

|  |
| --- |
| Family violence crisis responses  Roles and responsibilities after hours |
|  |

|  |
| --- |
|  |
| To receive this publication in an accessible format phone 1300 758 554, using the National Relay Service 13 36 77 if required, or [email Family Safety Victoria](mailto:reception@familysafety.vic.gov.au) <reception@familysafety.vic.gov.au>  Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne.  © State of Victoria, Australia, Family Safety Victoria, October 2022.  In this document, ‘Aboriginal’ refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.  Available at <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/roles-and-responsibilities-after-hours-family-violence-crisis-responses> <<https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/roles-and-responsibilities-after-hours-family-violence-crisis-responses>> |

Contents

[1. Introduction 4](#_Toc117152516)

[1.1. About this document 4](#_Toc117152517)

[1.2. A note on language 5](#_Toc117152518)

[1.3. Context 5](#_Toc117152519)

[1.4. Relationship with case management program requirements 6](#_Toc117152520)

[1.5. Implementation 8](#_Toc117152521)

[2. Roles and responsibilities after hours 9](#_Toc117152522)

[2.1. Services with responsibilities after hours 9](#_Toc117152523)

[2.2. Crisis responses: roles and responsibilities after hours 10](#_Toc117152524)

[3. Key considerations for local after-hours services 15](#_Toc117152525)

[3.1. Referrals and risk assessments 15](#_Toc117152526)

[3.2. Handover at the end of business hours 16](#_Toc117152527)

[3.3. Prioritisation 16](#_Toc117152528)

[3.4. Material aid 17](#_Toc117152529)

[3.5. Worker safety 17](#_Toc117152530)

[4. Pathway flowchart 18](#_Toc117152531)

[Glossary 19](#_Toc117152532)

# Introduction

## About this document

Family Safety Victoria has developed Family violence crisis responses: roles and responsibilities after hours in partnership with Safe and Equal. The document aims to strengthen outcomes for victim survivors who need an after-hours crisis response due to serious family violence risk. It describes the roles and responsibilities of:

* the statewide 24/7 family violence crisis service (Safe Steps)
* local family violence after-hours services (local after-hours services)
* family violence accommodation services.

These services share responsibility for promoting the safety of victim survivors. Each has an important role in responding to victim survivors in crisis needing an after-hours service response.

The purpose of this document is to set out system-level after-hours crisis responses. It outlines how each part of the after-hours service system can work together to deliver consistent, timely after-hours responses to victim survivors.

Clarifying the roles and responsibilities of services that form the after-hours response will:

* reduce duplication of service responses
* avoid confusion for victim survivors by facilitating coordinated agency responses
* enable greater equity of access to after-hours support across the state.

This document is in five sections:

**Section 1:** **Introduction and context** for the roles and responsibilities for after-hours crisis responses. This includes the document’s relationship to the case management program requirements.

**Section 2:** Outlines the **roles and responsibilities** of the statewide 24/7 family violence crisis service, local after-hours services and family violence accommodation services. These focus on offering a crisis response after hours.

**Section 3:** **Key considerations** for local after-hours services relating to referrals and risk assessments, prioritising after-hours responses and worker safety.

**Section 4: Flowchart** showing the process for after-hours referrals, key points to consider such as the number of required workers and key contacts during an after-hours response.

**Glossary:** A list of **key terms and concepts** used throughout the document.

Read this document alongside the [Case management program requirements](https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/case-management-program-requirements) <<https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/case-management-program-requirements>> (released in 2022) and the [Family violence crisis brokerage guidelines](file:///C:\Users\mtse1704\Downloads\%3c%20https:\www.vic.gov.au\funds-to-support-victims-of-family-violence) < https://www.vic.gov.au/funds-to-support-victims-of-family-violence> (May 2020).

## A note on language

This document uses the term **emergency accommodation** to refer to all emergency accommodation facilities run or procured by specialist family violence services to accommodate victim survivors temporarily and safely while they are in crisis. These include family violence crisis accommodation properties (including refuge and crisis accommodation program properties) and private sector accommodation such as motels.

For clarity, the following terminology is used to distinguish the two primary types of emergency accommodation:

* **family violence accommodation service(s):** supported accommodation facilities run by specialist family violence services, including family violence refuge and crisis accommodation program (CAP) properties
* **motel(s):** a range of private sector accommodation including motels, hotels and caravan parks.

## Context

Since the release of the Family violence after-hours crisis responses operational guidelines in November 2017 the Victorian Government has implemented several reforms. These reforms have critical system, operational and practice implications for family violence after-hours crisis responses and include:

* establishing The Orange Door network across the state, with all 18 sites due to be operational by the end of 2022
* developing and implementing the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management (MARAM) Framework and the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme
* rolling out the core-and-cluster refuge redevelopment program, expanding access to 24/7 family violence accommodation services across the state
* expanding investment in family violence case management through several State Budgets
* expanding family violence crisis brokerage to all family violence case management providers to help practitioners to provide immediate, flexible, and person-centred support during a crisis
* releasing the Case management program requirements for specialist family violence services which support victim survivors
* setting up Local Family Violence Motels Coordination Projects to better coordinate motel use as emergency accommodation
* releasing guidance to support agencies to identify appropriate motels, set up and maintain relationships with moteliers, and manage issues and incidents (Key considerations for motel placement and relationship management developed by Safe and Equal and Safe Steps).

