



Strengthening Responses to Family and Domestic Violence

SYSTEM REFORM PLAN 2024 TO 2029

Improving the ways victim-survivors
are supported and perpetrators are
held to account

Acknowledgement of Country

The Government of Western Australia acknowledges the traditional custodians throughout Western Australia and their continuing connection to the land, waters and community. We pay our respects to all members of Western Australia's Aboriginal Communities and their cultures; and to Elders both past and present.

We also recognise that Aboriginal women and children experience family and domestic violence at far higher rates than other members of the Western Australian Community.

Commitment to victim-survivors



We recognise and respect the human right of women and children to live free from violence and fear. Importantly, we must not just say that we do we must show that we do. Actions, as we all know, speak louder than words. We must show that we respect the human right to live free from violence and fear by ensuring that systems are safe and accountable.

This means building an integrated family and domestic violence system where relevant information is shared so that the system can better identify, assess and manage the risk that perpetrators present to women and children's safety and wellbeing and to prevent further harm and death. Adult and child victim-survivors must never be left to manage a perpetrator's harmful and dangerous behaviours on their own.

Dr Alison Evans,
Family and Domestic Violence Taskforce Member
CEO, Centre for Women's Safety and Wellbeing



In this document, term 'Aboriginal' people is used in preference to "Indigenous" or "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander" people, in recognition that Aboriginal peoples are the original inhabitants of Western Australia. The term 'victim-survivor' is inclusive of adults and children who have experienced family and domestic violence.

Minister's Foreword

Family and domestic violence affects the lives of thousands of Western Australian women and children every day and has devastating impacts across our community.

In seeking support and safety, victim-survivors often need to access a range of services and systems including police, courts, child protection, health, social services, schools, banks, Centrelink and housing.

While no single service or agency can solve family and domestic violence, they all have an important role to play in making sure that victim-survivors are seen, believed, supported, and safe. They also have a role in making sure that perpetrators are identified early, held accountable and supported to change.

Achieving these outcomes for victim-survivors and perpetrators of violence, requires each of the services and agencies involved in responding to family and domestic violence to work seamlessly together in an integrated system response.

The Family and Domestic Violence Taskforce was established by government to identify barriers and propose solutions to victim-survivor safety and perpetrator accountability.

This system reform plan developed by the Taskforce has been informed by extensive engagement with stakeholders across government, non-government and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and people with lived experience.

Most fundamentally it is about creating a more unified and integrated system and service response, that is easier for victim-survivors to navigate, and more effective at managing risk posed by perpetrators of violence.

The system reform plan is organised around four foundational pillars: risk assessment, risk management, information sharing and workforce development. By taking action across these four areas, we intend to change the way victim-survivors access and navigate supports and services. This includes integrating the strengths and resources of multiple agencies and sector partners to deliver a more seamless, efficient, effective and responsive network of support.

Work to deliver on the actions outlined in the system reform plan will occur over a five year period and involve clear and robust governance and public reporting on progress.

Importantly, the work will also take a partnerships approach including across government, non-government, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and people with lived experience. It will be through these partnerships that the system reform plan will have the best effect, enabling the work to build on existing strong services and practices and to take account of the day-to-day strengths and challenges in responding to family and domestic violence.



Hon Sabine Winton MLA
Minister for Prevention of
Family and Domestic Violence

Family and domestic violence affects the lives of thousands of Western Australian women and children every day

305,400

Estimated number of women in Western Australia (30%) who have experienced **physical, emotional or economic abuse** by a cohabiting partner since the age of 15

19%

experienced **physical and/or sexual violence**

24%

experienced **emotional abuse**

16%

experienced **economic abuse**

Australian Bureau of Statistics
(Personal Safety Survey 2021-2022)
2023

39.6%

prevalence rate for childhood exposure to domestic violence

(Australian Child Maltreatment Study, 2023)

Aboriginal women are

32 times

more likely to be hospitalised because of violence than non-Aboriginal women



In WA in 2022 there were 49 victims of homicide and related offences

18

were **family and domestic violence related**

Number of FDV incidents West Australian Police attended has increased:

55,926 **↗** 58,994
in 2021-22 in 2022-23

Since 2014, WA has had the second highest recorded rate of FDV related assault of all states and territories.

Up to 82%

According to the Personal Safety Survey, up to 82% of women did no contact police after the most recent assault by a current partner.

Family and Domestic Violence System Reform Plan

Vision

A family and domestic violence response system that is collaborative, connected and organised around victim-survivor safety, recovery and re-establishment where all parts of the system provide trauma informed, culturally safe and joined-up services to keep victim-survivors safe and hold perpetrators to account.



