

DHHS Funded Flexible Family Violence Support Packages (North East Catchment)

Guidelines for Professionals

Background

Anglicare Victoria has secured funding to deliver four-hundred and ninety-five (495) Family Violence Support packages for individuals escaping family violence and living in the North-Eastern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne – ***Banyule, Darebin, Nillumbik, Whittlesea and Yarra.***

Purpose

Post crisis Flexible Family Violence Support packages are one of three inter-related components of DHHS's High Risk Family Violence Service. The High Risk Family Violence Service provides case management to individuals with or without children experiencing family violence to access a range of services to support them to live free from violence and rebuild their lives. These three components include:

- Case management support, for up to 13 weeks on average, to women with or without children at high risk from family violence to enable them to live free from violence and achieve safe and secure long-term housing and assistance. This may involve a referral to the multi-agency risk assessment and management panel (RAMP).
- The RAMP brings together Victoria Police, corrections, health, child protection, Child FIRST/Integrated Family Services, housing and family violence, to share information and plan for the safety of women and children, who have fled a family violence situation, especially those at high risk of serious injury or death, and to increase the accountability of perpetrators.
- Post Crisis Flexible Family Violence Support Packages provide brokerage funding for post crisis support packages to assist individuals with or without children who are being supported to leave/or have already fled a high risk family violence situation & who may have been referred to RAMP. The package seeks to provide an individualised response to individuals/families for the payment of specific services/items identified in their case management plan.

Available Funds

Four-hundred and ninety-five (495) individualised packages (\$3000-7000 – though usually capped at an average of **\$3,000**) are available throughout this financial year. Capping around the average is to ensure that we support as many individuals/families as possible with the funds we have allocated.

Target Group

Packages are targeted to individuals with or without children living in the North-Eastern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne who:

- Are escaping and /or have recently experienced family violence & where a RAMP referral may have been made because of high risk and /or
- Are planning to leave an abusive situation or have the perpetrator removed from the family home with appropriate legal sanctions in place.

Priority Access

- Individuals with or without children who are at highest risk from family violence, including those at serious and imminent risk of death or injury from family violence & who may have been/will be referred to RAMP.
- Individuals with or without children whose safety and security needs and independent living goals can reasonably be met through the provision of a flexible support package, and **all other reasonable avenues of financial/material support have been exhausted.**

Eligibility Criteria

(1) Priority Access/Target Group – Individuals/families with or without children must meet the above outlined criteria on Target Group/Priority Access – and reside in the North-Eastern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne.

(2) Allocated Case Manager/Case Plans - Applications must demonstrate clearly that the individual/family and children have an allocated case manager who has developed a comprehensive case management plan with the client. The case plan needs to outline *goals* (short, medium and long-term), and *support needs*. The application must outline the proposed package purchases and how these will assist the individual/family and children in the long-term (in a sustainable way).

(3) Children's needs – Case plans must reflect children's needs if children are also at risk and fleeing with the individual. The case plan must include linkages to appropriate services.

(4) Risk and Safety Assessment - A comprehensive risk and safety plan is required as part of the application to assist with the prioritisation process and to ensure the safety of the individuals and children. The goals and risk & safety planning will be reviewed regularly in collaboration with Anglicare's Flexible Support Packages Coordinator to ensure the package is adequately meeting the needs in a cost effective, timely and appropriate manner as outlined above.

(5) Most cost effective - The provision of the flexible package must represent the most cost effective, timely and appropriate response to meet the outcomes identified in the detailed case management support plan.

(6) Long-term Sustainability - The flexible funds are designed to assist individuals/families and children to achieve safety and freedom from violence, access to safe, stable housing, financial stability, family health and wellbeing, economic, social and community participation and independence in a long-term, sustainable way.

What can be purchased?

