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| Case Management Program Requirements  Frequently asked questions – January 2023 |

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# Purpose

Family Safety Victoria (FSV) has issued new case management program requirements (CMPR) for specialist family violence services that support victim survivors. This document aims to answer questions that agencies might have about the CMPR.

## Q. What are the case management program requirements (CMPR)?

The Victorian Government invited agencies to share feedback as part of the [Family Violence Royal Commission (2015)](https://www.rcfv.com.au/Media/Royal-Commission-report-delivered-to-Government-Ho) and the major policy reform that followed. Feedback showed that the main, unique function of case management in the area of specialist family violence is to assess and manage risk to victim survivors and find ways to support them and increase their safety.

FSV has published a detailed guide, or case management ‘manual’, that describes what specialist family violence agencies need to do to make sure their service delivery for victim survivors is high quality.

The CMPR is mainly for leaders and managers of organisations. It will support them to provide consistent case management, including for crisis, brief-non crisis, intermediate, long-term and intensive responses.

The CMPR describes person-centred, strengths-based, flexible and culturally safe case management service delivery using three components that complement each other: responses, functions and domains.

These three components respond to victim survivors’ risk, needs and individual circumstances. They consider the settings, situations and impact of family violence on victim survivors.

Services must adopt the relevant mandatory resources, tools and practice guidance in the CMPR. There are extra requirements for services that work with children and young people, and for family violence accommodation services.

The CMPR uses the inclusive term ‘victim survivors in the family group’ to describe a family group of any type affected by a perpetrator’s violence, seeking safety and support together. This can be adults, children and young people. It can include an adult victim survivor and a sibling group of children and young people, two adults not in an intimate partner relationship or a single person.

The term ‘adult victim survivor’ refers to a victim survivor with a carer role in the family, usually a mother.

This document also has other useful information and resources about services.

## Q. Is the CMPR relevant to my organisation?

The CMPR was developed for specialist family violence services funded by the Victorian Government to provide case management support to victim survivors of family violence. They include:

* local family violence support services
* family violence accommodation services, including:
  + short-term crisis accommodation
  + core-and-cluster, communal and dispersed refuges
  + transitional housing.

The CMPR also applies to agencies funded to provide crisis responses to victim survivors. In this context, their application is limited in scope in accordance with the specific roles and responsibilities of these agencies, as outlined in the Crisis Responses Model.

This is why some specific interventions and programs from statewide services are considered in the scope of the CMPR. Examples include Safe Steps’ brief intervention and refuge operations, and some local case management programs from specific services.

These services may offer flexible, brief or continuous specialist support. They may use different modes of engagement including outreach, in-service and phone-based support. They typically operate in local area networks where risk management and case planning responses are coordinated between agencies, resources are combined and risk management is collaborative.

## Q. What do statewide and targeted services need to do?

The family violence service system is made up of a range of services and organisations that extend well beyond local family violence support services and family violence accommodation services. It includes:

* Safe Steps, the statewide 24/7 family violence crisis service
* The Orange Door network
* sexual assault support services
* targeted family violence services
* family safety contact and advocate services[[1]](#footnote-1)
* Aboriginal family violence services.

All services have an important role to ensure victim survivors can access immediate, high-quality specialist family violence support wherever they enter the system. The [MARAM Framework](https://www.vic.gov.au/information-sharing-schemes-and-the-maram-framework) details the expectations of services to work together on family violence risk and family violence risk assessments, risk management, planning and review.

The CMPR is for service managers and leaders. It reflects the MARAM Framework’s emphasis on collaboration and development at the system level. This prioritises each victim survivors’ needs through a focus on individualised risk assessment and risk management.

The main focus of the CMPR is to explain what agencies need to do to provide consistent, high-quality responses to victim survivors across Victoria. It establishes detailed, consistent criteria for every stage of client support. These steps must be incorporated into service delivery practices by:

* agencies funded to support victim survivors of family violence under the list of funding activities in Section 5.1 of the CMPR document
* services that deliver family violence crisis responses, including Safe Steps and The Orange Door network, as much as their specific roles and responsibilities to provide emergency accommodation and / or after-hours responses are outlined in the Crisis Responses Model.

