

This document outlines the guidelines and processes for case workers / support workers to apply for a Family Violence Flexible Support Package (FVFSP) in accordance with:

1. **Program Requirements for the delivery of Family Violence Flexible Support Packages:**
<https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/program-requirements-delivery-family-violence-flexible-support-packages>
2. **Personal Safety Initiative (PSI) Operational Guidelines (if relevant to the application):**
<https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/personal-safety-initiative-operational-guidelines>

GUIDELINES FOR PROFESSIONALS AND APPLICATION FORM

This document and the Application Form are available in the following ways:

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

Please refer to the Program requirements and the Application Form for examples of goods and services able to be purchased.

TARGET GROUP AND ELIGIBILITY

In the NE Metro region of Melbourne, FVFSPs are available to those with or without children who reside in, or have connections to, **Banyule, Darebin, Nillumbik, Whittlesea and Yarra**. Packages are targeted to victim survivors 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 home with appropriate legal sanctions in place.

Packages can be distributed to adult victim survivors who have a case plan / support plan which identifies family violence and identifies how the support needs can be assisted by access to a FSP. They can also be distributed to children who have a case plan in their own right, or are included in their caregiver's case plan. The plan needs to state the way in which the package would provide support:

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

Clients / victim survivors are eligible for one FVFSP in a 3-month reporting period (January – March, April – June, July – September, October – December). In order for a victim survivor to be eligible for a subsequent FVFSP, the previous package needs to be finalised and closed (See Timeframe to Complete and Finalise Packages). For a subsequent package in a new reporting period, there needs to be a new case plan in place.

OTHER POSSIBLE AVENUES OF SUPPORT HAVE BEEN FULLY EXPLORED

Before applying for a FVFSP, attempts must be made to source alternative financial assistance / support services for the needs identified in the case plan. There is an expectation that other avenues of support have been fully explored and exhausted prior to applying for a FVFSP. Details regarding the attempts to source alternative funding / programs are requested in Section 7 of the Application Form. See Appendix at the end of the Application Form for a range of other funding options / programs.

FVFSPs cannot be used to replace or duplicate supports / services that are available through other funding sources, including other local, State and Commonwealth Government programs (unless available supports are unable to be provided in a timely manner).

PERSONAL SAFETY INITIATIVE (PSI) ITEMS

The purpose of the PSI is to:

- Utilise safety and security responses, including property modifications and technology, to:
 - Enable clients / victim survivors of FV to remain safely in, or return safely to, their own homes and communities, or relocate to a new home.
 - Increase safety and feelings of safety for clients / victim survivors.
- Deter breaches of FV Intervention Orders.
- Facilitate the collection of admissible evidence where breaches occur to hold perpetrators accountable for their use of violence.

When the application includes a request for safety and security items, a consult with the PSI Coordinator is required. Recommendations from the consult are provided to the case worker and the FVFSP Coordinator. Specific items and funding amounts are then incorporated into the application.

The PSI is a non-crisis response.

The PSI Coordinator may recommend a safety and security audit of the home and if this is the case, it would involve an auditor attending the property and providing a written report.

EXPECTATIONS AND EXCLUSIONS

Flexible support packages **cannot** be used for the following purposes:

- Illegal activity.
- Gambling.
- Products or services not identified in the case plan / support plan.
- To replace or duplicate supports / services that are available through other funding sources, including other local, State and Commonwealth Government programs (unless available supports are unable to be provided in a timely manner).

Funding is not able to be approved retrospectively for items already purchased.

Credit card debts cannot be paid.

Flexible support packages are not accessible to those who wish to continue their domestic living arrangements with the perpetrator of the abuse. If a client / victim survivor returns to a domestic living arrangement with the perpetrator of the abuse, access to FVFSP funding will cease.

PRIORITY OF ACCESS

- Clients / victim survivors and their children at highest risk from family violence.
- Clients / victim survivors whose safety and security needs and independent living goals can reasonably be met through a FVFSP.
- Clients / victim survivors experiencing significant financial hardship.

DATA COLLECTION

Specific information is requested as part of the application process. On a quarterly basis the data is de-identified and reported to Family Safety Victoria together with a YTD funding Acquittal. FSV aggregates the data from each FVFSP program across Victoria for the purposes of reporting on outcomes and planning further improvements to the program.

FAIR DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS

The overall amount of funding available during the financial year is divided into approximate monthly amounts to ensure an even spread and access throughout the year. This equates to an *average* of approximately **\$3,000** per package (up to \$10,000 can be approved), with each application being individually assessed. The average indicative package amount assists with ensuring as many people as possible are supported from the allocated funds. Each actual package amount may be more or less than the average amount, based on the needs of the client / victim survivor.