Foundation

A strong and supported specialist family and domestic violence service sector that includes Aboriginal led responses to family safety.



Driving reform – statement of commitment

We will:

- ✘ **Authorise, require and monitor** the core practice changes that are essential for victim-survivor safety
- ✘ Work in **partnership** to enable effective implementation
- ✘ Take **ownership** and hold ourselves to **account**
- ✘ Be **culturally responsive and trauma informed**
- ✘ Recognise that **Aboriginal led services are better for Aboriginal people**
- ✘ Tailor implementation to the **unique needs of communities**, recognising diversity and the unique strengths and challenges in regional and remote communities
- ✘ Invest in **creating lasting change** to improve outcomes for victim-survivors
- ✘ Have a **learning mindset** to reflect on what works and apply it to implementation

Pillars of the System Reform Plan

The system reform plan is organised around four interrelated pillars to embed ways of working that provide consistent, quality, safe and effective responses to family and domestic violence that safeguard victim-survivors and holds perpetrators to account. Outlined in each pillar is the future state goal the system reform plan is trying to achieve.



Workforce Development

A system-wide workforce where everyone is clear about their roles and responsibilities and have the knowledge and skills to provide safety-focused, family violence informed and culturally appropriate responses to victim-survivors and those using violence.



Information Sharing

The right information is shared at the right time to the right people to keep victim-survivors safe, maintain perpetrators in view and support coordination of service responses.



Risk Assessment

Workers, organisations and agencies are required and supported to assess risk in a consistent way to inform decision making and action. This approach includes the use of specific Aboriginal family safety screening and risk assessment tools.



Risk Management

Case coordination and specialist responses are appropriately resourced, with collaborative practices required and embedded. Victim-survivors consistently receive a sensitive and safe response and perpetrators are visible and held to account across all parts of the system.

Legislative frameworks will be explored across all pillars to ensure key activities are enabled and barriers are removed

This will mean a service system that looks different to everyone



Victim-survivors

- ❑ I can access the help I need when I need it, to keep me and my family safe and to support recovery and re-establishment.
- ❑ Services are locally tailored, culturally safe, family violence and trauma informed. They are well-coordinated to meet my needs.
- ❑ Services and the service system take responsibility for managing the risk posed by the perpetrator.
- ❑ As a child or young person, I am recognised as a victim-survivor and supported to be safe and recover.
- ❑ I have access to Aboriginal-led services.



Perpetrators

- ❑ The actions of all services, and service systems hold me to account for my coercive, controlling and violent behaviours and provide pathways to interventions that target behaviour change.
- ❑ I have access to culturally safe interventions.



Community

- ❑ I do not tolerate violence or violence supportive attitudes.
- ❑ I see stopping family and domestic violence as mine and everyone's responsibility.
- ❑ I know how to promote respect and challenge violence supportive attitudes.



Service workers

- ❑ I understand my role and responsibilities in responding to family and domestic violence and have the tools and skills I need to provide a response that meets the needs of my client.
- ❑ I know how to share information in a way that is safe, purposeful and supports the needs of victim-survivors.
- ❑ I support continuous quality improvement including service or program review.

Workforce development



We commit to...	Which means
<p>Developing a family and domestic violence Workforce Capability Framework</p>	<p>Develop and implement a workforce capability framework specific to family and domestic violence practice that is safety focused, trauma informed and culturally safe including specialist responses to children, Aboriginal people and people who are CaLD, LGBTQI+ or with a disability. The framework will be consistent but flexible to accommodate the needs of workers across the system (government, non-government and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations). In delivery, we will focus on capacity building including in Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.</p>
<p>Establishing a dedicated family and domestic violence workforce entity</p>	<p>Design and establish a dedicated entity to develop and support family and domestic violence informed workforces (aligned to the workforce capability framework). The role is inclusive of strategic coordination, localising and quality assuring existing training products and developing and delivering new training programs where needed. The role also includes support for Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.</p>
<p>Embedding family and domestic violence workforce capabilities</p>	<p>Consider ways to implement and embed the workforce capability framework in government agencies, non-government organisations and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations. This could include via quality or practice standards and changes to policy and procedure.</p>
<p>Establishing minimum training standards</p>	<p>Provide direct training to staff to provide them with the associated knowledge and skills identified in the workforce capability framework. Training to be considerate of culturally appropriate and responsive practices. Training and workforce development strategies to consider the unique needs of new and existing staff.</p>
<p>Appropriate responses for employees who are experiencing or using family and domestic violence</p>	<p>Ensure employers across government agencies, non-government organisations and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations have embedded policies and procedures to identify and respond to employees who are experiencing or using family and domestic violence. To include consideration of reporting requirements related to child protection, police, integrity (code of conduct) and reportable conduct. Approaches to be tailored in relation to individual workforces with consideration to unique risks and vulnerabilities.</p>



