

# Department of Human Services Standards scope of independent reviews for funded organisations

Last updated June 2012

Standards and independent review processes are a part of providing quality services that deliver positive outcomes for the Victorian community.

All service providers that are funded to provide services to clients are required to meet the Department of Human Services Standards. Service providers in scope for independent review need to:

- demonstrate compliance with the Department of Human Services Standards and the governance and management standards of an approved independent review body
- be independently reviewed by a department-endorsed independent review body once in every three years
- gain and maintain their accreditation/certification with their independent review body.

Independent review processes help to ensure that service providers have systems in place that promote acceptable levels of management, administration and service delivery and continual improvement against defined service quality requirements. This process is one of a number of mechanisms the department and funded organisations have in place to ensure quality, including desktop reviews, incident reporting and performance measurement processes, for example financial accountability requirements.

This document provides information on which funded organisations are in scope of accreditation and independent reviews under the Department of Human Services Standards.

## What is the scope of accreditation and independent reviews?

The scope includes the following factors:

- the nature of the relationship the service provider has with the client and client vulnerability, including legal obligations and duty of care
- the importance of independent reviews in monitoring quality and capturing quality improvement activities
- the need to ensure the benefits of review processes outweigh the costs of independent reviews for organisations.

Diagram 1 describes the scope of accreditation and independent reviews under the Department of Human Services Standards. In summary:

- Funded organisations that receive over \$20,000 in annual funding to deliver direct client services, such as counselling or accommodation services, are in scope for independent review, except where a decision is made to exclude organisations based on defined criteria below.

- Funded organisations that receive ongoing funding to provide advice, information, referral and/or services which provide goods, aids and equipment are in scope of independent review if they receive funding over \$200,000 for services in scope for independent review annually.
- If an organisation which provides advice, information, referral and or other goods, aids and equipments **only** receives under \$200,000 in funding for these services, they will not be in scope of independent review, but will be subject to a self-assessment process.
- Funded organisations that have no direct relationship with clients and are funded to undertake, for example research, professional development, community development activities, policy advocacy and other peak body services **only** will not need to be accredited or reviewed in relation to the standards, except where a decision is made to include these services based on criteria as outlined below.
- Funded organisations that receive less than \$20,000 in annual funding for activities in scope for independent review are excluded except based on criteria as outlined below.

The fact sheet titled *Funded activities in scope of independent review* provides information on the type of funded activities considered to be in scope of independent review as they are a direct client service or advice, information, referral, goods, aids and equipment services. This list is subject to change and organisations should ensure they keep aware of the activities in scope for independent review. Where a new activity comes into scope, the department will discuss an appropriate timeframe for when a review of this service needs to be completed.

**Diagram 1 – Matrix of Scope of independent reviews**

		Nature of the service and relationship with the client group		
		CATEGORY 1 No direct client relationship (for example, research and policy, professional development, community development programs, expense payments)	CATEGORY 2 Advice, information, referral and/or services which provide goods, aids and equipment only	CATEGORY 3 Direct client service delivery
Annual funding (total in scope service activity funding cat 2 & 3)	<\$20,000	Exempt (1)	Exempt (1)	Exempt (1)
	<\$100,000	Exempt (1)	Exempt (2)	Included (3)
	\$100,000 - \$200,000	Exempt (1)	Exempt (2)	Included (4)
	Over \$200,000	Exempt (1)	Included (4)	Included (4)
<b>Criteria for inclusion/exclusion</b>				
<p>1. The organisation is exempt from independent review and self-assessment except where a decision is made to include services based on the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the department and funded organisation has a significant duty of care including services being provided to statutory clients, (where the department has guardianship of a person through a statutory order) and/or the services being provided to clients that have limited capacity to self-advocate.</li> <li>• the organisation is a sole service provider within a geographic area</li> <li>• the organisation is registered under the <i>Children, Youth and Families Act 2005</i> or <i>Disability Act 2006</i> and is required to undertake an independent review or self-assessment</li> <li>• a performance issue is identified by desktop review or through other means by the region/division and it has been determined that a self-assessment or independent review is required.</li> </ul> <p>2. The organisation needs to undertake a self-assessment, but is exempt from independent review, except where there is a decision to include the organisation based on the criteria as outlined in point 1 above.</p> <p>3. Organisations that receive funding for direct client services and receive under \$100,000 in annual funding for in scope activities are in scope, except if there is a decision between the funded organisation and the department that a self-assessment review process should be undertaken instead of an independent review. The inclusion criteria in point one will be considered in making this decision and whether the benefits of the review process outweigh the costs of the review. Note organisations that receive less than \$20,000 for in scope activities are in general exempt.</p> <p>4. The organisation is in scope. In some specific circumstances the department may make a decision to exclude a organisation which only provides a medical or dental service to a client of the department and the service is accredited through a separate approved process.</p>				

Organisations that receive non-recurrent funding will generally not be in scope of independent review except if there is evidence that the organisation will in the future provide more ongoing client services or the organisation is registered under *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* or *Disability Act 2006*.

