



Homelessness and Housing Support Guidelines 2024 DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

OFFICIAL





more homes for more victorians

For general enquiries

If you would like to receive this publication in an accessible or interpreted format, phone **1300 650 172**, using the National Relay Service **13 36 77** if required, or email enquiries@homes.vic.gov.au



homes.vic.gov.au



**Homelessness and Housing
Support Guidelines 2024**
DRAFT
FOR SECTOR CONSULTATION

Acknowledgement



The department acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional Custodians of the land and acknowledges and pays respect to their Elders, past and present.

We acknowledge that Aboriginal self-determination is a human right and recognise the work of many generations of Aboriginal people.

The department is committed to safe and inclusive workplaces, policies and services for people of LGBTIQ+ communities and their families.

Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne.

© State of Victoria, Australia, Homes Victoria, month year.

Except where otherwise indicated, the images in this document show models and illustrative settings only, and do not necessarily depict actual services, facilities or recipients of services. This document may contain images of deceased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

In this document, 'Aboriginal' refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. 'Indigenous' or 'Koori/Koorie' is retained when part of the title of a report, program or quotation.

ISBN/ISSN number (online/PDF/Word) or (print)

Available at insert web site or web page name and make this the hyperlink <insert full web address (URL) here but do not make it a hyperlink, and do not remove the angled brackets>

Printed by insert printing company name, suburb (insert design job number in brackets)

Table of contents

Table of contents	6
Glossary.....	8
1 Introduction.....	10
2 Roles of government entities	10
2.1 Department of Families, Fairness and Housing	10
3 The Homelessness Service System	12
3.1 Principles	13
3.2 System Coordination	15
4 Legislative requirements.....	18
4.1 Information and Privacy	18
4.2 Tenancy Laws	18
4.3 Housing Legislation	19
4.4 Family Violence.....	20
4.5 Public health.....	20
4.6 Human Rights.....	20
4.7 Disability Discrimination.....	21
4.8 Equal Opportunity	21
5 Policy requirements	21
5.1 Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness	21
5.2 Family Violence Multi Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework	23
5.3 Responsible gambling	24
5.4 Other service delivery policy.....	24
6 Service Delivery Requirements	24
6.1 Eligibility	24
6.2 Access to services	26
6.3 Complaints and feedback	29
6.4 Occupational health and safety	30
6.5 Intellectual property and service publications	30
7 Agency performance arrangements	30
7.1 Targets	30
7.2 Performance and monitoring arrangements.....	30
8 Homelessness Services Data Collection	31
8.1 Data collection.....	31
8.2 Manual data collections.....	31
9 Tools	32
9.1 Funded Agency Channel.....	32

9.2	The Vacancy Management System (VMS).....	32
9.3	Electronic referral system.....	33
9.4	MARAM tools in the Specialist Homelessness Information Platform (SHIP)	33
10	Training.....	34
10.1	Training Opportunities.....	34
10.2	LGBTQIA+ Homelessness Capacity Building Framework	34
11	Compliance	35
11.1	Service Agreement Requirements.....	35
11.2	Standards for service delivery	35
11.3	Governance and management	35
11.4	Social Services Standards Accreditation	35
11.5	Child Safety Standards.....	36
12	Functions of the homelessness service system	36
12.1	Initial Assessment and Planning	36
12.2	Brokerage	37
12.3	Support to Establish and Sustain Tenancies	38
12.4	Client support and case management	39
12.5	Staffed Accommodation	41
12.6	Transitional Housing and Tenancy Administration	43
12.7	Capital Grants.....	44
12.8	System capacity and enablers.....	44
12.9	Essential needs centres and mobile drop in centres	46
Appendix 1 Overview of the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework		47
MARAM Responsibilities		50
Appendix 2 Referrals across DFFH local areas.....		52

Glossary

Acronym	Description
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
API	Application Programming Interface
APSS	Agency Performance System Support
APRAP	Aboriginal Private Rental Assistance Program
BHHP	Better Health and Housing Program
CAV	Consumer Affairs Victoria
Child	A person aged 0-15 years of age
CHP	Council to Homeless Persons
DFFH	Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
FAC	Funded Agency Channel
FSV	Family Safety Victoria
FVISS	Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme
HEF	Housing Establishment Fund
HRSAP	Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Plan
HV	Homes Victoria
IAP	Initial Assessment and Planning
ISE	Information Sharing Entity
LGBTIQA+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and gender diverse, Intersex, Queer Questioning and Asexual
MARAM	Victorian Family Violence Multi-Risk Assessment and Management Framework
NHHA	National Housing and Homelessness Agreement
ODF	Opening Doors Framework
PRAP	Private Rental Assistance Program
RTA	<i>Residential Tenancies Act 1997</i>
SHIP	Specialist Homelessness Information Platform
SHS	Specialist Homelessness Services funded by the Victorian Government
SHSC	Specialist Homelessness Services Collection

Acronym	Description
THM	Transitional Housing Management
VCAT	Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal
VHR	Victorian Housing Register
VMS	Vacancy Management System
Young person	A person aged 16-25 years

1 Introduction

The *Homelessness and Housing Support Guidelines 2024 (2024 Guidelines)* are the terms and conditions for organisations delivering state government-funded homelessness services. They provide clear requirements to guide and support services working with people experiencing homelessness or people at risk of homelessness.

The primary objective of these guidelines is to establish the necessary requirements for delivering funded homelessness activities in Victoria, ensuring consistency and high-quality service delivery among Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS).

How to use these guidelines

To effectively implement the 2024 Guidelines, it is essential to consider them alongside the Funding and Service Agreement (Service Agreement) that each SHS has with the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH).

The Service Agreement outlines the legislative requirements each SHS is required to adhere to and includes a list of program requirements, including the [Human Services Standards](https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/human-services-standards), accessible at <<https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/human-services-standards>>.

The updated 2024 Guidelines replace the previous version, known as the *Homelessness Services Guidelines and Conditions of Funding from May 2014*.

2 Roles of government entities

2.1 Department of Families, Fairness and Housing

The DFFH works to create a more inclusive society, one in which people feel safe and can take part equally. It funds SHS, delivers services directly and works with commissions, peak bodies and other community organisations to provide a range of advice and supports.

The [Department of Families, Fairness and Housing Strategic Plan](https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/publications/dffh-strategic-plan) <<https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/publications/dffh-strategic-plan>> outlines what the department is doing to achieve outcomes and its vision to empower communities to build a fairer and safer Victoria.

The Strategic Plan sets out the DFFH's Outcomes Framework which focuses on five areas:

1. Aboriginal voice, knowledge and cultural leadership drive Aboriginal policy, legislation and system reform

Self-determination enables the wellbeing of Aboriginal Victorians. Systems and structures that inhibit self-determination are actively addressed with the partnership and leadership of the Victorian Aboriginal community.

2. Children, young people and families are safe, strong and supported

Victorian families, carers and individuals have supportive and respectful relationships and are safe from harm, fear and neglect in their homes.

3. Victorian communities¹ are safe, fair, inclusive and resilient

Victorians are socially involved in their community and participation helps their wellbeing. Communities foster social inclusion and participation, and diversity is celebrated and enabled. Victorians from intersectional communities can safely identify with their culture, express their identity and build support networks with people they trust. Communities are strong and resilient in times of emergency.

4. All Victorians have stable, affordable and appropriate housing

Victorians have safe homes that provide emotional and physical sanctuary. Victorians have security of tenure in housing that is accessible, appropriate, affordable and tailored to them. This outcome includes supports to address and reduce housing insecurity and homelessness, to enable suitable housing for all.

5. Our social services system is integrated, effective, person-centred and sustainable

The social services system is joined up and provides safe, effective and appropriate services that respond to the needs, preferences and circumstances of Victorians. Our corporate functions and IT systems facilitate efficient service delivery, administration and oversight, and our workforce is sustainable and highly skilled. We nurture strong partnerships with funded agencies, and we deploy data and evidence to continuously improve.

