

SQS 13

The service unit respects the service users' right in relation to private property.

- 13.1 The service unit has policy and procedures for ensuring that service users' rights in relation to private property are being respected, and the policy and procedures are accessible to service users, staff or other interested parties.
- 13.2 Where appropriate, the service unit provides service users with the opportunity to keep private property in a secure place, or informs service users of the risks to their personal property.
- 13.3 Where the service unit has any responsibilities for collecting and/or managing the service users' money and other valuables, appropriate procedures and controls exist and are adhered to.

A. INTRODUCTION TO SQS 13 – PRIVATE PROPERTY

Service Quality Standard 13 deals with service users' rights in relation to private property. This SQS focuses on personal belongings, private property, money and valuables, and the service unit's responsibilities in relation to managing these items. The SQS specifies the measures a service unit would be expected to take in order to protect personal belongings, private property, money and valuables.

B. ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR MEETING SQS 13

In order to meet this SQS, your service unit will need to:

1. Have written policy and procedures for protecting the personal belongings of service users and where applicable, their right of not sharing their property for communal use;
2. Ensure that the policy and procedures are accessible to service users, staff and other interested parties, and that service users are informed of their rights in relation to private property;
3. Have a secure and accessible place for service users to keep their private property, or otherwise have a mechanism for informing service users of risks to their private property;
4. Have written procedures and control mechanisms for collecting and/or managing service users' money and other valuables where the service unit has such responsibilities, which should include:
 - circumstances under which service users' money (including collection of subscriptions / fees) and other valuables will be collected and/or managed,
 - the way money will be collected and /or stored, and the steps /procedures in controlling their use,
 - appropriate record keeping and accounting controls;
5. Ensure that all the above policy, procedures and mechanisms are implemented.

As required by SQS 13, it would be necessary to develop a brief policy statement describing your service unit's approach in relation to service users' private property and monies.

In all cases, simple written procedures will be necessary to provide staff, service users and families with clear expectations in relation to private property.

More detailed written procedures will be necessary in those service units that have responsibilities for collecting or managing service users' monies and other valuables.

C. RESOURCES TO ASSIST YOUR SERVICE MEET SQS 13

This handbook contains the following documents:

- Guidelines for developing a policy on protecting service users' private property and service users' monies; and
- Guidelines for the preparation of procedures in relation to service users' property and management of service users' monies.

The guidelines provided may be used either as:

- a basis for developing a policy and procedures specific to your service unit, in the event that you do not already have existing documents in this area; or
- a checklist for reviewing and, if necessary, amending your service unit's relevant policy and procedures, if you already have such items in place.

It is important to remember that the resource documents provided in this handbook are intended only to provide guidance. The final policy and procedure documents implemented in your service unit should be specifically tailored to reflect the nature and operations of your service unit and your service users' needs.

Policies and guidelines need not be detailed. Brief documents, which present your message succinctly, are more likely to be read and understood by staff and service users.

GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING A POLICY ON PROTECTING SERVICE USERS' PRIVATE PROPERTY AND SERVICE USERS' MONIES

1. Introduction

These guidelines are intended to set out the range of potential issues that should be covered in your policy. You should consider each issue and determine whether it is relevant for your service unit, and if so, state your service unit's position on the issue.

2. Contents of policy

A. Purpose

In this section, the purpose of the policy will be outlined. The purposes of this policy and associated guidelines may be to:

- establish the framework by which the service unit aims to comply with SQS 13;
- identify the service unit's responsibilities for protecting service users' private property, if any;
- identify the service unit's responsibilities for collecting or managing service users' monies and other valuables, if any;
- specify the responsibilities that service users and/or their families have with respect to private property and service users' monies;
- specify the strategy by which service users and their families will be informed about their responsibilities for personal property; and
- specify any other Ordinances or Regulations that might apply to your service user group. (For example, the Mental Health (Amendment) Ordinance 1997 specifies the term and effect of a guardianship order).

B. Definition of private property

In this section of the policy, terms used throughout the document need to be defined, this may cover:

- Routine personal belongings such as clothes, toiletries, utensils, entertainment items (e.g. radio);
- Important personal documents such as identity card, social security documents and birth certificates;
- Service users' monies (including cash and bank accounts); and
- Valuable items such as jewellery.

C. Philosophy

Each service unit will have a different philosophy depending on the type of service it provides. For example a residential service will have some responsibilities for storing and protecting personal property, whereas a day nursery may encourage families not to leave any personal property at the centre.

In this section, you will need to describe your overall philosophy to storing and protecting service users' personal property.

D. Policy

In this section, you will need to describe your policies in relation to personal property. The policy should include a statement on how you will deal with the different types of personal property.

Policies relating to personal property will be highly dependent upon the type of service provided.

E. Cross references

In this section, you should consider how this policy aligns with other organisational policies and cross-reference as appropriate. For example, this policy may impact upon the policy relating to entering and leaving the service, the confidentiality policy and the complaints policy.

F. Administration issues

In this section of the policy, you will need to indicate:

- the date of the policy;
- how and to whom the policy will be distributed; and
- how and when the policy will be reviewed.

GUIDELINES FOR THE PREPARATION OF PROCEDURES IN RELATION TO SERVICE USERS' PROPERTY AND MANAGEMENT OF SERVICE USERS' MONIES

1. Introduction

These guidelines are intended to set out the range of potential issues that should be covered in your procedures. You should consider each issue and determine whether it is relevant for your service unit, and if so, state your service unit's position on the issue.

2. Contents

The contents proposed below should be reviewed and amended to reflect your service unit's requirements.

A. Purpose of guidelines

The main purpose of these guidelines is to describe the arrangements the service unit has made to assist service users manage their personal property and to explain the service users' rights and responsibilities with respect to personal property.

B. Guidelines

i) Protecting service users' personal items

- What storage for personal items will be available in the service unit;
- Who has responsibility for personal property;
- Access to personal property (i.e. who has the keys to the cupboard);
- Availability of security storage for important or expensive items; and
- Dealing with loss and damage to personal property.

ii) Use of personal belongings

- What personal belongings may be used for communal property; and
- Gaining permission to use personal belongings as communal property.

iii) Informing people about risks, rights and responsibilities in relation to personal property

- How people will be informed about the availability of personal property storage; and
- How people will be informed about risks, rights and responsibilities in relation to personal property.

iv) Managing service users' monies and valuables

- Circumstances under which the service unit will store, protect and manage a service user's money and valuables;
- How money will be collected;
- How money and valuables will be secured (i.e. bank accounts or service safe);
- Who can give permission about spending service users' money;
- Amount of money that can be spent on a service user's behalf without permission;
- Purposes for which money can be spent;
- Circumstances under which permission from service user, guardian or family member is required;
- Record keeping (i.e. invoices, ledger book);
- Providing information on monies available; and
- Accounting controls.

C. Administration issues

In this section of the procedures, you will need to indicate:

- the date of the procedures;
- how and to whom the procedures will be distributed; and
- how and when the procedures will be reviewed.

- End -