Organisations that are in scope of independent review and accreditation due to their client services, but also provide services that do not have direct contact with clients, in general will not need to have these services reviewed as part of their accreditation. For example a peak body may provide client assistance services, but their main services are related to policy advocacy. The peak body in this circumstance will be reviewed for their client assistance services, but in general will not need to undertake a review of their policy advocacy services. There may be some cases where a review of these indirect services is required due to the nature of the service provided or by preference of the organisation.

## When can a decision be made to exclude a funded organisation or service from independent review and accreditation that would otherwise be in scope?

### **Funded organisations receiving less than \$100,000 in annual funding for in scope activities**

Funded organisations that provide direct client services and receive less than \$100,000 for in scope activities are in scope of independent review. However, these organisations are able to discuss with their program and service adviser or the Standards and Regulation Unit, Business Relationship Management Branch, whether there is an option for their organisation to undertake a self-assessment and quality plan instead of an independent review.

If the preference of the organisation is to undertake a self-assessment process, a range of factors will be considered by the department in consultation with the funded organisation, to make this decision including whether:

- the department has a duty of care to the clients of a service, including services being provided to statutory clients or clients who have limited capacity to self-advocate
- the service is a residential or supported accommodation program
- the service is the sole service provider within a geographic area
- the burden on the organisation of the review processes and whether the costs outweigh the benefits of the independent review.

The decision will be made in consultation with an organisation's program and service adviser, the funded organisation and the Standards and Regulation Unit, Business Relationship Management Branch. The funding threshold of \$100,000 will be indexed annually at the rate provided for in the service agreement.

For 2012-2015 a number of organisations receiving under \$100,000 will complete a self-assessment and quality plan to the Standards and Regulation Unit.

Organisations that receive under \$20,000 in annual funding for in scope activities are in general not in scope for independent review or self-assessment, except if a decision is made to include them based on the criteria below.

### **Other possible exclusions from independent review**

The department funds some health services to provide departmental clients with timely access to a medical or dental service. In specific instances, the department may determine that this medical or dental service is not required to be independently reviewed, where the service has received its accreditation through another approved process.

## When can a decision be made to include a funded organisation that would normally not be in scope of independent review and accreditation?

The department can decide to include an organisation that is out of scope of independent review and accreditation if it is determined that the organisation:

- provides services where there is a significant duty of care to the client/s of a service
- is a sole provider of a service within a geographic area
- is registered under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* or *Disability Act 2006*.

This decision will be made in consultation with an organisation's program and service adviser, the funded organisation and the Standards and Regulation Unit, Business Relationship Management Branch.

The department may also require a self-assessment or independent review of a service that is not in scope if there is a performance issue identified by a desktop review or through other means by a region/division.

Funded organisations that are not in scope may also opt to be independently reviewed and accredited. Organisations should discuss this option with their program and service adviser and the Standards and Regulation Unit.

## Will new services come into scope for independent review and accreditation under the Department of Human Services Standards?

The Department of Human Services Standards seek to ensure that people receive the same quality of service no matter what program they are accessing.

Some new services are in scope under the Department of Human Services Standards and independent review processes, such as youth services and youth justice services, disability advocacy and family violence services funded by the Children, Youth and Families Division (for a list of funded activities in scope see the *Funded Activities in scope fact sheet*). The department will work closely with these services in relation to review processes.

Where a funded organisation is new to independent reviews for the department, these new services will have until June 2015 to complete an independent review.

## How can my organisation confirm whether it is in scope for independent review?

A funded organisation should firstly review the *Funded activities in scope of independent review* fact sheet to determine whether the services they provide are in scope of independent review. This fact sheet is subject to change and organisations should access the fact sheet regularly to keep aware of the services that are in scope of independent review. Where a new activity comes into scope, the department will discuss an appropriate timeframe for when a review of this service needs to be completed.

If your organisation has further questions please contact your relevant program and service adviser or the Standards and Regulation Unit, Business Relationship Management Branch via email at [dhsstandards@dhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:dhsstandards@dhs.vic.gov.au)

## Where can I find out more information about the Department of Human Services Standards?

Further information on the Department of Human Services Standards can be found on the Department of Human Services website <[www.dhs.vic.gov.au](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au)> About the Department: Policies Guidelines and Legislation.