Statewide and targeted services must include relevant responses, functions and domains of the CMPR in their service delivery approaches as they relate to their MARAM responsibilities, according to the funded activities in their agency service agreements and within the scope of their services.

Many of these services aim to meet the needs of a particular population group. This means they usually add specific expertise to a client’s risk assessment and risk management plan. They also work with other ‘mainstream’ local specialist family violence case management services as part of a multi-agency response to victim survivors. This requires strong relationships and regular communication with the lead agency doing most of the case management work for the victim survivor family group.

For example, a family violence service may approach another service to support a victim survivor with specific information, advice or support. This may be resources about disability, recovering from sexual assault, or LGBTIQ+ or cultural identity.

Records must be kept about any risks, advice or support provided or actions taken. This must be shared with the lead agency (per MARAM requirements). They can then update the primary risk assessment, ensure accountability for risk management and update the victim survivor’s case plan.

This means that services will fulfil their role under MARAM responsibilities 5 and 6 (information sharing with other services, including secondary consultation and referral), and responsibilities 9 and 10 (contribute to coordinated and collaborative risk management, including ongoing risk assessment).

A victim survivor may also contact a service and ask for specific help. Under MARAM, this service would need to fulfil MARAM responsibilities 2 and 3 (identify family violence risk and conduct risk assessment).

The CMPR sets out agency requirements to undertake screening, identification and triage, and risk assessment. This is to determine if a person or family is eligible and suitable for the service, and to respond to the victim survivor’s immediate risk and needs.

The Orange Door is the primary, state-wide family violence and child wellbeing intake, assessment and triage service. Where victim survivors’ self refer to a specialist family violence service in the community, that service may deem it necessary to undertake an intake risk assessment to ensure a timely response and so client does not have to repeat their story (a No Wrong Door approach). Now that The Orange Door is operational in all 17 DFFH areas, specialist family violence services should see a reduction in self referrals and the scenarios above should be by exception. All family violence services should have developed referral systems with The Orange Doors to support strong collaboration and effective information sharing pathways.

Sometimes a victim survivor needs ongoing or more intensive support than the agency can provide. Or the agency is not the most appropriate agency to lead the case management response. In these cases, the agency should refer the person or family to a specialist case management service, per the case planning and risk management function. They must also share relevant risk assessment and case planning information with the victim-survivor’s consent, to minimise disruption and repetition.

## Q. What do Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations need to do?

FSV is committed to community-led responses to end family violence against Aboriginal people, underpinned by self-determination.

FSV welcomes any opportunity to work with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) to develop a case management ‘manual’ for Aboriginal services to support more consistent, high-quality case management services to Aboriginal victim survivors and families. FSV will continue to liaise with ACCOs on options to do this.

ACCOs are not required to apply the CMPR. The project team included input from Aboriginal-led engagement with ACCOs and Aboriginal practitioners to the CMPR consultation process.

ACCOs may find that the CMPR supports good practice within their organisations. They may also find it useful for understanding expectations of mainstream services for delivering consistent case management services to victim survivors. This includes crisis, brief-non crisis, intermediate, long-term and intensive responses.

The project team welcomes input from Aboriginal services and practitioners to further strengthen the CMPR to support mainstream services to further develop and embed culturally safe practices.

## Q. What are you asking us to do?

In-scope agencies need to embed the CMPR into their service delivery practices.

As agency funding and capacity varies, this work can be undertaken in stages. A maturity approach is being adopted consistent with the [MARAM Framework](https://www.vic.gov.au/family-violence-multi-agency-risk-assessment-and-management-framework).

Agencies self-assessed their service delivery practices against each of the program requirements. This meant reviewing their policy and procedural documentation. To support this prior to the divisional information sessions in 2022 agencies were provided with a mapping document, self-audit tool and action plan template.

Agencies were able to use a self-assessment tool and action plan of their own. Safe and Equal also developed more options in response to sector feedback.

Agencies completed their self-assessment by the end of June 2022. The self-assessment informed the agency action plan to align agencies’ policy and procedural documentation with the CMPR.

Agency action plans were provided to local APSS contacts in September 2022. The updating of internal policy and procedure documents was due by the end of 2022. Agencies now need to update their APSS contacts on the progress of their action plans.