DFFH local areas

The DFFH operates across the state in 17 local areas that each focus on achieving lasting outcomes for our clients. The DFFH local area Agency Performance System and Support (APSS) teams manage SHS service agreements, which includes negotiating funding to improve outcomes for people seeking assistance. The DFFH local areas are responsible for:

- service agreement negotiation and monitoring
- planning
- assisting SHS to meet their statutory obligations
- Funding and Service Agreement requirements, and
- other relevant Departmental or State Government requirements.

The local area map is provided on the [DFFH website](https://services.dffh.vic.gov.au/dffh-division-local-area-lga-map)
<<https://services.dffh.vic.gov.au/dffh-division-local-area-lga-map>>.

Homes Victoria

Homes Victoria, as a division of the DFFH, is responsible for developing and delivering policies, programs and services that support all Victorians to have access to safe, secure and affordable housing.

¹ In addition to the Victorian community as a whole, DFFH works with a range of communities including women, culturally diverse people, LGBTIQ+ communities, and Aboriginal Victorians, as well as veterans, seniors, youth, people with disability, survivors of institutional care and abuse, victim-survivors of family violence, and more.

Homes Victoria acknowledges that a safe, secure and affordable home that meets one's needs is the foundation upon which strong individuals, healthy families and resilient communities are built.

Homes Victoria works with SHS alongside the broader housing and community services sectors, to break the cycle of homelessness by intervening early, getting people housed quickly, and ensuring the homelessness service system remains responsive to client needs.

3 The Homelessness Service System

A home is fundamental to a healthy and fulfilling life. Victorians experiencing or at risk of homelessness are part of our community, and dedicated SHS are funded to provide crucial support so people can access housing, improve their well-being, and contribute their strengths to our state. This system is funded to support Victorians experiencing or at risk of homelessness, ensuring they are not left to navigate these challenges alone.

SHS offer a comprehensive suite and diverse set of services designed to address homelessness at every stage.

Individuals experiencing homelessness or at risk of losing their housing can connect through designated **Homelessness Entry Points**. These entry points serve as a central point of access, offering a safe and welcoming environment for people to seek assistance. Here individuals will complete a comprehensive needs assessment which will assist to identify the specific challenges and barriers each person faces, allowing for a tailored approach to support. Based on the assessment findings, individuals will be connected to the most suitable combination of services allowing them to receive the most effective support to achieve their housing and well-being goals.

Prevention and early intervention programs are a crucial intervention to provide proactive support to people at risk of homelessness. These programs focus on building the resilience and capacity of individuals at risk of homelessness.

Financial assistance can be provided to help renters understand their rights and responsibilities as renters, catch up on rent arrears or address tenancy issues to protect their current tenancy. SHS can facilitate communication and mediation between renters and rental providers to resolve issues amicably and prevent eviction. Furthermore, programs may equip individuals with skills, such as budgeting and conflict resolution, to navigate the challenges of maintaining independent housing.

For people who experience homelessness, SHS offer a variety of accommodation and support options. For people requiring immediate assistance, emergency accommodation can be provided for short stay in hotel accommodation whilst further accommodation is sought.

Crisis accommodation provides a short term supported option with individual accommodation, sometimes with shared facilities, along with essential support services. Case managers and support staff are available onsite to assist residents with necessities like meals, budgeting, and referrals to additional services.

Transitional housing programs offer a bridge between crisis accommodation and permanent housing. These programs provide individuals with time to stabilise their circumstances and develop the skills needed for independent living. Supportive accommodation goes a further step, combining safe housing with on-site support services like mental health counselling, life skills training, and employment assistance.

This intensive level of support is particularly beneficial for individuals with complex needs who may require ongoing assistance to maintain their tenancy.

SHS also deliver **Housing First programs**, designed specifically for people with multiple and complex needs. These programs prioritise securing long-term housing accompanied by appropriate support services. This approach empowers participants to build a foundation for long-term stability and independence by addressing their underlying needs within a secure housing environment.

Recognising the diverse needs of people experiencing homelessness, Victoria's SHS offer **tailored support programs and safe accommodation**. Dedicated services exist for women fleeing family violence, First Peoples, and LGBTIQ+ Victorians, ensuring culturally sensitive and inclusive support. Homes Victoria extends this commitment to all backgrounds, empowering individuals to access the resources they need for a stable future.

Homes Victoria acknowledges that there's no single solution to homelessness.

The diverse needs of individuals experiencing homelessness need a multifaceted approach. SHS offer a comprehensive suite of services, ranging from prevention and early intervention programs to crisis accommodation, transitional housing, and supportive housing options. This spectrum of services caters to all individuals irrespective of their needs, addressing both immediate needs and long-term goals.

3.1 Principles

The Victorian Government is committed to supporting SHS to achieve high standards of practice and service in the delivery of homelessness services. SHS are expected to uphold key service delivery principles that ensure Victorians experiencing or at risk of homelessness receive high-quality and effective support.

Every client who engages with a SHS has their own unique circumstances. The client must be given the opportunity to tell their story and be heard without judgement. There are a range of approaches a support worker can take to ensure clients feel valued, in control and not retraumatised.

Principles for the delivery of homelessness responses

Service delivery should provide:

A Person-Centred Approach

Use a person-centred approach by focusing on a person or household's individual circumstances and goals in a safe and welcoming space that is free of judgement and offers clear information. The support worker engages the person by building a trusting relationship where the person receiving support feels free to ask questions and is encouraged to make their own decisions on what path they want to take. Support individuals and families experiencing homelessness to engage with the community and participate fully in society.

A Trauma Informed Approach

Use trauma-informed practice to support people by recognising that people accessing homelessness services often have experienced trauma. Trauma-informed practice is an approach that is holistic, empowering, strengths-focused, collaborative and reflective.

It promotes physical, emotional, spiritual and cultural safety². The DFFH have published the [Framework](#) for trauma informed practice.

Framework	< https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/publications/framework-trauma-informed-practice >
---------------------------	---

A Strengths-based Approach

Use a strengths-based approach that focuses on the individual, their personal strengths, resilience and social networks. This approach focuses on identifying and building upon each individual's unique strengths, resilience, and existing social networks. By empowering individuals to define their own goals, SHS foster a sense of ownership and accountability in the support process. This collaborative approach allows individuals to set realistic goals and work alongside case managers to develop a personalised plan for achieving them.

Equity, Dignity, and Respect

SHS are to provide inclusive and accessible services to all Victorians experiencing or at risk of homelessness. This commitment extends to individuals from all backgrounds, regardless of ethnicity, ability, gender identity, sexual orientation, or circumstance. The SHS ensure services are culturally sensitive and readily available to people in need. Furthermore, SHS are to prioritise treating all clients with dignity and respect. This fosters a safe and supportive environment where individuals feel empowered to participate in positive changes to their lives. The system recognises and values the unique experiences of each client, fostering a sense of collaboration.

Holistic Support and Service Integration

SHS recognise the multifaceted needs of individuals experiencing homelessness. This provides a comprehensive range of services that go beyond just housing and accommodation. This includes mental health support, addiction recovery programs, employment assistance, and life skills development programs. SHS are to prioritise a collaborative approach, working closely with other service providers. This ensures clients receive a coordinated care plan, eliminating service gaps and fostering seamless transitions between programs. This collaborative model allows clients to access the full spectrum of support services needed to address challenges and achieve their goals.

Evidence-Based Practice and Continuous Improvement

Utilise evidence-based interventions and best practices to deliver high-quality and effective services. Continuously monitor and evaluate service delivery to identify areas for improvement and ensure services are meeting the evolving needs of the community. Embed a culture of information sharing and collaboration amongst SHS to share best practices and promote continuous improvement across the homelessness service system.