The funding approved must represent the most cost-effective, timely and appropriate response to meet the outcomes identified in a person's case plan / support plan. Please email flexiblepackages.preston@anglicarevic.org.au for a copy of the latest version of the pricing guide which lists recommended amounts for many furniture, whitegoods and household items requested.



APPROVAL TIMEFRAME AND VARIATIONS TO APPROVED PACKAGES

The outcome of an application is emailed to the case worker within 1 – 3 business days, depending on all documentation being provided, the application being complete, the risk level and the level of demand. When the victim survivor is a current client of RAMP, the outcome will be provided within 24 hours, subject to all relevant information being provided.

The outcome is provided in a confirmation email with an Approval and Variation Form attached, which confirms all approved items and the specific amount of funding approved per item.

It is recognised that at times, the circumstances of clients can change suddenly, requiring the approved items to be amended or perhaps no longer required. At these times please complete page 2 of the Approval and Variation Form (previously provided to the case worker when the package was approved) and email it to the FVFSP Coordinator. One Variation per package is available. The outcome of the Variation request will be emailed to the case worker promptly.

PROCESS FOR PURCHASING ITEMS

The preferred method is a Reimbursement Model, where the applicant agency purchases all of the approved items for a package using the agency's funds, then provides all receipts and a tax invoice for the total amount of the package to Anglicare FVFSP Program for timely reimbursement.

For agencies where a Reimbursement Model is unable to be implemented, the referring agency obtains a tax invoice addressed to Anglicare Victoria, 42 Mary St Preston for each approved item and emails each one to Anglicare FVFSP Program. Payment will then be arranged for each item via an EFT process.

VOUCHERS

Anglicare has e-vouchers available on request if approved within a package. They are able to be used at Coles and Kmart. Please advise the FVFSP Coordinator when these are to be emailed to the case worker.

WHITEGOODS

Anglicare has an account with the Commercial Sales Department of The Good Guys, and this means that a cheaper price can sometimes be obtained for items purchased. Ultimately this is beneficial to the program because it leads to more funding being available for future packages.

VEHICLES

When funding is being requested for the purpose of purchasing a vehicle, a Vehicle Request Form must be completed. Contact flexiblepackages.preston@anglicarevic.org.au to request the form. A report from a financial counsellor forms part of the assessment process, because it is essential that the client is able to financially sustain the running costs including registration, insurance, petrol and repairs.

It is recommended where possible that a vehicle be purchased from a dealer. However, a request for purchase from a private seller will be considered. Only vehicles with a Comprehensive Vehicle Report of no less than 4.0/5.0 Star or a Purchase Recommendation Rating "Green-Go" will be considered for funding. Approval must be sought from Anglicare Victoria to complete a Comprehensive RACV Vehicle Inspection Report on the nominated vehicle. Once approved, the cost (approximately \$340) will form part of the funding granted by the FVFSP. Alternatively this could be funded and organised separately and the report forwarded to flexiblepackages.preston@anglicarevic.org.au to allow for an informed decision to be made about approval for purchase of the nominated vehicle.

TIMEFRAME TO COMPLETE AND FINALISE PACKAGES

It is expected that packages will be completed and finalised within 3 months from the date of approval of the package. Completing a package means that all the items approved have been purchased.

Finalising a package means that:

- For agencies who have purchased all approved items: a completed Acquittal Impacts and Outcomes Form has been returned to the FVFSP Coordinator, together with all receipts and a tax invoice for the total amount to be reimbursed, and Anglicare Victoria has made the reimbursement payment.
- For agencies who have supplied invoices for payment to Anglicare: a completed Impacts and Outcomes Form has been returned to the FVFSP Coordinator.

OUTCOMES

The intention of FVFSPs is that they assist victim survivors to access support, move out of crisis, stabilise and improve their safety, wellbeing and independence. They can provide an opportunity for victim survivors to transform their own and their children's lives.



They aim to deliver the following outcomes for victim survivors:

- 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.
- Identification and connection to community.

STEERING COMMITTEE

A Steering Committee with representatives from key agencies (including Anglicare Victoria, Berry Street, The Orange Door, Kids First, Merri Outreach Support Service, VACCA, and City of Whittlesea Maternal and Child Health) and DHHS meets quarterly to receive sector updates and provide input into the development and continued administration of the Program. The Steering committee has an advisory and oversight role.

COMMUNICATION

All communication will be between the case worker and the FVFSP Program. It is requested that referring agencies do NOT provide contact details of the FVFSP Coordinator to victim survivors, because this can be confusing and can increase the complexities of administering the packages for all parties.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Where there are concerns about the outcome of a decision:

1. The case worker must discuss their concerns with the FVFSP Coordinator in the first instance.
2. If the case worker is 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.