In the first three months of 2023, agencies should review their action plans. The plans should be updated as required with further activities to fully embed the CMPR into their service delivery, alongside alignment work for MARAM and the Code of Practice.

Note: Include further activities to thoroughly embed program requirements at any stage. For example, during self-assessment of the alignment of policy and procedural documentation, when first developing an action plan, or later when reviewing an action plan.

## Q. What is a ‘lead agency’?

A ‘lead agency’ is the primary specialist family violence support provider that communicates directly with the victim survivor/s. The lead agency delivers, coordinates and documents specialist family violence responses, usually for all victim survivors in the family group. A lead agency also has some of the main MARAM responsibilities.

For victim survivors needing crisis support, the lead agency can change rapidly. Particularly if after-hours responses are needed for immediate risks and needs. The ‘lead’ agency should be determined by the main service needs and case management processes set out in Family violence crisis responses: roles and responsibilities in the provision of emergency accommodation and [Family violence after hours crisis responses operational guidelines](https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/family-violence-after-hours-crisis-responses-operational-guidelines-word).

Where multiple agencies offer 24/7 responses, all specialist family violence services taking the role of lead agency in the victim survivors’ support plan must:

* coordinate responses so risk assessment and case management information is shared consistently, safely and with consent
* ensure victim survivors experience minimal disruptions or handovers between agencies
* be clear on which agency is leading their support and where to seek help.

## Q. How does the CMPR relate to other work?

The CMPR will align with the ongoing implementation of [The code of practice: principles and standards for specialist family violence services for victim survivors](https://safeandequal.org.au/working-in-family-violence/service-responses/specialist-family-violence-services/the-code-of-practice/) as far as possible. Various platforms must also be used to provide advice and feedback on implementation strategies. Such platforms include Implementation Champions Group, Refuge Roundtable and MARAM Community of Practice.

FSV and Safe and Equal will work with sector agencies to collect and answer questions during the implementation period.

Additionally, the work to define service expectations will continue. The first edition of the CMPR is a foundational element of this work. It links to the principles and standards set out in the [Code of practice](https://safeandequal.org.au/working-in-family-violence/service-responses/specialist-family-violence-services/the-code-of-practice/) and the more detailed practice guides and tools in [MARAM](https://www.vic.gov.au/maram-practice-guides-and-resources).

The CMPR also incorporates key elements of Family Safety Victoria’s crisis responses guide, Family violence crisis responses: roles and responsibilities in the provision of emergency accommodation, released in April 2021.

This guidance was designed to support victim survivors in crisis situations that require emergency accommodation through:

* coordinated responses that are consistent
* clearly communicated
* jointly managed by the services involved.

## Q. Are the changes to the family violence funding structure affected by the CMPR?

On 1 July 2022, there were changes to the funding structure for FSV. This was to simplify funding arrangements and provide more consistency and flexibility. Since then programs have been funded through new or revised activities.

The key performance measures will change for mainstream and Aboriginal family violence client support that include funding for crisis and case management (client support). The measures will now include service hours unit priced at the Integrated Family Services published unit price, in addition to support periods.

The total number of support periods will be from a standardised mix of hours based on the following tiers:

* average brief (10 hour)
* average intermediate to longer term (24 hours)
* average intensive (98 hours).

Services will not need to count support periods by these individual tiers. They will only need to count total support periods. Services will be able to implement their service hours mix in a flexible way, together with the CMPR.

There is a performance threshold of 97% for support periods. This recognises that some service hours are outside of support periods (such as secondary consultations).

This change aligns family violence client support funding to other similar functions in the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing. This includes Family Services and The Orange Door funding.

The CMPR describes interventions that have a lesser and greater duration and intensity. It also describes a requirement for agencies to undertake secondary consultations that would also count as service hours. Introducing service hours formalises the intent of the program requirements. It also allows agencies to respond to demand in a flexible way through a range of shorter and longer-term interventions.

FSV has made changes to SHIP to enable agencies to capture and report on service hours, as well as on supported accommodation bed nights and household stays.

## Q. How do I use the CMPR with other standards, frameworks and processes?

The CMPR aligns with the current Human Services Standards. Under current accreditation processes, independent review bodies can examine if an organisation’s systems, policies and services reflect the CMPR per the Human Services Standards evidence guide. So, it is important that agencies develop and apply their CMPR alignment action plans as per the required schedule.

