



Bluestar Best Practice Standards

for Pre-Trial Support Services



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The Bluestar Best Practice Standards for Pre-Trial Support Services were developed by the Bluestar Project, led by the evidence-base and in partnership with survivors of trauma alongside the multi-agency criminal justice response in 2023.

The Best Practice Standards aim to ensure that every survivor of trauma can have access to quality pre-trial support regardless of criminal justice outcomes.

In conjunction with the Bluestar Accreditation Programme, the Bluestar Best Practice Standards provide a benchmark across England and Wales that services can monitor their delivery of pre-trial support against. The Standards are free for frontline services to access along with our Pre-Trial Toolkit. Services wishing to sign up to the Bluestar Project's Accreditation Programme will be supported by a member of our Team to implement the Standards.

To find out more, contact us at
info@bluestarproject.co.uk

Best Practice Areas

Pre-Trial Governance

1. Has a comprehensive pre-trial protocol/policy in place which seeks to provide consistency and quality of care across key delivery areas, including:
 - Roles and responsibilities (service, multi-agency partners)
 - Referral into service
 - Assessment and contracting pre-trial
 - Service delivery (decision to commence, types of service delivery)
 - Note keeping
 - New or additional disclosures
 - Responding to notes requests
 - Responding to court requests/ witness summons
2. All staff delivering pre-trial services have had specific training about the delivery of pre-trial support services.
3. Established process in place for receiving and managing pre-trial notes requests in line with GDPR regulation, Victims and Prisoners Act (2024) and the Victim Information Requests Code of Practice (2026).
4. Pre-trial notes meet best practice standards ensuring agreement is clearly recorded throughout client journey and pre-trial status is clear.
5. Maintains effective case management of pre-trial clients (including ongoing review of case notes) and has in place supervision arrangements.

Access

1. Accessible, visible, and accurate information about pre-trial services available to clients at each stage of their service journey including:
 - At the point of referral (website, referral form)
 - Triage/Assessment (confidentiality/ privacy statement)
 - Service delivery (pre-trial leaflet)
 - Signposting (referral onwards to other pre-trial services)
2. Puts in place a comprehensive pre-trial client agreement that seeks to:
 - Outline pre-trial provision (benefits, risks, rights of access)
 - Explain confidentiality, safeguarding and service-responsibilities pre-trial
 - Define the process for recording new or additional disclosures
 - Define agreement and provide assurance around disclosures/notes requests
 - Explain the client's rights in relation to notes requests
 - Explain that responding to a TPM request is voluntary and that the client's data will not be shared without their knowledge
3. Established relationships and proactive partnership working by individual practitioners and at a service-level with the multi-agency criminal justice response, particularly the Police, CPS, and advocacy services.

Best Practice Areas

Service Delivery

1. All services are accessible pre-trial, regardless of service type (e.g., 1-1 therapy, groups, advocacy) and stage of criminal justice involvement, and clients can talk about what happened to them.
2. Knowledgeable and confident delivery of pre-trial services regardless of service type (e.g., 1-1 therapy, group, advocacy).
3. Note-keeping is factual, accurate and timely, in-line with best practice pre-trial note keeping guidance, with the primary purpose of safeguarding and reflecting the client's voice.
4. New or additional disclosures, and in particular any first disclosures made for the very first time, are recorded accurately and concisely on a separate disclosure template. The client is informed that the disclosure has been recorded and the likely next steps explained.
5. Arrangements in place to support staff whose notes are requested, during redaction, notes release and court processes.

Client-centred Delivery

1. Delivery is client-led, with agreement and collaboration regularly sought within the pre-trial journey, and there are established mechanisms for feedback or co-production.
2. Process in place to offer clients the opportunity to agree to information sharing before release, including those clients that are no longer accessing the service.
3. Arrangements in place to offer emotional support to clients throughout and after the notes request process.
4. Established referral pathways to other local or national services that deliver pre-trial support.



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