

Personal Safety Initiative (PSI)

Quick Guide

The Personal Safety Initiative (PSI) is a Family Safety Victoria initiative aimed at strengthening security response for victim survivors; to allow for appropriate, suitable, and quality security measures to aid victim survivors to stay within their homes. PSI will also ensure that security and technology responses delivered in Victoria are consistent, effective and used in conjunction with a broader case plan to benefit victim survivor/s.

The purpose of the PSI is to:

- Utilise safety and security responses, including property modifications and technology, to:
 - Enable victim survivors of family violence to remain safely in, or return safely to, their own homes and communities, or relocate to a new home.
 - Increase safety and feelings of safety for victim survivors.
- Deter breaches of Family Violence Intervention Orders (FVIOs).
- Facilitate the collection of admissible evidence where breaches occur to hold perpetrators accountable for their use of violence.

How is PSI Funded?

PSI responses are funded through Family Violence Flexible Support Packages (FSP). A consult with the PSI Coordinator must occur if FSP funding is being sought for any home security measures (other than immediate measures to secure the home, such as lock changes and repairs to broken windows/doors).

What can be expected from a PSI Response?

The PSI response is a **non-crisis** response that provides eligible victim survivors with:

- Coordination of personal safety, security and technology responses, through the collaboration of case managers and local PSI agencies.
- A safety and security audit completed by a suitably qualified security provider.
- A family violence flexible support package (FSP) to fund personal safety, security and technology responses.
- Access to property modifications and personal safety technology (including personal safety devices and CCTV) which meets Minimum Technology Standards.

A security and safety audit will provide a summary that outlines home modifications to be considered based on the physical inspection of the property and the behaviour of the perpetrator including:

- Technology responses (e.g. CCTV, personal safety device, home alarms).
- Home modifications responses (e.g. landscaping, security upgrades to doors / windows, fencing, lock changes, lighting).
- If relevant, bug detection (home, car & workplace) and technology sweeps (mobile phones & laptops)

What can be done if an immediate response is required?

To ensure a timely response to any immediate risks to safety, a small number of basic safety and security responses can be implemented outside the scope of a PSI response and do not require a safety and security audit. These include repairs to broken doors and/or windows, lock changes and installation of security doors.

- Apply for immediate safety and security responses through the current method used by your organisation.
- See Tenancy Victoria for information regarding any immediate safety and security repairs if residing in a social housing property. See - [Repair for public housing](#)

All other safety and security responses require a consult with the PSI Coordinator.

Who is Eligible for a PSI Response?

To be eligible for a PSI response, victim survivors must:

- Have recently experienced, or be experiencing, family violence, as defined in the Family Violence Protection Act 2008.
- Have received a comprehensive risk and needs assessment, aligned with the MARAM Framework.
- Be receiving case management support, from a specialist family violence agency or related agency (such as a Integrated Family Services or Child Protection) that identifies how a PSI response will address safety and security goals and sustainably assist in managing family violence related risk.
- Meet the eligibility criteria for a family violence flexible support package.
- Have, or be in the process of applying for, a Family Violence Intervention Order (FVIO) with exclusion conditions, unless in exceptional circumstances (*victim survivors cannot receive a PSI response whilst cohabiting with the perpetrator).
- Provide informed consent for a PSI response as outlined with the Important Considerations section.

Refer to [SouthSafe.com.au](https://southsafe.com.au) for all up to date forms and Information for both PSI and FSP referrals.

What Questions to consider in determining if a Technology Security Response is needed?

Technology alone is not sufficient to enable victim survivors to stay safely in their own homes and should only be implemented as part of a broader plan for the safety, stability and wellbeing of an individual or family. The suitability of technology responses such as CCTV, video doorbells, personal safety devices and property alarms should be carefully considered and explored with victim survivors (including children and young people residing in the property). Victim survivors should be provided with information and choice about the options available to them.

Personal Safety Device (PSD)

A personal safety device (PSD) is a small lightweight device that has been configured with the details of the victim survivor. The PSD is a discreet form of contacting a 24/7 monitoring centre who can request an emergency response if required. In the event of an incident the device has capacity to provide your location (via GPS tracking) and open a live audio transmission to the monitoring centre. Victim survivors should only activate their device if an incident occurs.

- Is there a history of the perpetrator taking the victim survivors phone so the victim survivor is unable to call Police?

- Is the perpetrator attending the home despite the Intervention Order or stalking a victim survivor at home and/or away from home?
- Is the victim survivor likely to use a PSD on a daily basis?

Closed-circuit Television (CCTV) and Video Doorbells

- Is a Family Violence Intervention Order (FVIO) in place or in the process of being applied for (unless a risk assessment has indicated that this could place the victim survivor at further harm)?
- Are there breaches to the FVIO occurring at the home?
- Is there high-risk family violence & stalking?
- Are there ongoing risks that the perpetrator will attend at the home in breach of an FVIO?
- Is the perpetrator aware of the victim survivor's address?
- What benefit might CCTV provide, if installed in isolation of a PSD?
- Is this being installed to facilitate the collection of admissible evidence where breaches have occurred?

