**Communication about DHHS funded Family Violence Flexible Support Packages in Hume Moreland Catchment**

**Guidelines for Professionals**

**Background**

Kildonan UnitingCare has been funded by DHHS during the past two years, from September 2015 to June 2017 to provide Family Violence Flexible Support Packages to victim-survivors of family violence in the Hume Moreland catchment. This funding has been extended into the current financial year from July 2017 to June 2018.

From July 2017 Kildonan UnitingCare has joined with the broader group of UnitingCare community organisations across Victoria and Tasmania to form the new organisation ***Uniting***.

The programs and services previously accessed via Kildonan UnitingCare will operate under the name of ***Uniting Kildonan***, for the time being.

Family Violence Flexible Support Packages in the Hume Moreland catchment are delivered by Uniting Kildonan in accordance with the recently released *“Program requirements for the delivery of Family Violence Flexible Support Packages”* (DHHS, August 2017).

This document outlines *“the mandatory program requirements to be implemented by service providers for family violence Flexible Support Packages (FSPs)… developed to ensure consistency in how FSPs are distributed across the state”*.

**Purpose of Family Violence FSPs**

Family Violence FSPs are available to people who are experiencing or have experienced family violence. The department recognises the gendered nature of family violence; consistent with the Royal Commission into Family Violence, it is noted that *‘the significant majority of perpetrators are men and the significant majority of victims are women and their children’*.

Women alone and women with children are therefore expected to be primary recipients of the flexible support packages. However, in recognition of the diverse experiences of family violence experienced by Aboriginal people, people from culturally diverse backgrounds, people with disabilities, people from the lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, gender diverse and intersex community and older people experiencing elder abuse, victim-survivor will be used as an inclusive term.

Family Violence FSPs will deliver a personalised and holistic response to victim-survivors experiencing family violence, by assisting them to access support to move out of crisis, stabilise and improve their safety, well-being and independence into recovery.

**Available Funds**

For the current financial year 2017-2018, funding has been made available to Uniting Kildonan for the provision of individualised packages for more than 450 cases; with an average of $3000 per package & a maximum of $10,000.

A case is defined as a necessary period of support where a case management/support plan is in place and a package has been allocated. In circumstances where a woman and her child/ren re-present after a support period has been closed and a new plan is in place, this will be considered as a new case. Service providers are required to collect data on a range of outcome indicators (refer below).

As the service provider for family violence FSPs in the Hume Moreland catchment, Uniting Kildonan is accountable for delivering the specified number of packages funded by DHHS to deliver better outcomes for victim-survivors of family violence.

Quarterly reporting to DHHS is required via a detailed acquittal template with de-identified client information. This requires regular monitoring of expenditure against individual case/support plans and agreed payment arrangements.

**Assessment and Allocation of Family Violence FSP’s**

Uniting Kildonan will assess and allocate family violence FSPs in accordance with the guidelines outlined below.

***These updated guidelines are in response to and align with the mandatory program requirements for the implementation of family violence flexible support packages released by DHHS, August 2017.***

**Purpose and principles**

An FSP is available for victim-survivors of family violence who are in a high risk, crisis or post crisis situation, as well as those victim-survivors who are attempting to stabilise in recovery from family violence.

FSPs must be administered in accordance with the following principles:

* The safety and well-being of victim-survivors is paramount;
* Victim-survivors are empowered to lead and make informed choices about the package, supports they need to meet their goals, improve their well-being and safety, and live independently;
* Tailored to the individual;
* Directed by the victim-survivors receiving the package, consistent with the FSP guidelines;
* Understanding the social and gendered context of family violence and the impact of violence on victim-survivors’ (including children) development;
* Understanding of culturally appropriate service response for victim-survivors from a range of backgrounds. This includes Aboriginal victim-survivors, victim-survivors with disabilities, victim-survivors from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, older victim-survivors and victim-survivors who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, gender diverse or intersex;
* Commitment by service providers to build and maintain effective partnerships, collaborate, communicate and share resources with other agencies in order to maximise opportunities for victim-survivors to achieve their goals;
* Support system wide responses focussing on perpetrator accountability; &
* Underpinned by a strong quality improvement framework including a willingness to participate in research, evaluation and reviews to inform quality improvement and innovation.

**Target Group and Eligibility**

Packages can only be distributed to victim-survivors of family violence who have a case management or support plan and who live in Hume & Moreland local municipalities.

FSPs will be targeted to victims-survivors who:

* Are escaping; and /or
* Have recently experienced family violence; and /or
* Are planning to leave an abusive situation or have the perpetrator removed from the family home with appropriate legal sanctions in place.

The case management/support plan, based on a risk/needs assessment, must clearly identify how the requested support needs can be assisted through access to a family violence FSP. This includes children who have a case plan in their own right or are included in their care givers case plan.

In addition to the risk/needs assessment, this thorough case management/support plan needs to identify the ways in which an FSP would assist the victim-survivors:

* To establish sustainable arrangements that support their long-term health and well-being;
* In preventing unnecessary intervention by child protection; &
* In leaving their current family arrangements in which family violence is occurring.