Preventative and early interventions

Reduce the number of Victorians entering homelessness by providing early intervention and support services to people at risk of losing their current housing. This includes

² Framework for trauma informed practice, Supporting children, young people and their families DFFH

supporting people to maintain their housing by providing ongoing assistance and addressing the underlying causes of homelessness. It is important to minimise the impacts of homelessness on a person's life by providing a pathway to safe and secure housing as quickly as possible.

3.2 System Coordination

Key organisations and networks that lead the coordination of Victoria's homelessness system are outlined below.

Council to Homelessness Persons

Council to Homelessness Persons (CHP) is the peak body representing homelessness organisations and individuals in Victoria. CHP deliver programs and campaigns that focus on changing perceptions of homelessness and advocating for systemic change to create awareness and drive action towards ending homelessness in Victoria.

These initiatives help inform the public and stakeholders about the impact of homelessness, as well as highlight the steps that can be taken to address the root causes and provide support for individuals experiencing homelessness.

CHP offer the following services:

- Homelessness Advocacy Service - offering advice and information for people seeking or receiving assistance from any Victorian community managed homelessness or social housing services.
- Peer Education Support - a volunteer program that provides opportunities for individuals with a lived experience of homelessness to engage and contribute to improving Victoria's homelessness service system to create a more responsive, compassionate and effective system.
- Sector development and learning - to build the capacity of Victoria's homelessness services, through training and self-directed eLearning courses and online resources.
- Policy and advocacy, leadership on preventing and ending homelessness through campaigning and developing evidence-based policies and practices, to drive change and create lasting impact for people in the community affected by homelessness.
- Parity Magazine - a national publication which examines homelessness from personal, local and global perspectives.

Homelessness Advocacy Service (HAS)

The [Homelessness advocacy service](#) is delivered by CHP, the service plays a crucial role in ensuring individuals who are accessing homelessness services in Victoria are supported and empowered to address challenges they may encounter.

The focus of the HAS is to empower individuals, advocating for their rights and work towards mutually beneficial resolutions for people accessing homelessness services and SHS.

SHS should provide all people accessing their service with information on the HAS, including the contact details for HAS.

Homelessness advocacy service	< https://chp.org.au/home/homelessness-advocacy-service/ >
--	---

Community Housing Industry Association Victoria

The Community Housing Industry Association Victoria (CHIA Vic.) is the community housing sector's peak body which works with community housing providers to represent the housing sectors position to the Victorian Government to develop a policy environment which facilitates growth in community housing.

CHIA Victoria:

Facilitates long term housing growth through representing its members position to the Victorian Government and other key bodies.

Offers training and other professional development opportunities to ensure the community housing workforce possesses the requisite skills and knowledge for delivering high-quality services to tenants.

Engages with a range of stakeholders to share information and develop campaigns to increase the profile of community housing.

Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Forum (AHHF)

The AHHF is convened by CEO, Aboriginal Housing Victoria with membership from all 18 Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) that deliver housing and/or homelessness services, as well as Traditional Owners (TOs) and Aboriginal Trusts with an interest in housing and homelessness and Homes Victoria staff from the Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Branch to progress the strategic work of Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort: Every Aboriginal Person has a Home, the Victorian Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Framework (VAHHF).

The purpose of the AHHF is to provide a dedicated space to engage in strategic thinking, planning, action, capacity building, information sharing, collaboration, advocacy and innovation to progress the strategic objectives of the VAHHF.

The AHHF respects the unique role that ACCOs play in their communities. The AHHF represent the views of the Aboriginal community and present these views to the Implementation Working Group. The Implementation Working Group is co-chaired by Darren Smith (CEO Aboriginal Housing Victoria) and Simon Newport (CEO Homes Victoria) and has member representation from the Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF) and the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC).

The Blueprint Steering Committee

The Blueprint Steering Committee is Co-Chaired by Homes Victoria and the Aboriginal Housing Victoria and was established in April 2023 to implement, develop, drive and oversee the Blueprint's Implementation plan.

The Steering Committee is a sub-committee of the Victorian Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Implementation Working Group (VAHHF-IWG). The purpose of the VAHHF-IWG is to drive the implementation of the Victorian Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Framework (VAHHF) and to oversee the achievement of its goals, objectives and targets.

Local Area Service Networks

Local Area Service Networks (LASNs) support SHS to share information and work strategically as a group in local areas to improve outcomes and opportunities for people experiencing homelessness.

The LASN forms a collaborative network of organisations including SHS, DFFH and Homes Victoria to:

- build collaboration
- share information to improve and coordinate the homelessness service system responses in the local area
- establish structures to monitor and improve the local model
- inform the local model by creating opportunities for a client voice
- develop local models which are responsive to the needs of the local area, and
- make evidence-based recommendations on service gaps by utilising local data.

The membership of the LASN should include a senior representative from each SHS in the local area, a representative from the local DFFH office, the Homelessness Networker, the Children's Resource Coordinator allied services and other community services including mental health, alcohol and other drug workers and a representative from the local Orange Door service.

Each LASN is responsible for developing the local homelessness model, which will include the development of the prioritisation and resource allocation policy. Having a local model in preference to a state-wide model, provides the opportunity for metropolitan, regional and rural LASNs to build a model which best reflects the geographical area and the resources available within the LASN. All local models must align with these guidelines. The local model should be reviewed annually supported by updated local data and the client voice.

Victorian Indigenous State-wide Homelessness Network

The Victorian Indigenous Statewide Homelessness Network (VISHN) aims to address homelessness in Aboriginal communities by creating a platform for inclusive discussions and collaboration for ACCOs. VISHN promote the strength of community and aim to create a just and equitable society where Aboriginal peoples voice is valued.

By providing advocacy, support, and training, the VISHN ensures that Aboriginal communities in Victoria have access to safe and sustainable housing options. Through their work, VISHN is helping to address the systemic issues that contribute to Aboriginal homelessness and housing insecurity in Victoria.

Ngwala Willumbong Aboriginal Cooperative is funded to deliver the VISHN. The VISHN members are from Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations which are funded by DFFH to deliver a range of homelessness programs.

4 Legislative requirements

SHS must comply with legislative requirements relevant to service delivery. Key requirements are outlined below.

4.1 Information and Privacy

SHS are prescribed as Information Sharing Entities (ISE) under the Information Sharing Schemes (schemes). The Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS) and the Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) work together to improve information sharing between organizations. This allows them to share a wider range of information in more ways than before.

These information sharing schemes are designed to complement each other. This means they work together to achieve the same goal: enabling services to share information effectively. This information sharing helps services respond to the complex needs and risks faced by children and families.

The information sharing schemes do not impact on these other permissions to share, including Health Records Act and the Privacy and Data Protection Act.

The [Health Records Act 2001 \(Vic\)](#) and the [Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 \(Vic\)](#) regulate the information handling of personal and health information. It includes standards for information collection, storage, access, transmission, disclosure, use and disposal.

SHS should share information as appropriate in line with the following legislation:

Child Wellbeing and Safety (Information Sharing) Regulations 2018	< https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/statutory-rules/child-wellbeing-and-safety-information-sharing-regulations-2018/004 >
Family Violence Protection (Information Sharing Regulations) 2018	< https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/statutory-rules/family-violence-protection-information-sharing-and-risk-management/005 >
Health Records Act 2001 (Vic)	< https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/health-records-act-2001 >
Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)	< https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/privacy-and-data-protection-act-2014 >

4.2 Tenancy Laws

The [Residential Tenancies Act 1997 \(Vic\)](#) (RTA) is the primary legislation for rental tenancies in Victoria, it clearly delineates the rights and responsibilities of both renters and residents, caravan and residential parks, rooming houses, owners of rental premises and rental providers.

The RTA has a number of Regulations attached that further define rights and responsibilities. Together, these are often referred to as "Tenancy Law" in Victoria.