Technical Surveillance Counter Measures (TSCM) (Bug Detection) and Technology Sweeps

- Has the perpetrator's behaviour indicated they know the victim survivors' movements?
- Are there concerns with tracking devices or bug devices in the home or car of the victim survivor? Please note - debugging cannot be used on phones.
 - Are there concerns around the victim survivors' phone? Has the victim survivor changed all passwords for accounts, set up multifactor authentication and completed a factory reset of the phone (this would enable any tracking apps to be deleted from the phone).

A thorough risk assessment and consultation with the PSI Coordinator is required before any of the above will be approved.

Important Considerations

Suitability

Though a victim survivor may meet the eligibility criteria outlined above, this will not always mean a PSI response is suitable for the victim survivor in their current circumstances.

A perpetrator's history and patterns of behaviour must be considered when assessing a victim survivor's suitability for a PSI response. Where a risk and needs assessment identifies a perpetrator poses an immediate risk to the life or safety of an individual or family, the appropriateness of a PSI response should be carefully considered, and alternative options explored. Justice system responses and/or potential relocation may be more appropriate in these circumstances.

In circumstances where a victim survivor is relocated, a PSI response can be implemented in the new residence to support the victim survivor's safety. The PSI Coordinator will provide case managers with a rationale if they have determined a victim survivor does not meet the eligibility and suitability requirements for a PSI response.

Consent

A victim survivor who is eligible and suitable for a PSI response must also provide informed consent to all components of the response being implemented. For a victim survivor to provide informed consent, their case manager must ensure they understand the potential impacts and outcomes of a PSI response. These include:

- The potential cost of a PSI response (including a safety and security audit) in the context of an FSP.
- The requirement for a safety and security audit which involves an auditor attending their property.
- Information about the installation of security technologies and options relating to external monitoring of these technologies.
- The potential for recordings or other evidence to be subpoenaed (by parties including Police, Child Protection, and the perpetrator's lawyer).
- That information about the perpetrator and victim survivor will be shared between agencies for the purposes of assessing and managing risk and increasing safety (this may include requesting further information via the Information Sharing Scheme if required).
- Consideration of the potential impacts of the surveillance and monitoring of any children or young people in the home associated with implementing a technology response such as CCTV.
- That victim survivors receiving a PSI response that includes external monitoring of technology (such as CCTV, a personal safety device or property alarm) must consent to a reassessment of their eligibility and suitability no longer than three months after the initial date of installation if the costs of external monitoring are being addressed through the use of FSP funds.
- Written consent from the landlord must be obtained prior to any property modifications being made if the victim survivor is residing in a private rental or social housing property.

Technology safety

When safety planning with a victim survivor, case managers should consider how technology safety measures could be implemented to enhance safety and support a PSI response. Wesnet provides a range of advice related to technology safety planning and privacy. There is also a smartphone app called Arc which supports victim survivors to collect and store evidence safely.

Housing permissions

The *Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (VIC)* requires that a tenant obtain written permission from their landlord before additional safety features are added to the rental property. A tenant who has installed additional safety features must also restore the premises to their original condition before the tenancy ends, unless they have the landlord's consent in writing that they don't have to remove them when they leave.

Case managers should support victim survivors to seek written permission from their landlord before any PSI related changes are made to their property.

Further information, resources and factsheets regarding family violence and tenancies are available from:

- [Consumer Affairs Victoria](#)
- [Tenants Victoria](#)

The Personal Safety Initiative (PSI) Operational Guidelines have been finalised and published on the DFFS Service Providers' [website](#)

**For more information contact:
Personal Safety Initiative Coordinator Bayside Peninsula**

See Below for the PSI Referral, Audit & Implementation Flow Chart

Initial Needs Assessment

Case Manager (CM) to assess Victim Survivors (VS) eligibility and suitability for PSI response and obtain informed consent for referral.

CM & PSI Coordinator consult about the referral (via phone or email)

CM to complete and email the PSI Referral, client consent and MARAM to the PSI Coordinator. PSI Coordinator provides recommendation for a PSI response.

CM submits FSP application for Safety & Security Audit and provides PSI Coordinator's recommendations. **See** - South Safe for the [Bayside Peninsula FSP Application Process](#)

FSP provides an outcome about Safety & Security audit to be completed.

Safety & Security Audit

CM to complete and send Safety & Security Request form to Auditor.

Auditor arranges the audit with the VS, completes audit and sends audit report to the CM. CM to send auditor's tax invoice to FSP for payment within 2 business days.

CM & PSI Coordinator consult about recommendations from Audit Report. PSI Coordinator makes final recommendations and provides contractor's information to

CM consults with VS about recommendations and requests quotes from contractors. If required, CM to have additional consult with PSI Coordinator once quotes are received or if client is requesting more safety measures than PSI coordinator's recommendation.

CM & VS to seek landlord's (Home Owner/ Body Corp/OOH) written approval for any property modifications.

Implementation of PSI Recommendations

CM submits FSP application with PSI Coordinator's recommendations and quotes to FSP.

FSP provides an outcome about funding application.

Once FSP approval & Landlord approval are obtained, CM & VS to coordinate the implementation of the FSP approved security measures with the security contractors.

CM to send all tax invoices for completed works to FSP for payment within 2 business days of receiving them. PSI response complete.