

Questions to Reflect on When Developing a Policy, Procedure or Guidance Document

- What is the hoped outcome, i.e., an overarching statement of intent and action (policy); a means by which a task is achieved (procedure); parameters within which decisions can be made in an informed way (guidance)?
- Who might usefully contribute to the discussions, and are all parties potentially affected by the outcome able to participate and contribute?
- Are there implications for existing policies, procedures or guidance documents, i.e., do they need to be incorporated into the planning, reviewed or rescinded?
- Does the planned document appropriately reflect the parameters and culture of the service offered, i.e., taking into account the experience of the counsellors, supervision contracts, capacity of the service to respond to clients, etc?
- What steps will be taken to ensure any document is clear, accessible and easy to communicate to all involved?
- Is the proposed document realistic? Does it provide counsellors and psychotherapists with realistic options, rather than set up unrealistic and often unachievable expectations?
- How will the proposed document take into account difference, the varying needs of clients and anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive practice?
- What review process will be built in, by whom, and how will the outcomes of reviews be implemented in change?
- Does the proposed document have a 'shelf life', i.e., is it intended for the longer term, or rather a time-limited approach?