Residential Tenancies Act 1997	< https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/residential-tenancies-act-1997/ >
Residential Tenancies Regulations 2021	< https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/as-made/statutory-rules/residential-tenancies-regulations-2021-0 >
Residential Tenancies Amendment Regulations 2021	< https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/as-made/statutory-rules/residential-tenancies-amendment-regulations-2021 >
Residential Tenancies (Residential Tenancies Amendment Act 2018) Transitional Regulations 2021	< https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/as-made/statutory-rules/residential-tenancies-residential-tenancies-amendment-act-2018- >
Residential Tenancies (Caravan Parks and Movable Dwellings Registration and Standards) Regulations 2020	< https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/statutory-rules/residential-tenancies-caravan-parks-and-movable-dwellings-registration-and-0/004 >
Residential Tenancies (Rooming House Standards) Regulations 2021	< https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/statutory-rules/residential-tenancies-rooming-house-standards-regulations-2023/001 >
Residential Tenancies (Specialist Disability Accommodation) Regulations 2019	< https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/statutory-rules/residential-tenancies-specialist-disability-accommodation-regulations-2019/001 >

2021 Victorian rental laws changes

New rental laws were introduced in 2021. The changes expanded the rights and responsibilities of tenants and rental providers to make renting in Victoria fairer and safer. The changes apply to all types of tenancies including private rentals, caravan and residential parks, and rooming houses.

[Consumer Affairs Victoria \(CAV\) outlines these changes.](#)

Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV)	< https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/housing/renting/2021-victorian-rental-laws-changes >
---	---

4.3 Housing Legislation

Registered housing agencies, including community housing providers or housing associations must comply with the performance standards and other legislative requirements under the [Housing Act 1983](#) (Vic).

Housing Act 1983	< https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/housing-act-1983/080 >
----------------------------------	---

The Housing Registrar provides regulatory oversight of the registered housing agencies by monitoring and enforcing compliance with the [Housing Act 1983](#) and [Performance Standards](#)

Performance Standards	< https://www.vic.gov.au/our-compliance-process >
---------------------------------------	---

4.4 Family Violence

SHS are prescribed under the Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management (MARAM) and Information Sharing Schemes and must comply with Part 11 of the [Family Violence Protection Act 2008](#) (Vic).

Part 11 of the Family Violence Protection Act 2008 requires that organisations prescribed under MARAM align their policies, procedures, practice guidance, and tools with the authorised Framework. It also requires an understanding of the legal and operational aspects of information sharing legislation to support effective risk assessment and management as relevant to their service.

More information on the MARAM Framework can be found in section 5.2.

Family Violence Protection Act 2008	< https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/family-violence-protection-act-2008 >
---	---

4.5 Public health

The Victorian Government introduced a [management framework](#) specific to pandemics in the [Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008](#). The Minister for Health can make pandemic orders to protect public health if the Premier of Victoria has declared a pandemic. All SHS must comply with measures contained within these pandemic orders. Further information can be found at the Department of Health's [Pandemic Order Register](#).

Management Framework	< https://www.health.vic.gov.au/covid-19/victorias-pandemic-management-framework >
Pandemic Order Register	< https://www.health.vic.gov.au/covid-19/pandemic-order-register >
Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008	< https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/public-health-and-wellbeing-act-2008/063 >

4.6 Human Rights

SHS operate in accordance with the principles enshrined in the [Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006](#) (Charter). The Charter serves to protect and promote the human rights of all Victorians, without discrimination. By adhering to the Charter, SHS ensure that individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness receive services that respect their fundamental rights and dignity.

Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006	< https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/charter-human-rights-and-responsibilities-act-2006/015 >
---	---

4.7 Disability Discrimination

SHS must comply with the [Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#) that aims to improve access to services and to prevent discrimination toward people with a disability.

Disability Discrimination Act 1992	< https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2004A04426/2018-04-12/text >
--	---

4.8 Equal Opportunity

The Equal Opportunity Act 2010 aims to make public life free from discrimination, sexual harassment and victimisation. Under the *Equal Opportunity Act* it is unlawful to discriminate against a person because of a protected personal characteristic. It covers discrimination in employment, education, accommodation, clubs, sport, goods and services, land sales and transfers, and local government, as well as sexual harassment.

Equal Opportunity Act 2010-	< https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/equal-opportunity-act-2010/030 >
---	---

5 Policy requirements

SHS are supported and guided by policy and frameworks. Key resources for SHS to follow are outlined below.

5.1 Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness

The Victorian homelessness service system must provide culturally safe and appropriate services to Aboriginal Victorians experiencing or at risk of homelessness. This commitment aligns with the principles of self-determination, ensuring Aboriginal people have control over the services they access.

Aboriginal Victorians have the right to choose the services they access. SHS should avoid referring Aboriginal people to Aboriginal-specific services based on their identity. All people must be offered options and provided the service which they choose.

SHS are required to recognise the importance of cultural competency. By partnering and working closely with local Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs), SHS can connect clients with culturally specific services if that's their preference. SHS are to empower clients by providing information about all available services, including ACCOs, while respecting their right to choose the best fit for their needs.

SHS need to refer to relevant policy documents including those below to ensure services are delivered in a culturally safe and appropriate way.

Mana-na worn-tyeen maar-takoort: Every Aboriginal Person has a home

Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort, also known as the [Victorian Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Framework](https://vahhf.org.au/) (VAHMF) was officially launched on 26 February 2020. The VAHMF lays the foundation for Aboriginal housing and homelessness reform in Victoria. The VAHMF was developed to reflect the objectives and priorities of the Victorian Aboriginal community and respond to community needs across the housing and homelessness systems. It provides a 20-year agenda designed to respond to the unique housing and homelessness challenges faced by the Victorian Aboriginal community.

Victorian Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Framework	< https://vahhf.org.au/ >
---	---

An Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework for the Specialist Homelessness Sector

The VAHMF informed the development of the [Aboriginal Homelessness: An Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework for the Specialist Homelessness Sector](https://chp.org.au/publication/an-aboriginal-cultural-safety-framework-for-the-specialist-homelessness-sector/) was designed to assist SHS to reflect on their practices and adopt strategies and actions that will improve the way they engage with and address the homelessness needs of Aboriginal Victorians. It was designed as a tool to guide organisations as they work through the steps toward becoming culturally safe organisations.

Aboriginal Homelessness: An Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework for the Specialist Homelessness Sector	< https://chp.org.au/publication/an-aboriginal-cultural-safety-framework-for-the-specialist-homelessness-sector/ >
--	---

Blueprint for an Aboriginal specific homelessness system in Victoria (the Blueprint)

Developed by the Aboriginal community, the [Blueprint for an Aboriginal-specific homelessness system](#) (the Blueprint) offers a clear vision for improved services. It outlines a path for building a system that respects Aboriginal self-determination, community leadership, and cultural needs. This system will address the unique experiences of Aboriginal Victorians experiencing homelessness.

Aboriginal Victorians experiencing homelessness face a complex set of challenges. Housing availability is insufficient and often geographically mismatched with demand. The current system lacks cultural competency and suffers from fragmentation, with services operating in isolation. Clients often struggle to navigate a system that lacks intensive, culturally appropriate case management. Additionally, the focus on crisis response overshadows preventative measures and support for people at high risk. Furthermore, the system doesn't fully embrace self-determination, limiting client choice and empowerment. Finally, accessing the system itself presents a hurdle, with clients often unsure of entry points and facing barriers.

The Blueprint aligns with the vision and principles outlined in the VAHMF. Recognising the current system's limitations, the Blueprint aims to address fragmentation and provide more comprehensive support for Aboriginal Victorians experiencing homelessness.

