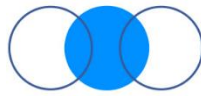


Code	SR.001
Title	Procedure and Process Policy for Signposting and Referrals
Status	Active
Prepared by	Stuart Hanson
Approved by	Andrew Buckingham
Date Approved	10.11.17
Revision Number	Version 1.0
Date last amended	31.10.17
Date of next review	31.10.19
Contact Officer	Stuart Hanson
Distribution Status	Controlled

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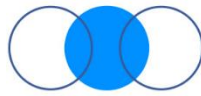
1. PROCEDURE AND PROCESS POLICY FOR SIGNPOSTING AND REFERRALS

- 1.1. Direct Mediation Services believes that referrals or signposting to another organisation are often an essential part of providing an effective service to ensure that service users receive the information or support that best meets their needs; the need to signpost or refer should be continually assessed by the mediator throughout the mediation process.
- 1.2. Referrals or signposting to another agency should be made when an enquiry or case falls outside the remit or geographical area of the advocacy service.
- 1.3. In all cases service users should be referred or signposted to appropriate organisations.
- 1.4. Referrals received by Direct Mediation Services will be dealt with by the most appropriate department and in good time.

2. DEFINITION OF OUTGOING REFERRAL

- 2.1. Direct Mediation Services defines an outgoing referral as making arrangements for an alternative agency to work with a service user. This kind of referral can happen when work has already been undertaken with the individual and then it is found to be no longer appropriate.
- 2.2. The referral will be made to an agency that is able to provide more effective support.
- 2.3. Outgoing referrals will be made when:
 - 2.3.1. The service does not have the expertise, specialist knowledge or work capacity to assist the service user further.
 - 2.3.2. The referral falls outside the remit or geographical area of the service.
 - 2.3.3. There is a conflict of interest between the service user and service i.e. where the service could be in the situation of working with both sides in a dispute.
 - 2.3.4. There is a breakdown in the partnership.
 - 2.3.5. A complaint has been made about the service.
- 2.4. Decisions regarding these referrals should be discussed with the mediator's PPC or as part of group supervision.
- 2.5. Consent should be obtained from the service user for the referral to be made after explaining the reasons.
- 2.6. When making a referral the mediator should, wherever possible, consider giving first consideration to those organisations with a Quality Mark, make contact with

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the alternative agency directly on behalf of the service user. Referrals should be confirmed in writing where practical.

- 2.7. Relevant details including any deadlines or other significant issues should be provided to the receiving agency bearing in mind confidentiality and service user consent procedures.
- 2.8. Arrangements should be made to ensure that the case progresses quickly. Support should be given to the service user during the transition period.
- 2.9. Records of outgoing referral will note the client referred, the outgoing agency, reason for its selection, and reason for referral with reference to the individual making the referral.

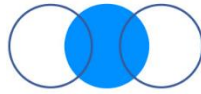
3. DEFINITION OF INCOMING REFERRAL

- 3.1. Direct Mediation Services defines an incoming referral as making arrangements to work with a service user where initial contact has come from other than the service user themselves.
- 3.2. Incoming referrals will be accepted when:
 - 3.2.1 The service has the expertise, specialist knowledge and work capacity to assist the service use.
 - 3.2.2 The referral falls inside the remit and geographical area of the service.
 - 3.2.3 There is no obvious conflict of interest.
 - 3.2.4 Records of outgoing referral will note the client referred, the outgoing agency, reason for its selection, and reason for referral with reference to the individual making the referral.

4. DEFINITION OF SIGNPOSTING

- 4.1. Direct Mediation Services defines signposting as providing a service user with information about other agencies or services that may be able to assist them.
- 4.2. Signposting may be provided at the enquiry stage or during mediation as different issues arise.
- 4.3. Service users should be provided with up to date contact details of other agencies or services including their hours of service.
- 4.4. Service users should be encouraged to make contact with the other agencies themselves. In most cases it should be left to the service user to make contact with the agency and arrange any necessary appointments.
- 4.5. Service users should be assisted in seeking the services of other agencies when they would otherwise be unable to do so e.g. due to language or communication barriers.

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5. PROCEDURE

- 5.1. To ensure successful referral and signposting good working partnerships should be established with other organisations.
- 5.2. Up to date contact details of all alternative agencies and services should be maintained. Details should be easily accessible and in an appropriate format.
- 5.3. Wherever possible referral and signposting should be made to known organisations that have an acknowledged quality mark.
- 5.4. Any cost implications of a referral or signposting to an agency which charges for its services should be discussed with the service user.

6. RECORDS AND MONITORING

- 6.1. All incoming enquiries to Direct Mediation Services should be logged and then recorded as:
 - 6.1.1. Referrals (which become cases)
 - 6.1.2. Referrals (which are immediately referred on elsewhere)
 - 6.1.3. Signposting
 - 6.1.4. No further action
- 6.2. Records should be kept on the individual case file of any referral or signposting to another agency.
- 6.3. In the event of the alternative agency not providing a good service it may be necessary to consider supporting the service user to make a complaint.
- 6.4. If a referral is made to a professional service, the Mediator may need to remain as a point of contact and support.
- 6.5. Records of outgoing referrals and signposting should be recorded in the Mediation Record, monitored and evaluated at least once annually. This will include records of instances where no suitable provider could be found. This may identify gaps in service provision both by the organisation and other service providers and inform future planning. It may also identify potential partners to work with.
- 6.6. Where a gap in service provision is identified because there is no agency to refer or signpost to, the service user should be informed and a decision taken on how best the service user can be supported.

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