@limeculture.co.uk](mailto: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 the services you would like to enrol. LimeCulture is a social enterprise and is established as a Community Interest Company, meaning it is not a profit-making organisation. As such, we are committed to providing value for money and transparency in all costs associated with our work.

**Q22. 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 and for you to meet 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.

## **Leaving the Programme**

**Q23. We enrolled on the programme and our Accreditation Workshop is coming up but on reflection think this is not for us. Can we get a refund?**

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.

**Q24. We've attended the Accreditation Workshop but we're no longer sure it's for us. Can we get a refund?**

Speak to your Accreditation Manager as soon as possible to discuss your circumstances. It may be the case that your Accreditation Manager is 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 Accreditation Workshop and therefore started the Independent Accreditation Programme, no refund can be made under our Terms and Conditions.

## **Q25. Our commissioner has paid our fees. Can we withdraw?**

In accordance with our Terms and Conditions, there can be no refunds where services decide not to continue on the Independent Accreditation Programme. If your commissioner has funded your place, we advise you discuss any intended changes to your participation in the programme directly with them.

## **Reaccreditation**

### **Q26. When should we start the process of applying for reaccreditation?**

The Independent Accreditation Team will make contact six months prior to the expiry of your existing Quality Mark to invite you to apply for reaccreditation.

### **Q27. What is the fee for applying for reaccreditation?**

The reaccreditation fee is £1,500 + VAT for a single service. Should you wish to reaccredit another service at the same time, there is an additional cost of £500 +VAT.

### **Q28. What is involved in the reaccreditation process?**

Services who choose to apply for reaccreditation are required to complete a three-stage process in the six months leading up to the expiry of their Quality Mark, incorporating:

1. Signing a written declaration confirming the service continues to comply with all the Quality Standards. LimeCulture strongly encourages services to carry out a thorough internal review to ensure the service still meets all the Quality Standards prior to signing the declaration.
2. Participating in a virtual group interview session where the Accreditation Manager examines each of the domains, standards and indicators in two 1.5 hour focus groups with the Leadership and Staff teams. Please note, for the Male Quality Standards, the staff session must have male representation.
3. On completion of the group interviews, the named Accreditation Manager will request a dip sample of documentary evidence relating to 8 Quality Standards across the four domains. The standards included in the dip sample are selected at random but may also include particular standards/indicators the Accreditation Manager feels require further review. The service will be given a four-week deadline to submit the required evidence.

Once the Accreditation Manager has completed a review of the documentary evidence and is satisfied the service has demonstrated continued compliance against all the Quality Standards, the Quality Mark will be extended for a further two years. If a service is unable to evidence continued compliance, the Quality Mark will not be renewed.

### **Q29. Can conditions be attached to a reaccreditation?**

Yes, in the same way that conditions can be attached to an accreditation, the same applies to a reaccreditation.

### **Q30. How long is the Quality Mark valid following successful reaccreditation?**

Following successful reaccreditation, the Quality Mark is valid for a further two years.

### **Q31. What happens after the reaccredited Quality Mark expires?**

The reaccreditation programme is a two-year rolling process – LimeCulture will invite services to apply for further reaccreditation six months prior to the existing Quality Mark expiring.

### **Q32. What happens if we do not apply for reaccreditation?**

Should a service provider choose not to reaccredit a service or be unable to demonstrate continued compliance against all the Quality Standards, the Quality Mark will cease on the existing expiry date and should be removed from all publicity material and external communications.

### **Q33. If we decide not to reaccredit but change our mind later, can we apply once the Quality Mark has expired?**

Services that wish to continue to hold the accreditation but whose Quality Mark has expired are encouraged to contact their Accreditation Manager at the earliest opportunity to discuss options. If a significant period of time has passed since the Quality Mark expired, the service may be required to complete the full accreditation process again to achieve the Quality Mark.

## **FAQ: Specific Quality Standards**

### **Q34. 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 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.

### **Q35. 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.

**Q36. 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.

**Q37. Quality Standard 3.5 refers to providing a choice of gender of professional 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 appropriately trained ISVA/counsellor/crisis worker (depending on the service being accredited). 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, genuine choice must be consistently offered and respected to meet this Quality Standard.

**Q38. 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 Quality Standard 3.5, 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.

**Q39. 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 have processes in place to 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 invite former or



current male service users to take part in meaningful consultation about the service they receive(d), and have a process in place to facilitate this. This might be achieved, for example, via a service user panel with male representation or individually face to face, online or via email. The formality, formation and frequency of the consultation is for the service provider to determine.

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