Blueprint for an Aboriginal-specific homelessness system	< https://vahhf.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Blueprint.pdf >
--	---

5.2 Family Violence Multi Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework

The Family Violence Multi Agency Risk Assessment and Management (MARAM) Framework has been designed to increase the safety and wellbeing of Victorians by supporting services to identify, assess and manage family violence risk. MARAM was developed in response to the findings of the 2016 Royal Commission into Family Violence and established in law under Part 11 of the *Family Violence Protection Act 2008*. A comprehensive overview of the MARAM Framework can be found at **Appendix 1** and on the [MARAM Framework](#) website.

SHS are prescribed under MARAM and the Information Sharing Schemes. This means that SHS have a legal obligation to align their policies, procedures, practice guidance and tools to MARAM. Resources are available to support prescribed organisations to understand their responsibilities for aligning to the MARAM Framework as well as put MARAM into practice for direct service delivery staff.

MARAM Framework	< https://www.vic.gov.au/report-on-implementation-of-the-family-violence-risk-assessment-and-management-framework-2018-19/maram-framework >
---------------------------------	---

The MARAM Framework is structured around four conceptual pillars. Leaders of SHS must align their practice to these policies, procedures, practice guidelines and tools. Each pillar has its own objective and requirement for alignment. Please refer to **Appendix 1** for detail.

Useful resources:

Frequently asked questions about information sharing and MARAM	< https://www.vic.gov.au/frequently-asked-questions-about-information-sharing-and-maram >
Information sharing guides, templates and tools	< https://www.vic.gov.au/guides-templates-tools-for-information-sharing >
The MARAM Framework	< https://www.vic.gov.au/report-on-implementation-of-the-family-violence-risk-assessment-and-management-framework-2018-19/maram-framework >
MARAM framework: summary for organisational leaders	< https://www.vic.gov.au/maram-framework-summary-organisational-leaders >
MARAM practice guides and resources	< https://www.vic.gov.au/maram-practice-guides-and-resources >
Training for the information sharing and MARAM reforms	< https://www.vic.gov.au/training-for-information-sharing-and-maram >

5.3 Responsible gambling

The Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation (VRGF) offers resources and support services for individuals struggling with gambling problems. SHS play a vital role in identifying and assisting clients who may be affected by gambling.

- **Be aware of the signs:** Problem gambling can sometimes be hidden, but symptoms like financial difficulties, changes in mood or behaviour, and social isolation may be indicators.
- **Ask open-ended questions:** During client intake or discussions about financial challenges, explore potential gambling habits.
- **Provide support and referrals:** If you suspect a gambling concern, encourage the client to seek help and provide appropriate referrals. The VRGF website <<https://responsiblegambling.vic.gov.au>> offers a confidential self-assessment tool and information on support services. SHS can also refer clients directly to the VRGF for further assistance.

The VRGF works alongside the Department of Justice and Community Safety and the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) to ensure a holistic approach for individuals with co-occurring gambling problems and homelessness. This collaboration allows for comprehensive screening and referrals to appropriate services across mental health, alcohol and other drugs, and family violence support.

Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation	< https://responsiblegambling.vic.gov.au >
--	---

5.4 Other service delivery policy

SHS should also refer to:

Community services quality governance framework	[link to be included when published]
Social Service Regulation Framework	< https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/social-services-regulation-reform >
Service Agreement requirements	< https://fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/service-agreement-requirements >
Client Voice Framework	< https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/publications/client-voice-framework-community-services >

6 Service Delivery Requirements

6.1 Eligibility

SHS are designed to be accessible to anyone experiencing homelessness or at-risk of homelessness. This includes individuals and families facing a variety of circumstances. Many SHS have expertise working with specific cohorts within the homeless population. These cohorts may include:

- women and children

- victim survivors of family violence
- young people
- Aboriginal
- families with children
- people sleeping rough
- people recently released from institutions
- older adults
- members of the LGBTIQ+ community
- refugees and asylum seekers.

While some agencies may have a specific service focus, all SHS are expected to provide clear information on available homelessness services in the area, including referral pathways to those services best suited to an individual's needs, even if they are not eligible for the referring agency's programs.

Please note that some individual homelessness programs have their own eligibility criteria. Please see individual program guidelines for further information.

Children aged 15 years and under

When a child aged 15 years and under presents without an accompanying adult at an HSP requesting accommodation, support workers should:

1. Undertake an **initial assessment** to determine the immediate needs of the child. If a young person requires accommodation, attempts to contact a parent or carer should be made when considered safe to do so and in the best interests of the young person.
2. Gather further information to determine whether a **report to Child Protection** or referral to an appropriate support service can or should be made to assist the child and/ or the family:
 - a. A **referral** can be made to The Orange Door which provides help for people experiencing family violence, or families who need assistance with the care and wellbeing of children and young people.
 - b. You can make a **report** to Child Protection if you have formed a reasonable belief that a child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of abuse or neglect and their parent has not or is unlikely to protect them from harm of that type.

Make a report to Child Protection - contacts	<https://services.dffh.vic.gov.au/child-protection-contacts>
Make a referral to The Orange Door	<https://www.vic.gov.au/about-the-orange-door>
Statewide, after-hours services	<https://www.vic.gov.au/statewide-after-hours-services >

Children aged 12-17

The DFFH Child Protection Manual also provides further guidance around working with unaccompanied children aged 12-17 who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Child Protection Manual advice for working with children aged 12-17	<https://www.cpmanual.vic.gov.au/advice-and-protocols/advice/children-specific-circumstances/unaccompanied-homeless-children-advice>
--	--

People with no income

A person with no income, as may be the case for people seeking asylum, and new migrants awaiting residency status, does not preclude people experiencing homelessness from accessing transitional and crisis accommodation. Homelessness or at risk of homelessness is the criterion for entry.

When presenting for housing assistance, clients without income must be assessed for eligibility based on their immediate need for housing and other types of appropriate assistance, regardless of their financial status.

Pets

People experiencing homelessness who own a pet should not be discriminated against on this basis. SHS who provide tenancy management of properties which fall under the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997* should refer to [Division 5B for guidance on rental premises and pets](#).

Properties not covered by the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997* will not always have the necessary safety requirements in place to house a pet. Accommodating pets is at the discretion of SHS, however SHS should assist a person to find alternative housing for their pet and/or consider providing financial assistance for short term placements for the pet.

[Residential Tenancies Act 1997](#)

<<https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/residential-tenancies-act-1997/>>

6.2 Access to services

SHS are required to make accessing services as easy as possible for people in need. This means offering multiple ways to connect, including in-person visits, phone consultations, and outreach programs for people in remote areas or experiencing rough sleeping.

Clear points of entry

There should be clear entry points into the homelessness system, backed up by formal service coordination. SHS across all DFFH local areas should support people who seek a service. SHS are obligated to provide a level of assistance that directly addresses each client's needs, regardless of their previous address, location seeking help from, or immigration status. This includes new migrants and asylum seekers.

SHS Operating Hours

SHS are required to be available to deliver services during standard business hours, which are Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 5.00pm, throughout the year. This includes outreach services for regional and remote locations. Where public holidays differ between DFFH Areas/Divisions, i.e. local racing carnivals, the local public holiday replaces the metropolitan equivalent day.

To ensure people can still get help outside of these hours, SHS must have a phone answering message that clearly states regular business hours and provides alternative contact options for urgent matters. This should include the information on the Statewide homelessness contact number (1800 825 955) which is a free call and available 24/7, as well as other relevant emergency services contact details.

In very rare cases, if an SHS needs to close during normal business hours, the service manager must contact their local DFFH Area to discuss and negotiate a change to the standard hours. This may involve working with another SHS to cover urgent requests. However, closures cannot exceed one business day.