As outlined above, agency action plans should have been provided to local APSS contacts by the end of September 2022 (noting there is no formal approval required). Agencies should then have updated internal policy and procedure documents by the end of 2022.

The social services regulation reform will establish a new regulatory framework. It will be administered by an independent regulatory body. New Social Services Standards will form the foundation of the regulatory framework, replacing the current Human Services Standards. Family violence, sexual assault and homelessness support services are currently required to comply with the Human Services Standards. They will need to register under the new regulatory scheme.

Under the new regulatory arrangements, instead of meeting the Human Service Standards or conditions as per individual funding agreements, providers will be required to meet the Social Services Standards. The *Social Services Regulation Act 2021* will phase out the need for in-scope service providers to achieve certification against the Human Services Standards via an audit conducted by an independent review body.

The existing regulator will continue to work with other areas of the department and certification bodies to plan for phasing out this requirement. They will provide information to regulated parties about an intelligence-led, risk-based approach to regulation.

The new regulatory scheme is expected to be phased in from July 2023 to give time for the sector to transition to the new arrangements. It is understood that a staged approach to implementation will be possible. This is to accommodate the diverse compliance requirements with the Human Services Standards.

DFFH will consult further as the transition plan is developed. In the meantime, FSV will undertake a more detailed mapping of the CMPR against the new Social Services Standards when they are available.

## Q. Is support available for agencies to apply the CMPR?

Safe and Equal and will be available throughout the development of agency action plans and beyond. Safe and Equal’s focus will be on:

* supporting agencies to enhance the quality of their practice in service delivery areas that agencies identify through alignment mapping
* the provision of helpful resources and implementation tools based on sector needs.

FSV is working on a range of system enablers[[2]](#footnote-2) to support agencies to apply the CMPR. FSV will work on implementation issues and concerns as they arise. FSV will liaise closely with local DFFH contacts, Safe and Equal and relevant governance structures.

A small amount of funding has been allocated to support agencies to implement and align with the CMPR and Crisis Response Model.

## Q. Which other documents should I read?

Read the CMPR in conjunction with:

1. [Family violence crisis responses: roles and responsibilities in providing emergency accommodation](https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/roles-and-responsibilities-providing-emergency-accommodation-family-violence-crisis-responses) (October 2022) <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/roles-and-responsibilities-providing-emergency-accommodation-family-violence-crisis-responses>
2. [Family violence crisis responses: roles and responsibilities after hours](https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/roles-and-responsibilities-after-hours-family-violence-crisis-responses) (October 2022) <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/roles-and-responsibilities-after-hours-family-violence-crisis-responses>
3. [Program requirements for family violence crisis brokerage guidelines](https://www.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-04/Family%20violence%20crisis%20brokerage%20guidelines%20-%20May%202020.docx) (May 2020) <<https://www.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-04/Family%20violence%20crisis%20brokerage%20guidelines%20-%20May%202020.docx>>
4. [Family violence crisis responses model implementation overview](https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/family-violence-crisis-response-model-implementation-overview) (February 2023) <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/family-violence-crisis-response-model-implementation-overview >.

FSV released a consolidated pack in the second half of 2022 to bring together these requirements in one place and improve the ability for in-scope services to navigate the documents.

## Q. Where can I get more information?

Local APSS contacts have been briefed on these changes. Contact them in the first instance for advice. Safe and Equal will be available to the sector throughout the development of action plans and beyond.

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1. Family safety contact and advocate services engage with family members of perpetrators (usually intimate partners) attending intervention programs, with specific responsibilities under MARAM. Their role is to maintain contact with victim survivors of the perpetrator in their programs to gather and share risk-relevant information, support risk assessment and safety planning, and provide support and referral where needed. The services should offer a counterpoint to the perpetrator’s under-reporting of their violence and abuse. ([No to Violence (2021), Family Safety Advocate Practice Guidance: MARAM Alignment](https://ntv.org.au/sector-resources/covid-support/)) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. System enablers work includes the family violence refuge eligibility criteria, prioritisation and allocation policy, the refuge application form and process, enhancements to the Family Violence Accommodation Register, and guidance on motel coordination and placement. Refer to the ‘Implementation overview for sector agencies’ for more information. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)