

Family Safety Framework and Family Safety Meetings Procedure

1. Purpose

This procedure outlines Family Safety Framework and Family Safety Meeting processes, and the associated responsibilities for the Department for Child Protection (DCP) staff when making Family Safety Meeting referrals or participating in Family Safety Meetings.

2. Scope

The Family Safety Framework is an across Government strategy which provides coordinated responses for people assessed as being at high risk of serious injury or death through domestic and family violence (DFV). The Family Safety Framework seeks to reduce serious harm or death to victims of DFV. The Family Safety Framework seeks to ensure that services provided to families most at risk of violence are provided in a planned way through agencies sharing information and taking responsibility for supporting families to navigate the DFV service system. While women and men are eligible for Family Safety Framework support, it is recognised that the majority of victims of DFV are women and the majority of perpetrators are men. The Family Safety Framework has a focus on the safety of women, children and young people as well as ensuring perpetrators are accountable for their actions.

As a partner agency to the Family Safety Framework, DCP practitioners have a responsibility to follow the requirements set out in this procedure. The Family Safety Framework does not replace DCP procedures regarding children and young people's safety and risk and the paramount consideration for DCP practitioners remains the safety of children and young people. The Family Safety Framework complements the procedures of DCP and other Family Safety Framework agencies.

This procedure should be read in conjunction with the [Domestic and family violence Practice Paper](#), the [Family Safety Framework Practice Manual](#) and the [Family Safety Portal User Guide](#).

3. Authority

3.1 Legislative context

- *Intervention Orders (Prevention of Abuse) Act 2009*
- Sections 30 and 31 of the *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017*.

3.2 Whole of Government requirements

The Family Safety Framework is endorsed by State Cabinet and the Privacy Committee of South Australia. The model operates in accordance with the [Information Sharing Guidelines](#) which clearly indicate that where an individual is at risk of harm or adverse outcomes, agencies are obliged to share information to support a coordinated response to mitigate that risk.



3.3 DCP requirements

The Family Safety Framework and the Family Safety Meeting Procedure provides DCP staff with practical information and is consistent with:

- [DCP Strategic Plan 2022-2026](#)
- [DCP Practice Approach](#)
- [DCP Domestic and Family Violence Practice Paper.](#)

All DCP field staff who are working with children and young people where DFV is a child protection concern should regularly assess the risk of harm to the victim parent and children and young people as per the procedure requirements set out below.

4. Procedure requirements

4.1 Family Safety Framework

The Family Safety Framework is underpinned by multi-agency Family Safety Meetings that occur across 17 different State Government regions in South Australia every two weeks (or as determined as necessary by the South Australian Police (SAPOL) regional meeting chairs). State Government regions are different to the DCP regions, meaning more than one DCP local office may be included in the Family Safety Meeting or a DCP office may be required to attend multiple meetings.

The 17 Family Safety Meetings are:

- Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY)
- Adelaide Hills
- Ceduna
- Coober Pedy
- Eastern Metro
- Fleurieu & Kangaroo Island
- Gawler & Barossa
- Limestone Coast
- Murraylands
- Northern Metro
- Port Augusta
- Port Lincoln
- Port Pirie, Yorke & Mid-North
- Riverland
- Southern Metro
- Western Metro
- Whyalla.

The core agencies involved in the Family Safety Framework are:

- SAPOL (Chair of the Family Safety Meetings)
- DCP
- SA Housing Authority
- Department for Correctional Services
- SA Health



- Adult Mental Health Services
- Drug and Alcohol Services SA
- Department for Education
- Women's Domestic Violence Services
- and specific other regional non-government agencies.

The essential elements of the Family Safety Framework are:

1. **Family Safety Portal**

- The [Family Safety Portal](#) is a secure online information sharing tool used to support the risk assessment, referral, case management and meeting management processes of the Family Safety Framework.
- Online [training](#) on how to use the Family Safety Portal is available to support users.