Two documents will replace the Family violence after-hours crisis responses operational guidelines (November 2017). These offer updated guidance on delivering after-hours support to victim survivors experiencing family violence crisis:

* the Case management program requirements for specialist family violence services which support victim survivors (the program requirements)
* Family violence crisis responses: roles and responsibilities after hours (this document).

Together with Family violence crisis response model: roles and responsibilities in providing emergency accommodation, they make up the **family violence crisis response model**.

### The family violence crisis response model

The family violence crisis response model has been developed to improve the way the family violence service system works together to support victim survivors in crisis. The model outlines shared responsibility for supporting victim survivors of family violence who are experiencing crisis. The model aims to ensure the following:

* **All victim survivors in crisis get immediate support and emergency accommodation, if needed, no matter which specialist family violence service they access** (through The Orange Door, Safe Steps, or a local family violence support service). All specialist family violence services now have family violence crisis brokerage to provide immediate crisis support.
* **All victim survivors in emergency accommodation can get face-to-face support from a local family violence support service, wherever they are accommodated and at any time of day or night**. For example, Safe Steps (a phone-based service) will be able to activate local outreach support from The Orange Door partner agency (victim services) during business hours, or a local family violence after-hours service outside of business hours.
* **All victim survivors will be supported by, or connected to, a local family violence support service when leaving emergency accommodation.** The local family violence support service will support the exit and provide ongoing case management, if required.

The model will ensure victim survivors in crisis are supported through responses that are:

* consistent
* clearly communicated
* jointly managed by the services involved.

It prioritises crisis support provided at the local level, where possible, and in line with victim survivor choice and safety.

Ensuring victim survivors across the state have prompt access to local family violence support services during a crisis, including after hours and/or while in emergency accommodation, will improve the quality and continuity of support provided. It will also lead to more sustainable and localised support for victim survivors.

The model also creates statewide consistency and clarity for how specialist family violence services are expected to provide crisis responses. By establishing this consistency and clarity of roles and responsibilities across the service system, the model aims to create system efficiencies and improve service coordination across the state.

In line with Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way – Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families, the program requirements, and MARAM, the model is underpinned by a commitment to Aboriginal self-determination. The principle of Aboriginal Self-Determination requires that ‘services respect and uphold the right to Aboriginal self-determination, choice and cultural safety’. The model has therefore been designed to ensure Aboriginal victim survivors have the choice of getting Aboriginal-led support. It also ensures they receive culturally safe and responsive crisis responses, no matter where they get support.

## Relationship with case management program requirements

Read this document alongside the Case management program requirements.

The program requirements describe the elements of person-centred, strengths-based, flexible, and culturally safe case management service delivery using three components that complement each other: responses, functions, and domains.[[1]](#footnote-2) Underpinning these are 10 principles that enable the delivery of consistent and high-quality case management responses.