One flexible support package will be available per case managed support period. A subsequent package for future presentations (at the same or a different service) may be provided based on assessed risk and need, where a new case management/support plan is in place.

In cases where a subsequent package is required within one reporting period (Quarterly), contact must be made to DHHS by the Manager responsible for FV FSPs in Uniting Kildonan to discuss the circumstances to inform a decision.

**Priority Access**

An FSP is available for victim-survivors of family violence who are in a high risk, crisis or post crisis situation, as well as those victim-survivors who are attempting to stabilise in recovery from family violence.

In acknowledgement of the diverse experiences of family violence, FSP providers are encouraged to review each allocation based upon individual circumstances.

Priority will be given to:

* Victim-survivors and their children at highest risk from family violence;
* Victim-survivors whose safety and security needs and independent living goals can be reasonably met through a flexible support package; &
* Victim-survivors experiencing significant financial hardship.

**Key Requirements and Features of FSPs:**

1. The provision of the flexible package must represent the **most cost effective, timely and appropriate response to meet** **the outcomes identified in the case management/support plan**. There is an expectation that other avenues for support are exhausted prior to application for an FSP. However an FSP can be used where available resources (eg local, state or commonwealth government services) cannot be provided in a timely manner.
2. The **case management/support plan needs to identify the way in which a flexible support package would support the victim-survivors** to: establish sustainable arrangements that support their long term health & well-being; prevent unnecessary interventions by child protection; & leave their current family arrangements in which family violence is occurring.
3. The package is applied for and provided **in conjunction with a case manager** who has developed a comprehensive case management/support plan with the client. This plan outlines goals and service interventions/support needs, and services/items needing to be purchased, and how access to funds from the FSP will assist. It also needs to detail a commitment for the plan to be regularly reviewed, including risk and safety planning.
4. The flexible funds will be used **in conjunction with other agencies’ support**, to achieve the following outcomes that meet varying needs and priorities: freedom from abuse and violence; suitable and stable housing; good physical and mental health; participation in learning and education; participation and contribution to the economy; financial security and independence; social engagement; and identification and connection to community. This includes addressing children’s needs in their own right and providing linkages for them to appropriate services.
5. Flexible funds can **only** purchase services and goods nominated in the client’s case management/support plan, including:
	* Freedom from abuse and violence: technological safety support, CCTV, mobile phone, personal/property alarm; security doors or lighting;
	* Good physical and mental health: medical or pharmaceutical costs not covered by Medicare or PBS, counselling or specialist services;
	* Suitable and stable housing: public or private housing debt, mortgage costs, rent in advance, rent arrears, relocations costs, bills for utilities and phone, travel costs, furnishings and whitegoods in newly established housing;
	* Participation in learning and education: schooling, education costs, workforce readiness (e.g. adult education/TAFE course/school supplies for children);
	* Financial security and independence: basic material needs including food, clothing, care packs, utility debts, care or placement of pets, outings, financial counselling, wellbeing courses; &
	* Identification and connection with culture and identity: travel, culturally specific service support, sporting or cultural activities.

 **Please Note:**

The package cannot fund: illegal activity; gambling; products and services not identified in the support plan; or other free or low cost services that are readily available.

For example, emergency accommodation supports are only available from an FSP when no viable alternative is possible. Similar to debts and fines, there are multiple alternative avenues available in the system that must be exhausted prior to support being provided through an FSP.

It also cannot be used to replace or duplicate supports that are available through other funding sources, including Local, State or Commonwealth Government programs.

**Application Process**

For any general enquiries about the application, please contact Kristen Dobbie (Family Violence Flexible Support Packages Coordinator) at Uniting Kildonan via 9302 6100.

Prior to lodging the application, Valerie Ayres-Wearne (Manager) can be contacted for a secondary consultation via mobile: 0414 507 734 or email: hmfvfsp@kildonan.org.au

An application form (Part A) is to be completed & lodged by the case manager on behalf of their client. Team leaders/Managers need to endorse applications.

It is preferable to provide invoice(s) or quote(s) from supplier(s) for goods/services requested in your application. Where it is difficult to obtain invoice(s) or quote(s) it is necessary to provide a clear outline of the amount of money being requested and the anticipated supplier(s) (e.g. website catalogue print outs).

**Please lodge your completed Application Form via email:** **hmfvfsp@kildonan.org.au**

Please mark CONFIDENTIAL FVFSP in the subject line.

On receipt of the application, a return email will be sent to the case manager acknowledging receipt (refer guidelines below for approval process, timelines and payment arrangements).

The Family Violence Flexible Support Package email: hmfvfsp@kildonan.org.au will be monitored daily.

Valerie Ayres-Wearne (Manager), in collaboration with Kristen Dobbie (FVFSP Coordinator), will process these applications.

Applications will be assessed in accordance with priority access guidelines and eligibility and suitability criteria.

The case manager will be informed in writing of the outcome of the application, generally within 2-3 days following receipt of the application.