Aboriginal Community Controlled SHS

Please note that some Aboriginal Community Controlled SHS are funded to deliver services during a standard business day between the hours of 9.00am – 5.00pm Monday to Friday, [insert number of] weeks of the year. To ensure people seeking assistance are provided with a response during these periods, Aboriginal Community Controlled SHS are required to have a recorded message with an alternative contact number for assistance when the office is closed during regular business hours and the Statewide After Hours Service contact number for people seeking assistance outside of business hours.

Out of standard business hours services

People requiring assistance outside of regular business hours can call the Statewide After Hours Service (1800 825 955).

A number of homelessness programs are funded to be delivered outside of the standard business hours. These include some services open on weekends and public holidays and some programs that run a 24-hour support model every day of the year.

Referrals across DFFH local areas

People seeking homelessness assistance can seek assistance from any Homelessness Entry Point or other homelessness service. There are no geographical boundaries for people seeking homelessness assistance.

All SHS share the responsibility of assisting individuals at their first point of contact with the homelessness service system. Irrespective of the Entry Point a person reaches out to, the person should be assisted at their first point of contact to address their immediate needs. Please refer to **Appendix 2** for detailed information on making referrals across DFFH local areas.

Inclusive Service Delivery

SHS must ensure their services are accessible, appropriate, and responsive to the needs of diverse communities. This means presenting information in a way that is:

- **linguistically diverse:** cater to clients with various language backgrounds
- **culturally sensitive:** respect and acknowledge different cultural practices and beliefs
- **easy to understand:** use clear and simple language for all clients
- **welcoming:** create a comfortable and inclusive environment for everyone
- **safe for LGBTIQ+ clients:** create visibly safe and inclusive services and spaces for people who identify as LGBTIQ+.

This commitment extends to specific groups like Aboriginal clients, culturally and linguistically diverse populations, and the LGBTIQ+ community. SHS are strongly encouraged to develop partnerships and protocols with culturally-specific support services to enhance their understanding and service delivery.

Furthermore, SHS are expected to provide access to training to build the skills in delivery of appropriate services for all staff. This training equips employees with the knowledge and skills to deliver culturally sensitive practices effectively.

Disability inclusion

The DFFH [Disability Action Plan](#) 2024-2025 aims to advance disability inclusion and address the barriers people with a disability face in accessing services and facilities. SHS should refer to this plan to improve access for people with a disability into homelessness services.

Disability Action Plan	< https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/publications/disability-action-plan >
--	---

SHS are expected to provide access to training for all employees, so all staff understand the principles which underpin culturally sensitive practice.

Language and communication support services

SHS are required to adhere to the DFFH Language services policy and are encouraged to develop local language services policies and procedures consistent with this policy and legislative requirements. Carers of clients, where appropriate, may also require the language services.

No client can be turned away for needing support from an interpreter or translator.

Language services policy and guidelines	< https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/publications/language-services-policy >
---	---

Incident reporting

All incidents which cause harm to a client during service delivery must be reported by all DFFH funded organisations.

The [Client Management System](#) (CIMS) is a reporting system that focuses on the safety and wellbeing of our clients by outlining the approach and key actions service providers are required to undertake to manage client incidents.

SHS currently required to report incidents through the CIMS, and who are in scope of the Social Services Regulator, will be able to use CIMS as the framework to submit incident reports under s48 (1) of the *Social Services Regulation Act 2021*.

Client Management System	< https://cims.vic.gov.au/#/introduction >
Changes to CIMS	< https://fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/news/changes-cims >

6.3 Complaints and feedback

[REVIEWERS PLEASE NOTE: this section will be updated to reflect the Social Services Standards after their introduction in July 2024]

The Social Services Standards have measures in place to guide management of grievance processes.

Cooperation between SHS

SHS are at the front end of service delivery, with effective operation of the services system relying on each SHS to apply their unique insight and expertise. SHS are expected to be active players in the local community services industry. This includes sharing knowledge with each other, operating cooperatively and participating in sector capability building and reform initiatives.

Complaints and feedback process for people accessing homelessness resources

SHS must provide information to people accessing their resources on how they can make a complaint. This should include avenues for people to escalate concerns. SHS must record and respond to feedback including compliments and complaints. SHS should base their complaints policy on the principles of:

- visibility
- responsiveness
- assessment
- feedback
- improvement focus
- service excellence.

Managing complaints	< https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/managing-complaints >
---	---

Homelessness Advocacy Service

The [Homelessness Advocacy Service](https://chp.org.au/home/homelessness-advocacy-service/) (HAS) advocates for the rights and needs of individuals experiencing homelessness or seeking social housing assistance in Victoria.

SHS should provide all people accessing their service with information and the contact details for HAS.

Homelessness advocacy service	< https://chp.org.au/home/homelessness-advocacy-service/ >
--	---

Victorian Ombudsman

The Victorian Ombudsman deals with complaints about an action or decision made by a Victorian public organisation, this includes Victorian Government departments and organisations, Councils and publicly funded community services.

Victorian Ombudsman	< https://www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au/ >
---	---

6.4 Occupational health and safety

[REVIEWERS PLEASE NOTE: this section will be updated to reflect the Social Services Standards after they are introduced on July 1 2024.]

SHS must be aware of their occupational health and safety obligations as employers and should have in place a documented system for demonstrating compliance.

For more information on occupational health and safety please refer to the Human Service Standards [evidence guide and resource tool](https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/human-services-standards-evidence-guide-word).

Evidence guide and resource tool	< https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/human-services-standards-evidence-guide-word >
---	---

6.5 Intellectual property and service publications

All documents and data created by SHS while delivering services funded by Homes Victoria belong to Homes Victoria.

SHS must acknowledge Commonwealth/State Government homelessness funding in any form of publication relating to the operation of homelessness funded programs. This includes annual reports and publicity brochures, as well as electronic media. SHS are required to forward copies of publications about the service to the DFFH local area within one month of the publication date.

7 Agency performance arrangements

7.1 Targets

The DFFH local area Agency Performance and System Support (APSS) teams and Homes Victoria are responsible for negotiating targets with service providers that maximise the effective use of the resources available and meet state and national performance targets.

Service providers are required to deliver services against the Performance Measures designated in the activity description underpinning each service plan. Each Activity description contains at least one performance measure. Targets against each performance measure may in some circumstances be negotiated with the local DFFH APSS team.

7.2 Performance and monitoring arrangements

Performance and monitoring

As part of the Funding and Service Agreement contract management role, the DFFH local area APSS teams meet regularly with SHS to monitor performance and an annual desktop review is undertaken. Some programs may be centrally monitored by DFFH.

SHS are required to deliver services against the outputs outlined in their service plans. There may be instances where the DFFH local area will negotiate new targets with SHS.

Performance measures communicate performance expectations and measure outcomes of activities performed by SHS. These measures are quantifiable service goals for

funded activities under the Funding and Service Agreement. They provide the basis for assessment of services' performance against agreed targets.

Issues with performance and/or monitoring will be managed by the relevant APSS team using their local area guidance to ensure arrangements are appropriate.

Budget allocation

SHS are required to work within their allocated budget each financial year. Where SHS experience significant demand, or challenges impacting budget allocation including substantial over or underspend, SHS should notify their APSS manager as soon as possible.

8 Homelessness Services Data Collection

8.1 Data collection

Service delivery is captured through client data and manual reporting. This includes:

- **Service Delivery Tracking (SDT)** via the Funded Agency Channel.
- **the monthly SHS Extracts** from the Specialist Homelessness Information Platform (SHIP) or equivalent client management system certified by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) to provide SHS client data
- **any specific data requirements** for homelessness activities as outlined in each of the Homelessness Service Responses. Refer to section **Error! Reference source not found.** for the Activities
- **ad hoc requests** related to program monitoring and evaluation, such as program evaluation required when funding is due to lapse.

SHS funded under an activity in scope for the SHS collection must submit the SHS extracts by the 10th working day of the month following the reporting month (for example, April data is submitted by the 10th working day in May).