2. **Domestic Violence Risk Assessment tool**

- Accessed through the [Family Safety Portal](#) by either logging into the portal or making a referral as a guest, the [Domestic Violence Risk Assessment tool](#) is used by all agencies to assist in the assessment of risk and likelihood of serious harm or death either being present or escalating. It relies on using the risk assessment tool AND professional assessment and judgment to assess such risk.
- Office for Women have provided a [training module](#) on the risk assessment & referral training module on their [website](#).
- Answering the questions of the Domestic Violence Risk Assessment tool is the first step in the Family Safety Framework referral process.
- The tool will calculate a risk score based on the information provided, to help guide an assessment of risk.
- A risk score of 45 or higher is considered high risk of serious injury or death. This is an indication only and, as outlined on the risk assessment tool, consideration needs to be given to the imminence of risk and safety threats. If when applying professional judgement it is assessed that a Family Safety Meeting referral is not required, DCP practitioners are strongly encouraged to consult with their supervisor prior to making a decision and ensure that a rationale for the final decision is recorded appropriately in C3MS.
- If the referrer believes in their professional judgement that the person at risk is experiencing domestic, family or sexual violence and they believe they are at high risk of serious injury or death and that the risk is ongoing and/or escalating and judged as likely to occur soon the worker should continue to make a referral even if the risk score is below 45.
 - If the risk score is lower than 45 but the referrer believes the criteria above has been met they should select the professional judgment button to continue to the referral. In this circumstance the referrer should consult with a supervisor prior to submitting the referral.

3. **Family Safety Meeting referrals**

- All referrals for a Family Safety Meeting are initiated and submitted electronically via the [Family Safety Portal](#). Information about the Family Safety Portal is located on the [Office for Women](#) website. The [Domestic Violence Risk Assessment tool](#) must be completed prior to submitting a Family Safety Meeting referral.
- Referrals are submitted for consideration by the SAPOL chairperson or proxy of the appropriate Family Safety Meeting region.



- Upon receipt of a Family Safety Meeting referral, the SAPOL chairperson or proxy will determine if the referral is placed on the Family Safety Meeting agenda. The referrer is provided with an outcome of the referral via an automated email.
- The referrer will be advised via email of this outcome. If the matter is not allocated to a Family Safety Meeting the referrer will be provided with a rationale for the decision. If a referrer is not satisfied with this outcome, the referrer can contact the relevant SAPOL chairperson to discuss further options.

4. Family Safety Meetings

- Family Safety Meetings are chaired by SAPOL via the Family Safety Portal.
- As mentioned above, Family Safety Meetings occur fortnightly, but meetings can be held sooner if a case requires emergency attention. Additional meetings are called at the discretion of the chairperson.
- A representative from each partner agency attends the Family Safety Meeting. Agency representative attending the Family Safety meeting must have the delegation to prioritise actions arising from the Family Safety Meeting and be able to commit resources. It is recommended that the DCP representative is a supervisor or their delegate.
- Representatives must accept a user agreement, describing the terms and responsibilities of Family Safety Meeting representatives before they can be approved to join a Family Safety Meeting.
- Agency representatives at the Family Safety Meeting will develop a multi-agency Positive Action Plan to support the reduction of risk for each family discussed. Agency representatives are responsible for ensuring that actions assigned to their agency in the Positive Action Plan are completed.
- Family Safety Meetings involve the review and ongoing management of cases as required and where the risk of serious harm or death remains high.
- Neither the victim parent nor the perpetrator attend the Family Safety Meeting.

4.2 Consent

- If there is a perceived risk of serious harm to the victim parent or their children their consent is not required to facilitate a referral to a Family Safety Meeting; but if it is assessed as safe to seek informed consent, this is preferred.
- If an attempt was made to seek consent and consent was not provided, it is important to explain that information will be shared without consent and why the information will be shared, including for the purpose of a Family Safety Meeting referral.
- If it is assessed as unsafe to inform the victim of the Family Safety Meeting referral, this information should be withheld.
- The victim should be informed about the contents of the Positive Action Plan where it is safe to do so.
- The perpetrator must not be informed of a referral to the Family Safety Meeting or any actions within the Positive Action Plan as this may increase the risk to the victim and their children.

4.3 Family Safety Meetings and mandatory notifications

Further information about the risks posed to a child or young person and reasonable suspicion of harm may be identified through the Family Safety Meetings. The Family Safety Meetings do not replace mandatory notifications. Where another agency holds new information about risks relevant to children or young people, that agency must adhere to their mandatory notification requirements. If a notification is not being made by another agency but the DCP representative has become aware of new information that supports a reasonable suspicion that the child or young person is at risk of harm, the DCP representative must initiate a child protection report in accordance with their professional responsibilities pursuant to section 30 and 31 of the *Child and Young Person (Safety) Act 2017* and the [Reporting a suspicion a child or young person is at risk Procedure](#).

4.4 DCP responsibilities

As a partner agency to the Family Safety Framework, DCP practitioners have a responsibility to undertake the Domestic Violence Risk Assessment in matters where there are concerns regarding DFV regardless of whether another agency has completed an assessment.