An Approved Application Code will be provided in the email when the application is approved. The Approved Application Code will include:

* Initials of the case manager (e.g. AV)
* Agency Identification (e.g. SCH)
* Description of the package (e.g. FV FSP)
* Number allocated for the package at the time of approval (e.g. 005)

**Expenditure of Approved Funds**

Generally there is an expectation that the approved funds will be expended within 3 months of receiving the approval email.

However, if there are any delays, or the situation has changed for your client and approved funds are no longer appropriate or necessary, it is important that the worker contact Kristen Dobbie/Val Ayres-Wearne via email hmfvfsp@kildonan.org.au within the 3 months to advise the anticipated finalisation date for the package.

**Impacts of the Financial Support on the Client/s**

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

Feedback needs to be provided using Part B: Impacts & Outcomes.

This form needs to be lodged following expenditure of funds. This is generally within a 3 month period (refer Payment Arrangements and Flowcharts).

Any delay in lodging Part B needs to be communicated to Kristen Dobbie/Val Ayres-Wearne via email hmfvfsp@kildonan.org.au .

**Availability of Packages**

At this stage, the packages are available until 30 June 2018.

**FLOWCHART APPLICATION & APPROVAL PROCESS**

**Payment Arrangements**

***Preferred Option: Reimbursement model (Purchase of Goods by Your Agency & Reimbursement by Uniting Kildonan)***

 ***Purchasing of Approved Items by the Allocated Case Manager***

* Following receipt of approval for the Family Violence Flexible Support package, the case manager needs to obtain an invoice(s) from the supplier(s) for specified item(s), if they have not already done so. These then need to be lodged with their Supervisor/Team Leader/Manager for sign off. *Internal Agency payment requisition processes would be followed*.
* When the goods/services are paid for, the receipt(s) of payment of goods/services provided to your Agency will be needed to support the reimbursement process.

***Process for reimbursement***

* An Agency Tax Invoice for reimbursement of the payment(s) then needs to be organised by the case manager in consultation with their Team Leader/Manager, in accordance with internal Agency guidelines. (*Refer below for specific details needed on Agency Tax Invoice to Uniting).*
* It is vital that there is proof of payment, detailing what has been purchased and the amount for individual items. (This may take the form of a receipt, remittance advice, or supplier invoice).

To invoice Uniting Kildonan for reimbursement, you need a Tax Invoice from your Agency with the following details:

Bill To: Accounts Payable

Uniting (Victoria & Tasmania) Limited

PO Box 339

Dallas VIC 3047

& Deliver To:  same as the above

Other details (standard on Tax Invoices):

* Invoice No:
* Ext Doc No: FV Flexible Support Package
* Customer No:
* Document Date:
* Due date:
* Payment Terms:

In the Description, please quote the Application Approval Code:  e.g. AV SCH FV FSP 005

Please list the total unit price plus any GST paid.

Copies of documents detailing proof of payment to individual suppliers (e.g. the receipt of payment from suppliers for paid goods/services or the remittance advice) need to be provided with the Agency Tax Invoice.

Please provide your Agency bank details to enable an Electronic Transfer when sending the Agency Tax Invoice and supporting documentation.

* The Agency Tax Invoice for reimbursement with documents detailing proof of payment then needs to be sent to Kristen Dobbie/Val Ayres-Wearne via email: hmfvfsp@kildonan.org.au
* On receipt of these documents, reimbursement to your Agency will be organised in a timely manner.
* When the Payment Request is forwarded to Uniting Kildonan Accounts Payable, the case manager & team leader/manager and/or the individual Agency Finance person requesting the payment will be cc’ed into the email.
* A copy of the remittance advice acknowledging payment by Uniting Kildonan to the Agency will also be forwarded to the case manager/team leader/manager and/or the Agency’s Finance person.

***Alternative payment option (non-reimbursement):***

* The case manager would seek a tax invoice(s) from specific supplier(s) to the approved amount. Tax invoice(s) needs to name Uniting (Victoria & Tasmania) Limited as the payee, with delivery address to the client (if appropriate).
* These need to be lodged for payment with Kristen Dobbie/Val Ayres-Wearne via email hmfvfsp@kildonan.org.au . A return email will be sent acknowledging receipt of the invoice(s) for payment.
* Uniting Kildonan payment request(s) would then be prepared by Kristen Dobbie/ Val Ayres-Wearne and sent to Uniting Kildonan Accounts Payable for payment.
* Following payment an email will be sent to the case manager/team leader confirming payment with remittance advice attached.
* The case manager will then be able to arrange delivery of the goods/services for their client.

***Please note for Uniting Kildonan staff:***

* Following approval of the application, the case manager seeks tax invoice(s) from specific supplier(s) to the approved amount.
* The case manager would then forward the tax invoice to Kristen Dobbie/Val Ayres-Wearne via email hmfvfsp@kildonan.org.au for invoice sign off and processing.
* This documentation (payment requisition & tax invoice) will then be lodged with Uniting Kildonan Accounts Payable for payment.
* Confirmation of payment will be provided to case manager following payment.
* The case manager will then be able to arrange delivery of the goods/services to the client.