Access to Local Family Violence Support Services

September 2022

The purpose of this update is to ensure that victim survivors have consistent and equitable access to specialist family violence support options across the state.

It provides confirmation of the minimum requirements for all Local Family Violence Support Services in all DFFH Areas related to the treatment of referrals for specialist family violence support.

Local Family Violence Support Services receive funding for victim survivor case management under *Activity 38028 - Client Support Family Violence*. This funding supports the delivery of key case management functions across the spectrum of responses and domains set out in the Case Management Program Requirements. This includes intake and access related screening, identification and triage functions.

Context and key messages

The Orange Door and Safe Steps Interface Guidance was released in September 2022 to support implementation from mid-October 2022. The Interface Guidance builds on the Case Management Program Requirements to ensure key family violence services operate with a 'no wrong door' approach and facilitate victim survivors' access to specialist family violence support.

The Case Management Program Requirements were released in December 2021 and are being implemented over 2022. They establish requirements for Local Family Violence Support Services, including requirements for screening, identification and triage (see section 3.2.1). These include:

- operating a 'no wrong door' for victim survivors
- accepting and progressing referrals in a timely manner from the statewide 24/7 crisis service and The Orange Door or 'other agencies' when victim survivors have been referred to or accommodated in emergency accommodation in their local area.

The Orange Door network and Safe Steps are (and remain) Victoria's primary entry points for victim survivors seeking support, including children and young people.

However, victim survivors should have alternative access and support options. These options should ensure that victim survivors who have already been assessed or supported by a specialist family violence service do not have to return to these primary entry points.

To enable this, all Local Family Violence Support Services in all DFFH Areas are required to accept and progress referrals from:

- **victim survivors (self-referring)**
- **The Orange Door (where a risk assessment has been completed)**
- **Safe Steps (where a risk assessment has been completed)**
- **other specialist family violence services* (where a risk assessment has been completed).**

*Other specialist family violence services are FSV funded Local Family Violence Support Services, Family Violence Accommodation Services (refuge) and Targeted Family Violence Services.

The application of this requirement should be informed by the key related documents set out below.

> **Referral pathways between Local Family Violence Support Services and 'other agencies' (beyond The Orange Door, Safe Steps and other specialist family violence services) can be determined locally - noting FSV will undertake further work in partnership with Safe and Equal to consider greater statewide consistency.**

The release of the Family Violence Crisis Response Model by end 2022 will provide further guidance and consistency on how the specialist family violence service system works together to deliver crisis responses. This will include referral pathways for victim survivors experiencing a crisis who need emergency accommodation or after-hours support.

Key related documents

This should be read alongside:

- the *Case management program requirements for specialist family violence services which support victim survivors (December 2021)*
- the *Code of Practice for specialist family violence services (2nd edition)*
- Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM)
- The Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS) and the Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS)
- Communications from FSV related to the Case Management Program Requirements and Crisis Response Model (including the *Implementation Overview – updated in August 2022*).