

Donations Standard

While every care is taken to ensure that this standard accurately reflects current legal obligations, please note that it does not and cannot guarantee to any Centre, and/or any Centre staff member or volunteer, immunity from suit and/or legal liability in civil courts, criminal courts or other tribunal.

1. INTRODUCTION

Historically Rape Crisis Centres have offered free services. Many do not seek nor encourage any donations from survivors and supporters using services, and in fact are committed to providing services which are entirely free. Recently, as demand for services continued to be unmet by resource allocations, some Centres have taken the decision to inform clients that donations will be accepted by their Centre.

Those supporting the practice of accepting donations are informed by the view that it can be empowering for a client(1) to be able make a donation, including feeling more independent and worthwhile, irrespective of the amount. They are also aware that women and men attending their Centre vary greatly in terms of personal wealth and resources, with some comfortably in a position to make a contribution, thus making services more accessible to others. However, they are equally informed by the view that no client should ever be put under any pressure to contribute. This is a different situation to charging for services.

It is not currently clear whether accepting donations will come under the following sections in the HSE Grant Aid Agreements and Service Arrangements, by which RCCs will be legally bound. Section 4.4 in the Service Arrangement states “Unless provided for elsewhere by law the Executive and the Provider shall agree and determine, in advance, the rates of any fees which the Provider wishes to impose upon Service Users in respect of the Services. Section 4.5 in the Service Arrangement states: “The Executive may require the Provider to remit any fees collected by the Provider (in accordance with Clause 4.4) to the Executive, and for the avoidance of doubt, the Executive shall be entitled to invoke the provisions of Clause 6 (Set-off) in respect of any sums owing to it.”

The RCNI is currently in negotiations with the HSE, on behalf of the rape crisis sector, regarding these funding agreements. Amongst a range of other matters, the RCNI is seeking further clarification on these sections and RCCs accepting donations.

This standard only applies to Centres which seek donations from clients.

2. REQUIREMENTS

- Our Centre will inform survivors and supporters that our RCC accepts donations, which are entirely at their discretion and choice. The client is informed that this is an entirely voluntary donation which is optional, that she/he should not feel under any pressure to contribute and this should not deter anyone from attending.
- An amount of €10 can be suggested.

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- The client is informed of this facility on one occasion only by their counsellor, generally at a first meeting and only if appropriate at that time.
- A small donation box, in a suitable discrete location, is made available.
- No donation will be accepted at an initial appointment.
- While our counsellors will not discuss any donation any further as such, it is important that any emotional issues around money that arise be discussed from a therapeutic view point.
- Under no circumstances will we put a counsellor or client under pressure should a client decline to make a donation, or cease making a donation.

Signed _____ Date _____ Review Date _____

1. For the purposes of this standard, a client is a survivor or supporter utilising face-to-face direct services at the Rape Crisis Centre.