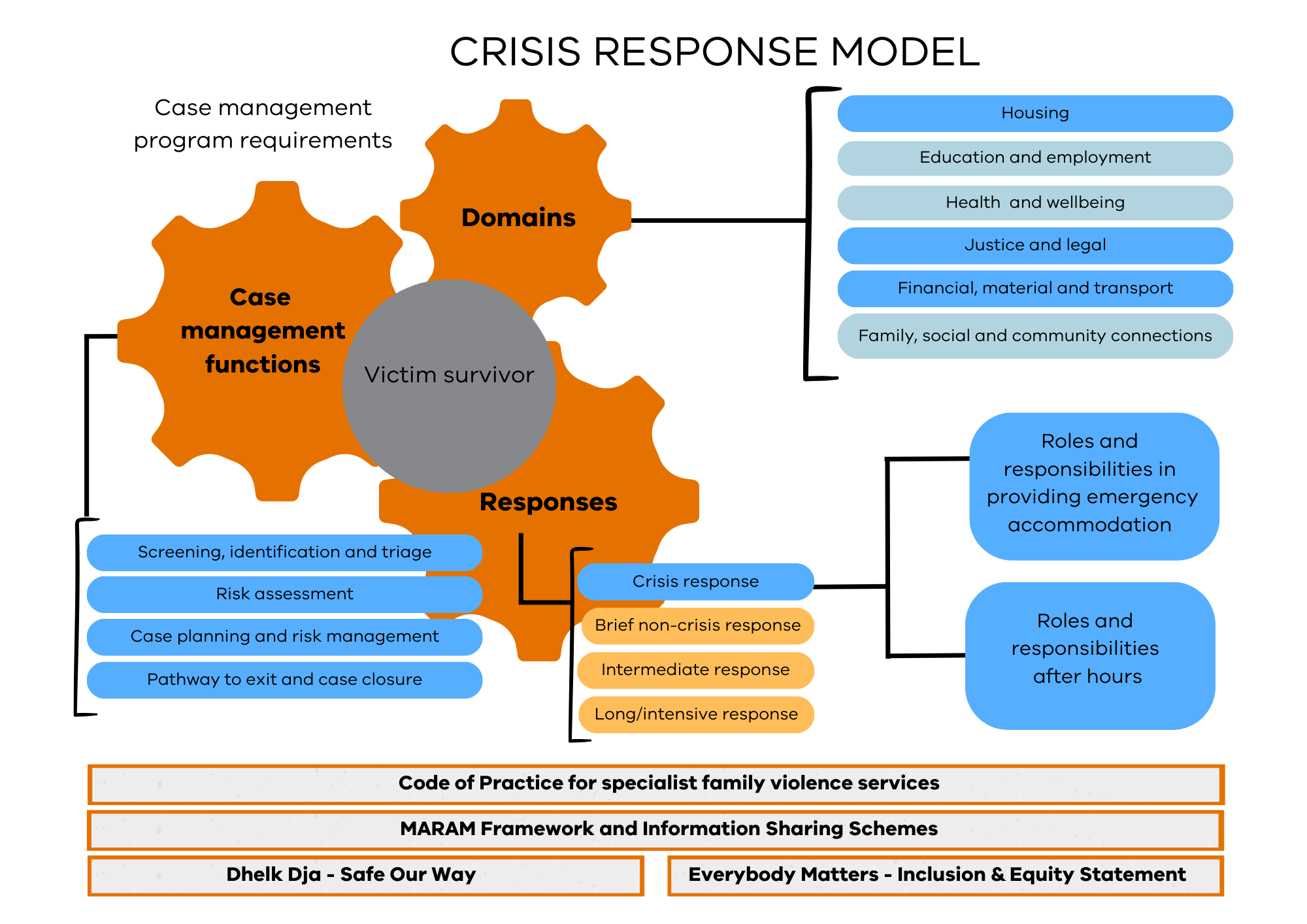
The program requirements also link with:

* the principles and standards set out in 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/) <https://safeandequal.org.au/working-in-family-violence/service-responses/specialist-family-violence-services/the-code-of-practice/>
* the practice guides and tools outlined in MARAM.

The program requirements cover each step in a victim survivor’s journey, moving from crisis through to exit via the specialist family violence service system. They include more detailed material to support work with children and young people and specific requirements for specialist family violence services.

**Figure 1** shows how the family violence crisis response model relates to the program requirements. It shows the three elements of the program requirements: responses, functions, and domains.  It highlights those that are most relevant to a crisis response. The elements highlighted, together with both sets of roles and responsibilities, make up key components of the family violence crisis response model.

Figure 1: Case management program requirements, including the family violence crisis response model



## Implementation

Services should work flexibly to fulfil their roles and responsibilities under the family violence crisis response model from April 2023.

The roles and responsibilities outlined are similar to the family violence after-hours responses set up in November 2017. Therefore, major preparation and change management should not be needed. Earlier alignment is encouraged, where possible.

Governance arrangements from Family Safety Victoria and Safe and Equal will help apply both this document and the program requirements. Agencies will be supported throughout the process with a range of establishment, change management and implementation activities and resources.

Implementation of the program requirements will align with the [Code of](http://dvvic.org.au/members/practice-development/) Practice as far as possible.

Family Safety Victoria will develop a monitoring and evaluation (M+E) framework to enable FSV to measure effectiveness and progress toward the aims of the Model. The M+E Framework will draw on existing data collection systems and monitoring will be managed by FSV.

# Roles and responsibilities after hours

Safe Steps, the statewide 24/7 family violence crisis service, is the main entry point to after-hours crisis responses for victim survivors. Local family violence after-hours servicesare mostly coordinated and activated by Safe Steps, when needed.

Local after-hours services may also be contacted by The Orange Door if a risk assessment has been completed and the victim survivor needs local support (including outreach) outside business hours.

The program requirements state that an immediate crisis response is needed in cases where perpetrators have put the lives of victim survivors and their family members (including extended family members and pets) in danger.

An after-hours crisis response is offered to a victim survivor following a family violence crisis outside usual business hours (9:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday to Friday). After-hours crisis responses provide support for immediate risks and needs that cannot wait until the next business day.

Ensuring access to immediate crisis support, including after hours, is critical to building victim survivors’ trust and confidence in the service system and the available supports.

## Services with responsibilities after hours

Described below are the services with key responsibilities in providing after-hours responses under the family violence crisis response model. The table in section 2.2 outlines the roles and responsibilities of each service.

### Statewide 24/7 family violence crisis service (Safe Steps)

Safe Steps provides a statewide 24-hour crisis response to victim survivors of family violence in Victoria. This includes coordinating after-hours crisis support for victim survivors.

### Local family violence after-hours services (local after-hours services)

Local after-hours services are available in all areas across the state. They offer an on-call service from 5:00 pm to 9:00 am Monday to Friday, all day Saturday, Sunday and on public holidays.