The SHS extracts must be submitted to the AIHW via the VALIDATA portal where the data will form a part of the national Specialist Homelessness Data collection. After validation the data must also be submitted to DFFH via the Secure Data Exchange where it will be held with the Victorian Homelessness Data Collection. A second extract may be required solely for submission to the DFFH.

Note that client data related to funded activities not included in the SHS collection may not be collected in SHIP and may not be included in the SHS extracts.

8.2 Manual data collections

In some instances, it may be necessary to prepare manual reports if the available SHS data is insufficient for monitoring, reporting, and evaluating a program. These reports will typically involve extracts from SHIP or other relevant client management systems whenever feasible. However, additional administrative data entry may be necessary to collect further metrics that are not available through existing reporting systems.

Procurement service contracts for a program will outline the need for manual collections wherever possible. However, in some cases, additional manually collected reports may be necessary for ad hoc evaluation or reporting purposes (for example, if further evidence of program success is required to secure lapsing funding). In such

cases, DFFH and service providers will hold discussions to reach an agreement on feasible reporting commitments.

9 Tools

All SHS should ensure they implement all tools available to support their service response to people seeking assistance for homelessness. Tools including the ones outlined in this section can help SHS meet service agreement requirements and improve the coordination of resources.

9.1 Funded Agency Channel

The Funded Agency Channel (FAC) contains information on policies and procedures, templates, systems, training and guides to enable the SHS to meet their service agreement requirements: [Funded Agency Channel](https://fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/).

Funded Agency Channel	< https://fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/ >
--	---

9.2 The Vacancy Management System (VMS)

The Victorian Homelessness Service System prioritises efficient service coordination to ensure individuals experiencing homelessness receive the most appropriate support. A key tool in achieving this goal is the Vacancy Management System (VMS).

The VMS functions as a central platform for all SHS to share information about available resources. This includes advertising vacancies in housing and support programs, along with detailed program descriptions and referral processes.

Benefits of the VMS: The VMS offers several advantages for both service providers and clients within the SHS. For entry points, the VMS streamlines the referral process by providing real-time information on available resources. This allows them to match clients with the most suitable program based on their specific needs and eligibility criteria. Furthermore, standardised program descriptions and referral processes outlined on the VMS ensure clarity and consistency for all SHS.

Transparency and Collaboration: The VMS fosters transparency and collaboration across the SHS. All service providers have access to the same information, allowing them to identify resources best suited to their clients, regardless of location or individual program offerings. This collaborative approach promotes efficient service delivery and ensures clients are seamlessly connected with the support they need.

Meeting Client Needs: By utilising the VMS, SHS can ensure that clients experiencing homelessness are directed towards programs that best address their unique circumstances. This comprehensive and readily available information empowers entry points to make informed referrals, ultimately leading to more effective service delivery and improved client outcomes.

Homes Victoria requires the use of the VMS by all SHS. This ensures consistent and standardised resource sharing across the system. The VMS is accessible through the Specialist Homelessness Information Platform (SHIP) or through a specific license for non-SHIP users.

For access or more information contact Homes Victoria homelessness area via:

HHS@homes.vic.gov.au	< HHS@homes.vic.gov.au >
--	--

9.3 Electronic referral system

The Victorian Specialist Homelessness Service System prioritises a secure and efficient referral process to ensure clients receive timely access to appropriate services. A key tool of this system is the Electronic Referral System (e-Referral).

Benefits of e-Referral:

- enhanced security: e-Referral ensures the secure transmission of sensitive client information between service providers
- improved efficiency: the electronic format streamlines the referral process, saving valuable time for both referring and receiving agencies
- clear communication: e-Referral allows for clear and concise communication of client needs and relevant information.

Accessibility for All SHS:

All SHS are required to have access to and utilize the e-Referral system. For agencies using the Specialist Homelessness Information Platform (SHIP), the e-referral function is readily available within the platform.

Non-SHIP Users:

SHS that do not use SHIP can still participate in the e-Referral system. These agencies can integrate the e-Referral function into their existing client management system through an Application Programming Interface (API). For assistance with API access, SHS can contact the Housing and Homelessness Support Unit at Homes Victoria via email.

HHS@homes.vic.gov.au	<HHS@homes.vic.gov.au>
--	------------------------

9.4 MARAM tools in the Specialist Homelessness Information Platform (SHIP)

The Specialist Homelessness Information Platform (SHIP) empowers SHS to align their practices with the MARAM Framework. SHIP offers MARAM risk assessment and risk management tools, including safety planning resources.

Benefits of SHIP's MARAM Tools:

- Standardised Approach: These tools reflect the latest evidence-based practices and MARAM requirements, ensuring consistent risk assessment and management across the SHS.
- Ongoing Improvement: The tools are regularly updated to reflect the evolving evidence base and changing MARAM requirements.

For SHIP users, relevant MARAM training is available through the Council to Homeless Persons' SHS Learning Hub.

For SHS which do not use SHIP, Family Safety Victoria (FSV) has the Tools Risk Assessment and Management (TRAM) platform which can be requested by contacting FSV Practice and Innovation team at [insert email].

10 Training

DFFH recognises that a skilled workforce is fundamental to the success of the Homelessness Service System. A strong foundation in knowledge and best practices equips SHS staff to effectively support individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

10.1 Training Opportunities

The DFFH subsidises the SHS training program, making it accessible and affordable for all SHS. This commitment ensures that all staff have the opportunity to develop their skills and expertise. Furthermore, DFFH requires SHS to provide access to this training program for all employees.

Comprehensive Learning Program:

The Council to Homeless Persons (CHP) delivers the SHS Learning Program on behalf of the DFFH. This program offers a comprehensive and flexible learning experience, encompassing five key elements:

- Live Training (Online and Face-to-Face): Interactive sessions led by SHS and allied services experts, allowing learners to engage with peers and instructors.
- Self-Directed eLearning Courses: Self-paced online modules providing foundational knowledge and skills development.
- Complimentary Pre-Requisite Packages: Combined eLearning and live training options for specific topics.
- Webinars: Timely and focused discussions on emerging issues or specific areas of practice.
- Reflective Practice: Guided sessions with subject matter experts to facilitate deeper learning and application of knowledge.

Streamlined Access:

Live training sessions and eLearning course enrolment are available through the Council to Homeless Persons' [SHS Learning Hub](https://chp.org.au/sector-learning-and-development/shs-learning-program/). This platform simplifies access to professional development opportunities for the entire SHS workforce.

SHS Learning Hub	< https://chp.org.au/sector-learning-and-development/shs-learning-program/ >.
---	--

10.2 LGBTQIA+ Homelessness Capacity Building Framework

The LGBTQIA+ Homelessness Capacity Building Framework supports SHS to respond more effectively to the challenges faced by people in the LGBTQIA+ community.

LGBTQIA+ Homelessness Capacity Building Framework	LGBTQIA+ Homelessness Capacity Building Framework [insert link when published]
---	--

11 Compliance

[REVIEWERS PLEASE NOTE: this section will be updated to reflect the Social Services Standards after they are introduced on July 1 2024]

11.1 Service Agreement Requirements

The DFFH [Service Agreement Requirements](#) document outlines the departmental responsibilities, policies and obligations that all funded organisations with a service agreement must comply with.

Service Agreement Requirements	< https://fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/service-agreement-requirements-dffh-and-dh >
--	---

11.2 Standards for service delivery

The [Human Services Standards](#) represent a single set of service quality standards for the DFFH funded organisations delivering services to clients and department-managed services, summarised as:

- **empowerment:** People's rights are promoted and upheld
- **access and Engagement:** People's right to access transparent, equitable and integrated services is promoted and upheld
- **wellbeing:** People's right to wellbeing and safety is promoted and upheld
- **participation:** People's right to choice, decision making and to actively participate as a valued member of their chosen community is promoted and upheld.

