

NE Metro Family Violence Flexible Support Packages

Guidelines for Professionals

Background

Anglicare Victoria is the service provider in the North East Metro Region of Melbourne for Family Violence Flexible Support Packages. The packages are designed to provide an individualised approach to respond to people experiencing family violence, and are available to individuals with or without children who are experiencing or have experienced family violence and who reside in ***Banyule, Darebin, Nillumbik, Whittlesea and Yarra***.

Individualised packages of up to \$10,000 are available (although they are usually capped at an average of **\$3,000**) throughout the financial year. Capping around the average is to ensure that as many people as possible are supported with the allocated funds.

Purpose

Family Violence Flexible Support packages are one of three inter-related components of DHHS's High Risk Family Violence Program. The High Risk Family Violence Program provides support to individuals with or without children who are experiencing or have experienced family violence to access a range of services to support them to live free from violence and rebuild their lives. These three components are as follows:

- Case management support, for up to 13 weeks on average, to individuals 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).
- 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 individuals and their children who have left a family violence situation, especially those at high risk of serious injury or death, and to increase the accountability of perpetrators.
- Family Violence Flexible Support Packages are designed to assist people to stabilise and improve their safety in a crisis or post-crisis situation. Packages can be distributed to individuals with or without children who already have a case management plan. Use of flexible support packages must represent the most cost-effective, timely and appropriate response to meet the outcomes identified in a person's support plan.

Target Group and Eligibility

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

- Are escaping family violence; 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.

In addition to the risk assessment, a thorough case management/safety or support plan needs to identify the way in which a flexible support package would support the individuals:

- To establish sustainable arrangements that support their long-term health and wellbeing,
- In preventing intervention by Child Protection, and
- In leaving their current family arrangements in which family violence is occurring.

Priority Access

- Individuals with or without children who are at highest risk from family violence,
- 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
- Individuals with or without children experiencing significant financial hardship due to family violence.

Note

FV Flexible Support Packages will not be accessible to those who wish to continue their domestic living arrangements with the perpetrator of the abuse. If this occurs, access to this funding package will cease.

Eligibility Criteria

(1) Priority Access/Target Group – Individuals with or without children must meet the above outlined criteria on Target Group/Priority Access – and reside in the North East 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. Examples include:

- **Freedom from abuse and violence:** 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.
- **Good physical and mental health:** medical or pharmaceutical costs not covered by Medicare or PBS, physical aids, counselling or specialist services.
- **Suitable and stable housing:** public or private housing debt, mortgage costs, rent in advance, rent arrears, relocation costs, travel costs, furnishings and whitegoods in newly established housing.
- **Participation in learning and education:** schooling, educational costs, workforce readiness (eg adult education/TAFE course/school supplies for children).
- **Financial security and independence:** clothing, 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.

****NB:** For the purchase of personal safety technology items eg CCTV & personal duress alarms, there are additional eligibility requirements. The client:

- Must be eligible for a FVFSP.
- Must have or be in the process of applying for an IVO with exclusion criteria or a Safety Order.
- Is being case managed by a FV specialist agency who assesses the client to be at high risk.

The FVFSP Coordinator assesses eligibility for the package and notifies the PSI (Personal Safety Initiative) Local Coordinator (based at Berry Street), who will review the application and continue with the process and report costs to the FVFSP Coordinator for payment.

Steering Committee

- A Steering Committee with representatives from key agencies (including Anglicare, Children's Protection Society, Merri Outreach Support Service, VACCA, Berry Street and City of Whittlesea Maternal and Child Health) will meet bi-monthly to receive updates and provide input into the development and continued administration 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 FV Flexible Support Packages Coordinator. Email address: flexiblepackages.preston@anglicarevic.org.au.
 - Notification of outcomes will be to the case manager by email.
 - Only fully completed applications will be considered.
- **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 Coordinator to work out what is possible.
- **Communication** - All communication will be with the case manager. We request that workers do NOT give out contact details of the FV FSP 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.
- **Administration of funds once the package has been approved** – Anglicare works on a reimbursement model of administering the packages, based on individual MOUs with agencies. An Agency acquittal form will be emailed when the package has been approved, for agencies where there is an MOU with Anglicare. Please contact the Coordinator via email: 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 a decision:

1. The case manager must discuss the concern with the Anglicare FV 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 Anglicare Victoria Northern Quality Manager for review. The decision of the Northern Quality Manager will be final.

Application Form

The Application Form is available in the following ways:

- Download from the NIFVS website:
 - <http://www.nifvs.org.au/resources/brokerage/>
- Ring Anglicare Preston on 8470 9999 and Reception staff will email the form.
- Email the FVFSP Coordinator:
 - flexiblepackages.preston@anglicarevic.org.au