### Family violence accommodation services

Family violence accommodation services are part of the local family violence service system. This includes providing:

* temporary supported accommodation for victim survivors who cannot stay in their usual home due to a serious level of risk posed by the perpetrator
* case management support to victim survivors in all responses in their family violence accommodation services (crisis and refuge) as per the program requirements.

These safe and specialist accommodation options provide supported accommodation of varying duration and intensity.

Family violence accommodation facilities accept victim survivors 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

## Crisis responses: roles and responsibilities after hours

Read the following sections of the program requirements before you read this section:

* + 3.1.1. Crisis response
  + 3.3.1. Case management domains: Housing.

Table 1 outlines the roles and responsibilities for each part of the family violence after-hours service system. Roles and responsibilities appear under themes in the first column for easy reference. Hyperlinks connect readers to external resources.

Table 1: Roles and responsibilities for each part of the family violence after-hours service system

| Theme | Safe Steps | Local after-hours services | Family violence accommodation services[[2]](#footnote-3) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Summary of the after hours role | * Leads the statewide crisis response for victim survivors including coordinating access to local family violence support services, family violence accommodation services and other supports. * Places victim survivors into emergency accommodation (motel and refuge) when required. Leads support for victim survivors who need to be moved outside their local departmental area. * Offers a 24-hour, seven-day phone, email and web-based crisis response service. * Ensures access to crisis support to all victim survivors regardless of their involvement with the family violence service system. | * Offers local after-hours crisis support including phone-based and outreach support, when required. * Focuses on supporting victim survivors who cannot access family violence accommodation services. * Places victim survivors into emergency accommodation (a motel), when required. * Offers a single after-hours phone number and two on-call workers per contracted departmental local area from 5:00 pm to 9:00 am Monday to Friday and all day on weekends and public holidays. | * Offers 24-hour, seven-day supported family violence accommodation services[[3]](#footnote-4) for eligible victim survivors including all relevant case management functions.[[4]](#footnote-5) * Focuses on supporting accommodated victim survivors, including organising exits to safe and secure housing options. |
| After hours support and coordination | * Responds to victim survivors needing after-hours support. Includes referrals from Victoria Police, specialist family violence services, The Orange Door, hospitals, Child Protection and other services. * Triages referrals to work out the immediacy and seriousness of the risk to all victim survivors in the family group to decide the most appropriate response. * Coordinates, undertakes, reviews and updates risk, needs and safety assessment (brief as a minimum) as per [MARAM practice guides](https://www.vic.gov.au/maram-practice-guides-and-resources) <https://www.vic.gov.au/maram-practice-guides-and-resources>. * Offers case management support including crisis response. This includes safety planning, emotional support, referral to other services and material aid, as per program requirements. * Coordinates placement into emergency accommodation, when required (see next row in table for details). * Engages interpreter services and cultural supports, including through secondary consultations when required. Refers to other support or emergency services. Incorporates advice into relevant assessments and plans. * Determines if a local after-hours crisis response is needed.[[5]](#footnote-6) Activates the relevant local after-hours service via a call to the senior on-call worker. Sends a referral via SHIP (refer to detail in section 3). * Supports the local after-hours service to work out local support and worker safety. * Shares information including the risk and needs assessment, safety plan and motel-specific information with the local after-hours service. Does so in line with the [Information Sharing guidelines](https://www.vic.gov.au/family-violence-information-sharing-scheme) <https://www.vic.gov.au/family-violence-information-sharing-scheme>. * Monitors and manages the victim survivor’s risk as they move through their service. * Ensures that a brief MARAM risk assessment, safety plan, case notes and outcome summary are completed, coordinating with local after-hours services as required. | * Responds to victim survivors needing local after-hours support. Includes referrals from Safe Steps, The Orange Door and within the agency (if they are a business-hours local family violence support service).[[6]](#footnote-7) * Responds to requests for local after-hours crisis support for victim survivors in the contracted departmental local area, including neighbouring areas, when required.[[7]](#footnote-8) * Triages referrals to work out the immediacy and seriousness of the risk to all victim survivors in the family group to decide the most appropriate response. * Undertakes, reviews and updates risk, needs and safety assessments (brief as a minimum) as per [MARAM practice guides](https://www.vic.gov.au/maram-practice-guides-and-resources) <https://www.vic.gov.au/maram-practice-guides-and-resources>. * Offers case management support including crisis response. This includes safety planning, emotional support, referral to other services and material aid, as per the program requirements. * Manages worker safety in the approach to delivering local outreach support or material aid. * Coordinates placement into emergency accommodation (see next row in table for details). * Organises interpreter services and cultural supports, including through secondary consultations. Refers to other support or emergency services. Incorporates advice into relevant assessments and plans. * Shares information including updated risk and needs assessments and safety plans with Safe Steps and other agencies. Does so in line with the [Information Sharing guidelines](https://www.vic.gov.au/family-violence-information-sharing-scheme) <https://www.vic.gov.au/family-violence-information-sharing-scheme>. * Ensures that a brief MARAM risk assessment, safety plan, case notes and outcome summary are completed, coordinating with Safe Steps as required. | * Undertakes, reviews and updates risk, needs and safety assessments (brief as a minimum) as per [MARAM practice guides](https://www.vic.gov.au/maram-practice-guides-and-resources) <https://www.vic.gov.au/maram-practice-guides-and-resources>. * Offers case management support, including crisis response, as per program requirements. * Shares information including the risk and needs assessment and safety plans with Safe Steps and other agencies as necessary. Does so in line with the [Information Sharing guidelines](https://www.vic.gov.au/family-violence-information-sharing-scheme) <https://www.vic.gov.au/family-violence-information-sharing-scheme>. |