In the event of an emergency, DCP should engage SAPOL immediately to ensure the safety of the victim parent/children and young people as a priority.

For Domestic Violence Risk Assessments, DCP practitioners should:

- complete the [Domestic Violence Risk Assessment tool](#) via the [Family Safety Portal](#) where there are concerns about DFV. DCP practitioners must complete the Domestic Violence Risk Assessment tool, regardless of whether another agency has completed the assessment if DCP have assessed that a victim parent and their children are at high risk of serious harm or death due to DFV.
- where the Domestic Violence Risk Assessment tool returns an overall assessed risk score of high (45 and above), the DCP practitioner must consider submitting a referral to the Family Safety Meeting via the [Family Safety Portal](#) as well as taking immediate case work steps to mitigate the high risk. If when applying professional judgement it is assessed that a Family Safety Meeting referral is not required, DCP practitioners are strongly encouraged to consult with their supervisor prior to making a decision and ensure that a rationale for the final decision is recorded appropriately on C3MS. (Matters with scores lower than 45 can also be referred with supervisor approval if a referral is deemed necessary.)
- upload a copy of the completed Domestic Violence Risk Assessment tool and subsequent referral to the child or young person's C3MS file that is clearly identifiable and using the correct naming convention (for example, DV Risk Assessment & FSF referral re Jane Smith (Mother) & Peter Jones).
- where the Domestic Violence Risk Assessment tool returns an overall assessed risk score of standard or medium (including where professional judgement is applied to reassess the risk score), the DCP practitioner should pursue case work tasks to support the family to mitigate DFV as a child protection concern and ensure case plan actions promote safety (refer to the [Domestic and Family Violence Practice Paper](#) for further information).

For Family Safety Meetings, the DCP representative must:

- attend all Family Safety Meetings (for the duration of the meeting), even if the referrals do not appear to relate to DCP clients.



- provide a designated proxy to attend the Family Safety Meeting if they are unavailable to attend. This person must be pre-registered and accepted onto the regions meeting prior to the required meeting taking place. See the [Office for Women website](#) for instructions on how to join.
- prior to the Family Safety Meeting, provide accurate information relevant to reduce the risk of harm, from DCP records (for example from C3MS) on all Family Safety Meeting referrals (including children and young people, victim parents and perpetrators) and upload a case summary (or documents such as C3MS records) to the [Family Safety Portal](#).
- understand the scope of actions DCP is able to undertake in line with the *Children and Young People (Safety) Act, 2017*.
- contribute to the development of a multi-agency Positive Action Plan.
- respond to, follow up and provide updates on (including updating action status in the Family Safety Portal) any designated actions in a timely, efficient manner, prior to the next meeting.
- inform relevant DCP staff (if applicable) of the outcomes of the Family Safety Meeting, the contents of the Positive Action Plan/s and the responsibilities/required actions of case management staff in response to the Positive Action Plan, ensuring that confidentiality is of the utmost consideration to protect the safety of victim parents and their children from further risk by perpetrators.
- ensure appropriate consultation occurs with a DCP Principal Aboriginal Consultant for Aboriginal children, young people and their families as necessary.
- ensure other required consultation occurs, for example with the practice leader or DCP Multicultural Services as necessary.

*Note – If the DCP representative requires support to prepare for or attend a Family Safety Meeting (for example summarising DCP records), contact can be made with the Multi Agency Protection Services Team ([MAPS](#)) to enquire about available support.

In relation to records management, the DCP representative (or their nominee) must:

- record an alert in C3MS reflecting that the child or young person has been referred to a Family Safety Meeting with relevant details about the victim parent and perpetrator.
- record all actions and communications arising from the Family Safety Meeting (available to download from the Portal) to the child or young person's C3MS record (for example to the current open case or by creating a 'general case' if the children or young people are not currently an open and allocated case)
- ensure that there is not any information that relates to any other cases that were presented at the Family Safety Meeting stored on the child or young person's C3MS record.

5. Compliance, monitoring and evaluation

The Practice Leader Practice Approach and Domestic and Family Violence will monitor and review this document and procedure in accordance with the policy review cycle.

6. Related documents

Related documents, forms and templates

[Domestic and Family Violence Practice Paper](#)

[Manual of Practice: Intake, investigation and assessment chapter](#)

[Family Safety Framework Practice Manual](#)


[Family Safety Portal User Guide](#)
[Domestic Violence Risk Assessment template](#)
[Information Sharing Guidelines](#)
[Reporting a suspicion a child or young person is at risk Procedure](#)

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