- Flexible funds can only purchase services and goods nominated in the individuals/families/child's case management plan, including:

- **Financial stability:** basic material needs including food, clothing, care packs, bills for utilities and phone, and utility debts.
- **Technological safety support:** CCTV, mobile phone, personal/property alarm; security doors or lighting.
- **Health and wellbeing:** medical or pharmaceutical costs not covered by medicare or PBS, counselling or specialist services.

- **Safe, stable housing:** – public or private housing debt, rent in advance, rent arrears, relocations costs, travel costs, furnishings and whitegoods in newly established housing.
- **Economic social and community participation:** – school, education costs, workforce readiness (eg CAE/Vocational courses)
- **Independence:** – clothing, care or placement of pets, outings, wellbeing courses.

Steering Committee

- A Steering Committee with representatives from key agencies (including Anglicare, Children’s Protection Society, Merri Outreach Support Services, VACCA, City of Whittlesea Maternal and Child Health, Berry Street, the RAMP meetings etc) will meet bi-monthly to receive updates and provide input into the development and continued administration and prioritisation of the Packages.
- The Steering committee has an Advisory and Oversight role.

Application Process

- **Applications** - The application form must be completed & lodged for each applicant by the applicant’s case manager via email to the Flexible Support Packages Coordinator. E-mail address: **flexiblepackages.preston@anglicarevic.org.au**
 - Notification of outcomes will be to the case manager in writing (e-mail) within 2-5 working days.
 - Only fully completed applications will be put to the Prioritisation Panel
- **When Urgent/more timely responses are required** – Anglicare recognises that there will be some instances where a more urgent/timely response is required (eg: bond and rent to secure a new residence where the landlord won’t/cannot wait, funds to escape to a different state etc). In these instances we encourage the case manager to discuss their particular needs with the Packages Coordinator to work out what is possible.
- **Duty** - Flexible Support Packages Coordinator is available to discuss any possible applications or provide information and secondary consultation regarding the packages during the following duty hours: **Mondays and Tuesdays between 10am-12:30pm. Tel 8470 9999 or Mob 0499 077 996.**
- **Communication** - All communication will be with the case manager. We request that workers do NOT give out contact details of the FVFSP’s coordinator to clients, as our experience has been that this is confusing and increases the complexities of administering the packages for all parties.
- **Fair Distribution of funds** - The overall amount of funding available over the financial year will be divided into **monthly available funds** to ensure an even spread and access throughout the financial year.
- **Notification of Outcomes** - Applicants (case managers) will be informed in writing (via e-mail) of the outcomes of their applications within 4 working days of the Prioritisation Panel’s meeting.
- **Administration of funds once the package has been approved** –Anglicare works on a reimbursement model of administering the packages, based on individual MOU’s with agencies. An Agency acquittal form and guidelines, as well as a feedback form should accompany your e-mail if the package has been approved.

Please feel free to call our coordinator **Ness** on Tel: 8470 9999 or Mob: 0499 077 996 on **Mondays and Tuesdays between 10am-12:30pm**. Ness can also be contacted via e-mail: flexiblepackages.preston@anglicarevic.org.au

The case manager must provide feedback on the impacts of the financial support made available in order to measure impacts/outcomes.

Dispute resolution

Where there are concerns about the outcome of the decision:

1. The case manager must discuss the concern with the Anglicare's Flexible Support Packages Coordinator in the first instance.
2. If the Case Manager is still not satisfied with the outcome, the matter is then referred to the Northern Quality Manager for review. The decision of the Northern Quality Manager will be final.

Availability of Packages

- Application Forms are available from Anglicare Victoria through calling or e-mailing the Flexible Support Packages Coordinator.
 - **Call** - call our coordinator *Ness* on Mondays and Tuesdays between 10am-12:30pm. **Tel 8470 9999 or Mob 0499 077 996. OR**
 - **E-mail** flexiblepackages.preston@anglicarevic.org.au
- Application forms are also available on the NIFVS website. (<http://www.nifvs.org.au/>)