| Addressing emergency accommodation need  (Motel and refuge) | * Sets up and maintains relationships with emergency accommodation (including motel) options in all 17 local departmental areas. * Assesses if the victim survivor can stay in the local area or needs out-of-area placement. Prioritises victim survivor choice. * Assesses if the victim survivor is eligible for family violence accommodation services. Monitors current and upcoming vacancies. Refers where appropriate. * Coordinates placements into motels. Activates the local after-hours service where local motel placement arrangements are agreed. When coordinating placement, arranges and pays for transport and a minimum of three nights of motel stay. * Supports local after-hours services to coordinate placements into motels. | * Sets up and maintains relationships with emergency accommodation (including motel) options in their local area (and neighbouring and other areas, as required). * Assesses if the victim survivor can stay in the local area or needs out-of-area placement. Prioritises victim survivor choice and safety. * Refers to Safe Steps victim survivors needing to move outside their departmental local area. * Coordinates placements into motels. When coordinating placement, arranges and pays for transport and a minimum of three nights of motel stay. * Assesses if the victim survivor is eligible for family violence accommodation services. Submits application to Safe Steps. | * Updates the Family Violence Accommodation Register with current and upcoming vacancies. * Offers supported family violence accommodation services for eligible victim survivors, including safe exits. |
| Family violence crisis brokerage | * Uses [family violence crisis brokerage](https://fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/news/updated-family-violence-crisis-brokerage-guidelines) <https://www.vic.gov.au/funds-to-support-victims-of-family-violence > to address the costs of supporting victim survivors in crisis. Includes transport, material aid and motel or other accommodation. | * Uses [family violence crisis brokerage](https://fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/news/updated-family-violence-crisis-brokerage-guidelines) < https://www.vic.gov.au/funds-to-support-victims-of-family-violence > to address the costs of supporting victim survivors in crisis. Includes transport, material aid and motel or other accommodation. | * Uses [family violence crisis brokerage](https://fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/news/updated-family-violence-crisis-brokerage-guidelines) < https://www.vic.gov.au/funds-to-support-victims-of-family-violence > to address the costs of supporting victim survivors in crisis. Includes transport and material aid. |
| Transition to business hours and referrals for further support | * Works with the local after-hours service (when activated), to manage referrals for further support after a crisis response. This may include:   + retaining lead support for the victim survivor   + referring to The Orange Door   + referring to a local family violence support service   + referring to an Aboriginal community-controlled organisation   + referring to another support provider. * Referrals prioritise victim survivor choice and continuity of support. This includes where an out-of-area movement has happened after hours. Preferences services with which the victim survivor already has a relationship. * Shares information including details of the crisis response provided, risk and needs assessments and safety plans with other services as needed. Does so in line with [Information Sharing guidelines](https://www.vic.gov.au/family-violence-information-sharing-scheme) <https://www.vic.gov.au/family-violence-information-sharing-scheme>. | * Provides Safe Steps or referrer with an outcome summary after delivering local after-hours support.[[8]](#footnote-9) * Manages referrals for further support following a crisis response, in coordination with Safe Steps. This may include:   + retaining lead support for the victim survivor (referring into own agency’s local family violence support service for continued business hours support)   + referring to The Orange Door   + referring to a local family violence support service   + referring to an Aboriginal community-controlled organisation   + referring to another appropriate support provider. * Referrals prioritise victim survivor choice and continuity of support. This includes where an out-of-area movement has happened after hours. Preferences services with which the victim survivor already has a relationship. * Shares information including details of the crisis response provided, risk and needs assessments and safety plans with other services as needed. Does so in line with [Information Sharing guidelines](https://www.vic.gov.au/family-violence-information-sharing-scheme) <https://www.vic.gov.au/family-violence-information-sharing-scheme>. | * Manages referrals for further support for any victim survivors exiting the accommodation after hours, as per program requirements. * Shares information including details of the crisis response provided, risk and needs assessments and safety plans with other services as needed. Does so in line with [Information Sharing guidelines](https://www.vic.gov.au/family-violence-information-sharing-scheme) <https://www.vic.gov.au/family-violence-information-sharing-scheme>. |

# Key considerations for local after-hours services

## Referrals and risk assessments

Undertaking a MARAM assessment is vital for an after-hours crisis response. Safe Steps and The Orange Door will complete a brief assessment before referring to local after-hours services. They will contact the senior on-call worker at the local after-hours service to activate a local after-hours response.

Safe Steps and The Orange Door will:

* complete the MARAM screening and identification and brief risk and needs assessment (at a minimum)
* include the MARAM risk and needs assessment and any other relevant information (such as case notes) in the referral
* ensure the victim survivor understands and consents to their information being shared with the local after-hours service.

The local after-hours service may build on the information in the MARAM assessment while balancing engagement to avoid asking the victim survivor to repeat information or to re-tell their story.

### Referral processes

Referrals to the local after-hours services from Safe Steps happen via the Specialist Homelessness Information Platform (SHIP). Referrals from The Orange Door and other sources happen via manual referral processes such as emails. All referrals should include the victim survivors’ details (including dependents), contacts, location and MARAM risk and needs assessments.

Local after-hours services should always acknowledge referrals. They should include comments to communicate with the referrer about capacity for and timeliness of the local after-hours response.

Although referrals for an after-hours response will mostly come from Safe Steps, at times The Orange Door or the local after-hours service (delivering local family violence support services during business hours) will start working with victim survivors at the end of business hours. They will then make referrals for victim survivors who need support after hours.

Local after-hours services will need to manually input these referrals, along with referrals from other services (such as Victoria Police and hospitals), into SHIP. The after-hours profile should be completed for all after-hours referrals including referrals requiring manual entry into SHIP.

### Managing after-hours referrals

Local after-hours services should respond to all after-hours referrals and address any concerns with eligibility or insufficient information with the referring agency. A referral should only be declined after attempts to resolve concerns with the referrer have been exhausted.

The four reasons a local after-hours service may decline a referral are:

* not enough information (such as missing contact details or needs identified)
* outside of contracted departmental local area or neighbouring area
* inappropriate referral or does not meet eligibility criteria
* the service does not have capacity to respond due to a need to prioritise another after-hours crisis responses.

The local after-hours service must assess the service capacity to respond to referrals within one hour of receipt. Where an after-hours response is unlikely to take place within four hours, local after-hours services should redirect the referral to Safe Steps or decline it within SHIP (if the referral is from Safe Steps).

## Handover at the end of business hours

Crisis responses for victim survivors are available during business hours and after hours. Local family violence support services that also provide after-hours crisis responses may begin a response at the end of business hours but not be able to complete the response before close of business. (This includes The Orange Door.)

In these situations, where a brief MARAM risk assessment has been completed and an out-of-area placement is not needed, the local family violence support service or The Orange Door may contact the senior on-call worker. The on-call worker will activate a local after-hours response before directing the referral to the local after-hours service.

To refer to the local after-hours service for support, services should:

* complete the brief MARAM risk assessment including a safety plan
* carry out a needs assessment and include any other relevant information such as contact information and case notes
* contact the senior on-call worker to confirm service capacity and activate local support
* send the referral via the Enterprise Client Referral Solution (The Orange Door) or the agreed referral platform when coming from the local family violence support service.

Victim survivors needing out-of-area placement should be referred to Safe Steps. The referral must include the brief MARAM risk assessment, safety plan and any other relevant information. The Orange Door will work across its statewide network to coordinate out-of-area placement whenever possible.

## Prioritisation

When after-hours service demand exceeds service capacity, victim survivors at **serious risk** (according to the MARAM assessment) must take priority when triaging referrals.

When prioritising after-hours responses for victim survivors at **serious risk**,other factors mayapply, such as multiple and complexpersonal and life circumstances. These victim survivors may need intensive, coordinated case management support. These victim survivors include people who:

* are pregnant or with newborns
* have children present[[9]](#footnote-10) (particularly children under five years of age)
* live with disability, complex mental illness, and/or alcohol or other drug misuse
* are in emergency accommodation for the first time
* report a high level of fear and distress
* identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
* identify as LGBTIQ+ and/or gender diverse
* are from a culturally diverse community with limited English (organise accredited interpreter services)
* are isolated from a support network or are fleeing a family violence situation outside of Victoria.[[10]](#footnote-11)

## Material aid

Material aid is a key part of the after-hours crisis response, supported by family violence crisis brokerage.

Safe Steps may activate the local after-hours service to deliver material aid listed in the risk and needs assessment.

Where Safe Steps meets all other needs, the local after-hours service may carry out a contactless material aid delivery. This may involve electronic vouchers, taxi or other ride-sharing or delivery services.

## Worker safety

Worker safety is a key issue for the senior on-call worker when deciding the best way to deliver after-hours crisis support. In practice this means:

* Workers will not attend situations where their safety is at risk, or where it is likely to heighten the risk of the victim survivors needing support.
* The funding model enables two workers to offer outreach support where children are present or in cases considered unsafe for one worker. This includes outreach to motels and private homes.
* Local after-hours services will have processes and policies to support their workers to make decisions about their own safety. They must ensure access to support and guidance from a manager or supervisor during after-hours responses.
* Wherever possible, local after-hours services will ensure arrangements are in place with local police and emergency services. These services can assist after-hours workers if the level of risk escalates.

# Pathway flowchart

The diagram below is a representation of the workflow described in this document.



The Orange Door will work across its network to coordinate out-of-area placement whenever possible.

# Glossary

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Term | Definition |
| After-hours | The period outside usual business hours of 9:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday to Friday. (Note: normal operating hours for some agencies may extend beyond these hours.) After hours includes:   * the period between 5:00 pm and 9:00 am on weekdays * all hours on weekends (between 5:00 pm Friday and 9:00 am Monday) * public holidays. |
| Code of practice | Safe and Equal recently released the second edition 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/) <https://safeandequal.org.au/working-in-family-violence/service-responses/specialist-family-violence-services/the-code-of-practice/>. The code sets out principles and standards to guide consistent quality service for victim survivors accessing specialist family violence supports in Victoria.  The code is based on a framework underpinned by an evidence-based understanding of:   * family violence * intersectional feminist analysis   supporting frameworks including human rights, social justice, anti-oppressive practice and a trauma- and violence-informed approach. |
| Emergency accommodation | All facilities operated or procured by specialist family violence services to accommodate victim survivors temporarily and safely. These include family violence crisis accommodation facilities, refuges and motels. Refer to **section 1.2 A note on language**. |
| Family violence | Section 5 of the Family Violence Protection Act 2008 defines family violence as:   1. Behaviour by a person towards a family member of that person if that behaviour:    1. is physically or sexually abusive; or    2. is emotionally or psychologically abusive; or    3. is economically abusive; or    4. is threatening; or    5. is coercive; or    6. in any other way controls or dominates the family member and causes that family member to feel fear for the safety or wellbeing of that family member or another person; or 2. Behaviour by a person that causes a child to hear or witness, or otherwise be exposed to the effects of, behaviour referred to above.   The Victorian Indigenous Family Violence Task Force (2003) defined family violence as:  ‘… an issue focused around a wide range of physical, emotional, sexual, social, spiritual, cultural, psychological and economic abuses that occur within families, intimate relationships, extended families, kinship networks and communities. It extends to one-on-one fighting, abuse of Indigenous community workers as well as self-harm, injury and suicide.’[[11]](#footnote-12)  The Dhelk Dja Partnership Forum definition of family violence:  ‘… also acknowledges the impact of violence by non-Aboriginal people against Aboriginal partners, children, young people and extended family on spiritual and cultural rights, which manifests as exclusion or isolation from Aboriginal culture and/or community. The Dhelk Dja definition includes Elder abuse and the use of lateral violence within Aboriginal communities. It also emphasises the impact of family violence on children.’[[12]](#footnote-13) |
| Family Violence Accommodation Register | The [Family Violence Accommodation Register](https://accommodationregister.com.au) <https://accommodationregister.com.au/app/login> is a web-based tool managed by Safe Steps. It tracks the capacity and use of family violence refuge and crisis accommodation in Victoria. It is a real-time online register for Safe Steps and family violence accommodation services. It efficiently locates appropriate family violence accommodation options for victim survivors at high risk. |
| Family violence crisis brokerage | [Family violence crisis brokerage](https://fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/news/updated-family-violence-crisis-brokerage-guidelines) <https://fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/news/updated-family-violence-crisis-brokerage-guidelines> (previously referred to as Housing Establishment Funds) supports specialist family violence services to respond to victim survivors of family violence experiencing crisis. Family violence crisis brokerage can address costs of crisis responses such as:   * accommodation * transport * material aid * smaller incidental costs associated with specialist family violence support. |
| Information sharing | The [Child Information Sharing Scheme](https://www.vic.gov.au/child-information-sharing-scheme) <https://www.vic.gov.au/child-information-sharing-scheme>and the[Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme](https://www.vic.gov.au/family-violence-information-sharing-scheme) <https://www.vic.gov.au/family-violence-information-sharing-scheme> make it easier for professionals to work with each other. They better support the children and families they are working with.  These reforms aim to streamline information sharing arrangements by promoting a shared responsibility for child wellbeing and safety and family violence. They enable more collaboration and better risk assessment and management across the service system. |
| Lead agency | 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. They hold key MARAM responsibilities including:   * undertaking a brief or comprehensive risk assessment and coordinating updates with other support agencies involved * leading coordinated risk monitoring, risk management responses and collaborative action planning * managing and documenting consent agreements and co-case management arrangements between agencies involved in each victim survivor’s case * updating other support agencies involved with risk relevant information in line with information sharing guidelines. |
| Local area | The Department of Families, Fairness and Housing Area that covers the primary service delivery catchments for:   * The Orange Door network sites * local family violence support services * local family violence after-hours services * family violence accommodation services.   There are 17 local departmental areas across the state, which comprise multiple local government areas. |
| Local family violence support services | Collectively refers to all Victorian Government–funded agencies that provide support services to victim survivors of family violence. These are described in more detail in **section 2.1** of this document. |
| MARAM Framework | The [Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management (MARAM) Framework](https://www.vic.gov.au/family-violence-multi-agency-risk-assessment-and-management) <https://www.vic.gov.au/family-violence-multi-agency-risk-assessment-and-management> is legislated under the Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (Vic). It aims to increase the safety and wellbeing of Victorians by ensuring prescribed organisations can effectively identify, assess and management family violence risk and keep perpetrators in view and accountable. |
| Motels | Term used to describe a range of private sector accommodation including motels, hotels and caravan parks. |
| Out-of-area placements | When a victim survivor needs temporary accommodation, family violence services secure this for them in their area, where safe and reasonable and culturally appropriate. This minimises the impact on other life domains (employment and education, health and wellbeing of all family members, etc.). When it is unsafe for the victim survivor to remain in their area, services work together to coordinate an out-of-area placement.[[13]](#footnote-14)  This includes making referrals to ensure the victim survivor continues to get case management support while in emergency accommodation. |
| Secondary consultation | Secondary consultations form an essential aspect of Structured Professional Judgement to determine the seriousness of risk and approaches to risk management and safety planning. It helps practitioners to decide how to respond to a person’s risk, or to support their wellbeing or needs, and identify services that can help.[[14]](#footnote-15)  Secondary consultation is usually specific and one-off or episodic advice rather than ongoing support or co-case management. |
| Targeted specialist family violence services | Targeted specialist family violence services provide specialised support to specific victim survivors of family violence, especially those from diverse communities. As per the MARAM Framework, diverse communities include:   * diverse cultural, linguistic and faith communities (including people with temporary residency status) * people with disability * people experiencing mental health issues * LGBTIQ+ people * women in or exiting prison or forensic institutions * people working in the sex industry * people living in regional, remote or rural communities * male victims * older people and young people (12–25 years of age). |
| The Orange Door network | The Orange Door network operates during business hours from 18 primary sites and many access points to provide an integrated intake and assessment service for family violence–related needs. It also responds to wellbeing concerns for children, young people and families. This includes providing crisis responses and non-crisis support for victim survivors, people using family violence, and families needing support with the wellbeing of children. The Orange Door network replaces separate intake systems across specialist family violence services and Child FIRST. The intake and assessment functions for young people with wellbeing concerns include support for young people who use family violence.  The Orange Door network is a partnership model that includes one or more local Aboriginal services in each local site. Practitioners and practice leaders are specifically recruited to support Aboriginal clients. They ensure cultural safety within the network and work with local and statewide Aboriginal services to provide referrals and access to appropriate support for Aboriginal people and families.  The Orange Door offers statewide business-hours crisis responses for victim survivors. This includes leading (or supporting) the initial crisis response and addressing safety and accommodation needs. This includes when out-of-area placement into emergency accommodation is needed. The Orange Door may also activate an after-hours crisis response. |
| Victim survivors | Refers to people of any age who are experiencing, or who have experienced, family violence.  Family Safety Victoria recognises the gendered nature of family violence. This is consistent with the Royal Commission into Family Violence. The Royal Commission noted that:  ‘… the significant majority of perpetrators are men and the significant majority of victim survivors are women and their children.’  Women and women with children are therefore usually the primary recipients of crisis support.  Victim survivors is the exclusive term used throughout this document. It recognises the diverse experiences of family violence experienced by:   * Aboriginal people * people from culturally diverse backgrounds * people with disabilities * people from the LGBTIQ+ community * older people experiencing elder abuse. |