Human Services Standards	< https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/human-services-standards >
--	---

11.3 Governance and management

Organisations will be accountable against the policies and guidelines under the service agreement and comply with relevant state and national laws that in any way affect or are applicable to the delivery of their funded services. It is important that organisations have strong governance processes in place to support safe service delivery and ensure ongoing organisational viability.

For more information on the governance and management please refer to:

Evidence guide and resource tool	< https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/human-services-standards-evidence-guide-word >
Governance for community organisations	< https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/governance-community-organisations >

11.4 Social Services Standards Accreditation

On 1 July 2024, new Social Services Standards form the foundation of a new regulatory framework which will include replacing the current Human Services Standards. Information on this reform is available on the [Social Services Regulation Reform](#)

Social Services Regulation Reform	< https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/social-services-regulation-reform >
---	---

11.5 Child Safety Standards

All SHS that provide services or facilities to children are required to comply with the Child Safety Standards. The Child Safe Standards aim to protect children and young people, by requiring SHS to put policies, procedures and processes in place to prevent and respond to abuse.

Child Safe Standards	< https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards >
---	---

12 Functions of the homelessness service system

[REVIEWERS PLEASE NOTE: this section will align with the activity re-mapping. Each function will have a general description and a list of activities which sit under this function with the corresponding program guidelines. Please note that some of the activities may change over the 90-day sector consultation period.]

Chapter 12 offers a broad overview of the various functions funded by the Victorian Government to assist individuals who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness. It serves as a roadmap by directing readers to more detailed program guidelines when available.

12.1 Initial Assessment and Planning

Purpose

Initial Assessment and Planning (IAP) provides the first point of contact to a person seeking homelessness assistance, these may include:

- IAP site-based assessments at entry points
- IAP response at correctional centers, mental health discharge facilities and courts
- telephone Information and Referral (site and phone-based assessment)
- State-wide Homelessness After Hours Service (site and phone-based assessment)
- outreach assessment services.

Objectives

IAP programs provide:

- clear entry points to the homelessness service system
- a risk and safety assessment
- a consistent initial assessment and referral practice by skilled workers
- triage and referral of clients based on their risks and needs
- an allocation of available homelessness resources
- flexible funding to purchase services and accommodation, and
- short-term support for immediate needs and monitoring of client welfare while they await access to relevant services.

Activities and guidelines

Homelessness activity	Service response	Link to Guidelines
94589	Initial Assessment and Planning at Entry Points	To be developed
94589	Corrections Housing Pathways Initial Assessment and Planning Guidelines	To be developed
94589	Youth Housing Placement worker	N/A
94589	Mental health pathways/JUI	N/A
94841	Assertive outreach	Rough Sleeping Assertive Outreach Guidelines
94846	Aboriginal Client Support	N/A

12.2 Brokerage

Purpose

Brokerage is provided to deliver an effective and timely response to an immediate need such as access to emergency accommodation, secure long term housing or maintain current housing arrangements.

This function includes:

- Program based flexible funding, and
- Housing Establishment Funds (HEF).

Information on client safety in accommodation purchased using flexible funds or HEF such as hotels or motels, as well as regulation information, is at **Appendix 3**.

Flexible funding

Flexible funding can address the holistic needs, outcomes and objectives identified in the client's case plan. Flexible funding can equip clients to support themselves, including brief and targeted support to divert people from entering the service system.

HEF

HEF is provided to deliver a timely response to an immediate need such as access to emergency accommodation, purchase private accommodation and for discretionary items to establish housing or prevent a housing breakdown.

Objectives

Flexible funding

Use of flexible funding is based on needs and includes a financial response to:

- prevent homelessness over the course of a support period
- address the needs and risks in a person's case plan, and

- improve well-being.

HEF

The HEF response provides financial assistance to:

- assist people to secure accommodation at their first point of contact, and
- purchase goods or services that supports a client to access housing or maintain their housing.

Activities and guidelines

Homelessness activity	Service response	Link to Guidelines
94113	Housing Establishment Funding (HEF)	Under development
94851	Homelessness Accommodation Options for Families (brokerage)	
	Youth Initiatives brokerage Mental Health brokerage	
	Assertive Outreach for Rough Sleepers brokerage*	
	Creating Connections brokerage	
	Aboriginal Tenancies at Risk Program brokerage	
	Homeless Children's Service (brokerage)	
	Corrections Housing Pathways IAP exiting prison brokerage	

12.3 Support to Establish and Sustain Tenancies

Purpose

Support to Establish and Sustain Tenancies programs assist people at risk of, or experiencing homelessness, to secure, stabilise and ensure the sustainability of tenancies in long term housing, including:

- private rental
- head leasing
- public housing, and
- community housing.

Objectives

Homelessness Support to Establish and Sustain Tenancies programs:

- intervene early to stabilise and retain housing arrangements for people at risk of, or experiencing homelessness
- reduce risk of eviction and its consequent impact on community connection, employment, schooling and recreation
- remove barriers to accessing private rental, and

- increase access to medium and long-term affordable housing in identified homelessness 'hot spot' locations.

Activities and guidelines

Homelessness activity	Service response	Link to Guidelines
94675	Aboriginal Private Rental Assistance Program	APRAP Guidelines <https://fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/aboriginal-private-rental-assistance-program-aprap-guidelines>
94675	Private Rental Assistance Program	PRAP Guidelines <https://fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/private-rental-assistance-program-guidelines>
94846	ATAR (includes the program formerly known as ITAR)	Add guidelines link
91423	Tenancy Plus advocacy	Add guidelines link
91424	Tenancy Plus Establishment and Intervention	Add guidelines link (same as above)
94827	Homelessness leasing	Headleasing Guidelines link
20082	Case management guidelines that will cover private rental access for various cohorts	Case management guidelines (will include a section of supporting clients to obtain a private rental)
94841	Rough sleeping supportive housing	

12.4 Client support and case management

Purpose

Client support aims to achieve long-term housing and improve employment, education, health and wellbeing outcomes for people who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

Homelessness client support is a case management response, which may include additional supports such as crisis resolution, life skills training, information, advocacy as well as assistance to access training and employment opportunities designed to help people access and sustain long term housing.

Case workers also provide direct support, which typically includes assistance to meet the goals and outcomes identified in a person's case plan. Support can be provided, irrespective of a person's existing living environment for example in rooming houses, transitional housing, squats, and informal arrangements.

Homeless Children's Specialist Support Service

The impact of homelessness and related issues can cause serious and long-lasting issues for children including developmental delays, social exclusion, interrupted education, and mental and physical health issues.

The Homeless Children's Specialist Support Service incorporates a suite of support responses to children and families including assessment and case planning support, enhanced case management support and therapeutic group work. The service aims to enhance the response to children experiencing homelessness and further support the homelessness service sector to improve their knowledge, skills and confidence in providing support to children and families. Support responses specifically tailored to children and families, include:

- case management
- engagement in and maintaining education (including early education services such as childcare and kindergarten)
- reduce social isolation by enhancing access to a range of support, social and recreational opportunities within their community
- provide social and emotional growth opportunities for children including to increase relational bonds between parents/carers and children.

Objectives

The client support and case management response will vary in resource type, cohort type, intensity, and level of engagement, however the principles which underpin them will remain the same and include:

- intervene earlier to prevent housing breakdowns
- client focused practice which considers the trauma a client has experienced
- flexible and tailored responses
- targeted and specialist support.

Activities and guidelines

Homelessness activity	• Service response	Link to Guidelines
20082	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homelessness Children's Programs • Homelessness Accommodation Options for Families • A Place to Call Home • Creating Connections Education Pathways • Drug Courts • Housing Mental Health Pathways • Intensive Case Management • Support for Young People Who Really Count • Supporting young parents • Young people life skills 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people leaving care • Youth Initiatives • