



FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND HOMELESSNESS

Family and domestic violence is one of the largest contributing factors of homelessness for women and children in Western Australia. In 2014-15, the Specialist Homelessness Services Collection showed family and domestic violence was the most common main reason women and children presented at specialist homelessness services for assistance.

The State Government is committed to responding to vulnerable women and children who have been affected by family and domestic violence and who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness.

Family and Domestic Violence Accommodation and Support Services (Women's Refuges)

In 2015-16, the Department for Child Protection and Family Support (the Department) provides significant resources of approximately \$22.9 million per annum through the National Affordable Housing Agreement to fund 37 accommodation and support services for women and children escaping family and domestic violence.

Family and Domestic Violence (FDV) Accommodation and Support Services provide supported and/or safe accommodation to women, with or without accompanying children, who as a result of family and domestic violence or other crisis are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness.

Services ensure women and children experiencing or at risk of family or domestic violence are safe and supported. They are able to intervene early to break the cycle of family and domestic violence and homelessness, by assisting clients to maintain existing safe accommodation where appropriate or move to stable safe long term accommodation. They aim to prevent further family and domestic violence and reduce homelessness.

The Metropolitan Service System Response Framework

In the Perth metropolitan area, FDV Accommodation and Support Services are funded to work within a new Service System Response Framework. The framework seeks to enhance the safety of women and children in imminent danger of family and domestic violence through a coordinated, integrated approach and improved referral pathways.

An important component of the new approach includes three specialist lead 24/7 emergency response services who take a lead coordination and facilitation role across the Perth metropolitan area. These services are the key referral points for the Department's Crisis Care Unit to provide better access to services for women and children in imminent danger.

The specialist lead emergency response services support referral processes across the FDV service system by assisting women to locate the most appropriate service. The newly reformed family and domestic service system commenced on 1 October 2015.

Safer Families, Safer Communities: Kimberley Family Violence Regional Plan 2015-2020

Following extensive consultation and information analysis, an across government and community sector plan for responding to family violence in the Kimberley region has been developed. The Safer Families, Safer Communities: Kimberley Family Violence Regional

Plan 2015-2020 (Kimberley Plan) focuses on Aboriginal families and communities as a priority and outlines a whole of community response. This includes improved access to and effectiveness of existing service responses, including civil and criminal justice processes, and working alongside Aboriginal people, families and communities to develop and/or strengthen local responses to family violence. The Kimberley Plan is informed by the report Family Violence in the Kimberley which documents the outcomes of data analysis, stakeholder consultation and case reviews.

The Safe At Home And Domestic Violence Outreach Program

The Safe at Home and Domestic Violence Outreach program has been operating in Western Australia since 2010. The program provides another option to support women and their children escaping family and domestic violence.

In 2015-16, the Department provides approximately \$2.6 million per annum through the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness to fund 11 Domestic Violence Outreach and Safe at Home services throughout the State.

The Safe at Home and Domestic Violence Outreach program provides women with an option to stay housed as an alternative to entering the traditional homelessness service system. The program aims to intervene early to keep the victims of domestic and family violence, primarily women and children, in the family home and remove the perpetrators of violence.

The program provides specialist workers to assess the safety and support needs of women and children who have experienced domestic violence. Brokerage funds are available to stabilise housing and increase security. This can make the financial burden for women seeking to escape from violence more manageable by removing the costs associated with finding alternative accommodation, establishing and furnishing a household and relocating children to new schools. Being able to remain in the same area can also mean that support networks and employment security is not disrupted.

Perpetrator Responses

A component of the Safe at Home and Domestic Violence Outreach services is a service to the perpetrator of violence. Safe at Home and Domestic Violence Outreach services work in collaboration with the Perpetrator Response Service in order to maximise the safety of women and children.

The Perpetrator Response Service is a state-wide service which offers telephone and face to face support to the violent perpetrator of clients accessing the Safe at Home and Domestic Violence Outreach programs and will offer crisis counselling and support to address the perpetrators behaviour. Perpetrators are held accountable for their actions and are actively supported to cease their violent behaviour.

The Perpetrator Response Service also identifies the female family members affected by the actions of the perpetrator and provides crisis assistance, referral and case management appropriate to the needs of the family and their circumstances. The Perpetrator Response Service has close partnerships with domestic violence services to ensure women are referred to the most appropriate specialist services and to facilitate safety planning and critical incident management when crises arises for victims. Domestic violence services and the Perpetrator Response Service work together to ensure relevant information and safety considerations are managed in order to provide better outcomes for clients.

The service has a brokerage component to ensure funding is available to intervene and respond to the needs of the perpetrator in order to stabilise the situation and increase the safety of women and children.

Breathing Space Perpetrator Program

Communicare's Breathing Space program is an Australia-first domestic violence initiative for men who have been violent or abusive in their relationships. Up to 12 men can live at the residence at one time in a holistic program based on a therapeutic community model. It is the first service in Australia using this model of domestic violence intervention.

The Breathing Space therapeutic community model offers an intensive program for men who choose to use violence and abuse against their family members. The model helps to address many aspects of violent behaviour and also includes a specific therapeutic program to promote change on multiple levels. The therapeutic program involves weekly mandatory groups and individual counselling.

Communicare Breathing Space also offers non-residential outreach services to men who are involved in family and domestic violence. The outreach services offers statewide information, support and referral to men who have been violent in the family environment.

New Services

In the 2013 Western Australian State Election the government made a number of election commitments to manage the impact and address the prevalence of family and domestic violence. This included additional crisis accommodation for women and children fleeing violence, including the construction of two new refuges and operational funding.

A new metropolitan crisis accommodation service will be provided for women and children fleeing violence in the Ellenbrook region. The refuge will be based on the 'cluster model' of women's refuge accommodation that consists of unit-style accommodation within a secure facility. Cluster model refuges enable larger families to be accommodated, including women with older boys, and provide more privacy and independence to women and children. The facility is expected to be completed in early 2016 and will offer a combination of five different sized independent units from a secure location.

The Wooree Miya Refuge is also currently being redeveloped with a new building being constructed in the south-east metropolitan region. The re-development of the Wooree Miya Refuge will offer ten different sized independent units and will double the capacity of the existing refuge to accommodate ten families, or ten women and up to 30 children. The newly developed Wooree Miya Women's Refuge equates to an additional family and domestic violence refuge facility in the metropolitan area. The new facility is expected to be completed in mid 2016.

In addition, in February 2014 a new women's refuge opened in Busselton for women and children escaping domestic violence in the south-west, referrals are accepted from other regions and the metropolitan area. The service model provides a response to the identified gaps in the Perth metropolitan specialist FDV Accommodation and Support Service System, including accommodation for older boys and larger families.

For a full list of Family and Domestic Violence Accommodation and Support Services go to <http://www.dcp.wa.gov.au/servicescommunity/Pages/Services%20by%20type.aspx>