1. Case management program requirements, p. 14 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Roles and responsibilities for family violence accommodation services relate to the after-hours support these services are expected to provide to victim survivors already accommodated in their supported accommodation facility. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. These services may be one program within a local family violence support service, which is funded for other responses to victim survivors, including local after-hours services. This column outlines after-hours responsibilities for family violence accommodation services. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. These services can accommodate victim survivors 24 hours, seven days per week. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. This focuses on the need for an outreach response including material aid. In some areas, the local after-hours service may prefer to manage placements into emergency accommodation in their area. Other arrangements should be agreed with Family Safety Victoria. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Local after-hours services may develop direct referral arrangements with Victoria Police, hospitals and other services. These arrangements should be discussed and agreed with Family Safety Victoria. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. By exception, Safe Steps may request local after-hours crisis support in neighbouring departmental local areas due to demand and capacity constraints with the relevant local after-hours service. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. Outcome summary should clearly articulate if the after-hours service will retain lead support during business hours and any new information obtained during after-hours support when responding to a Safe Steps referral. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. Organise a two-worker response where children are present. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. Victim survivors escaping interstate from a family violence situation are likely to be experiencing significant risk and complexity. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. Department of Victorian Communities, 2003, *Victorian Indigenous Family Violence Task Force: final report*, State Government of Victoria, Melbourne. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. Department of Health and Human Services, 2018, *Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way – Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families*, State of Victoria, Melbourne. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. *Case management program requirements for specialist family violence services which support victim survivors* (2021), p. 56 [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. For further information see [MARAM framework responsibility 5 practice guidance](https://www.vic.gov.au/maram-practice-guides-and-resources/responsibility-5) <https://www.vic.gov.au/maram-practice-guides-and-resources/responsibility-5>. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)