Information sharing



We commit to...	Which means
Supporting better information sharing within existing legal frameworks	Ensure government agencies, non-government organisations and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations are sharing what they can under current legislative and policy arrangements to provide better connected and coordinated services for victim-survivors.
Enhancing information sharing between specialist family and domestic violence services	Upgrade the Specialist Homelessness Information Platform, SafeNet system and Family Violence Incident Report Triage Application, to improve data capture and information sharing.
Enabling data sharing between Police, Communities and Justice	Develop a dashboard to share real time data between Police, Communities and Justice, as a potential step towards an integrated dashboard that includes data from other government agencies, non-government organisations and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations. Dashboard design and governance will include consideration of privacy, confidentiality, and data sovereignty for Aboriginal people.
Establishing a central information point	Design a central information point to connect existing information relevant for risk assessment and management of family and domestic violence to support information sharing across the system, including with non-government organisations and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.
Considering a dedicated disclosure scheme for victim-survivors	Consult on the design of a dedicated disclosure scheme for victim-survivors to seek information on intimate partner history of family and domestic violence.



Risk assessment



We commit to...	Which means
Creating a whole of system standard for identifying, assessing and managing risk	Establish an agreed practice approach for identifying family and domestic violence, and the assessment, management and monitoring of risk, which includes information sharing. Approach to build on what is already working and to be consistent but flexible enough to meet the needs of different service settings and the unique risks and vulnerabilities for Aboriginal people, people from CALD backgrounds, LGBTQI+ people, people with disability and the elderly.
Developing an Aboriginal Family Violence risk assessment tool	Develop a dedicated, culturally appropriate risk assessment tool to use with Aboriginal families across the service system.
Embedding risk assessment in policy and practice	Embed requirements for the identification, assessment, and management of family and domestic violence risk including through changes to policy, procedures, client databases and community sector contracts.
Exploring alternative response pathways	Explore alternative pathways for victim-survivors to seek help outside the justice system.





We commit to...	Which means
<p>Authorising and embedding models for case coordination</p>	<p>Develop and embed model(s) for coordinated case management across government, non-government and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, with clear governance and reporting arrangements. Require participation in multi-agency case management (or similar) as appropriate.</p> <p>Enhance Family and Domestic Violence Response Teams to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) include Adult Community Corrections Officers to strengthen responses to perpetrators; b) increase operation to 7 days per week to enable more timely responses during times of heightened demand; and c) support wider community partnerships including with the health and education sectors and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations. <p>Trial victim-survivor advocates in the justice system to support victim-survivors to navigate, stay engaged and access appropriate supports and compensation.</p> <p>Trial out of business hours social worker and socio-legal supports in health settings. This would increase access to safety focused support and provide a pathway from the health system to specialist services, on the weekends and in the evenings.</p>

Continued...



Risk management (continued...)



We commit to...	Which means
<p>More investment in perpetrator responses</p>	<p>A strategic and planned approach to strengthening perpetrator intervention through a dedicated perpetrator response framework, clear practice standards, and regular review or evaluation of existing interventions. Implementation to make sure that responses are proportionate to imminence, threat and level of risk identified. To also give consideration to the unique risks and needs of different perpetrator cohorts including adolescents using violence and perpetrators who are carers, guardians or administrators in relation to their victim-survivor.</p> <p>Undertake a data linkage project with PeopleWA to track perpetrator pathways through the system. This project will help identify opportunities for earlier intervention including the role of allied health services.</p>
<p>Safe accommodation initiatives</p>	<p>Understand need and provide options to support victim-survivors to access appropriate (safe and affordable) accommodation at the right time to keep them safe. Implementation to consider the range of ways access to housing can be supported including (but not limited to) access to transitional housing, use of the existing family and domestic violence provisions in the <i>Residential Tenancies Act 1997</i>, direct tenancy support, supportive policy settings in public housing, partnerships with Community Housing Organisations and advocacy with private landlords.</p>

Governance

The Government is committed to achieving these reform actions.

Accountability to implementation and outcomes will be created through robust governance and public reporting on progress.

A Lived Experience Advisory Group (LEAG) will ensure voices of those with lived experience inform the delivery of the system reforms.

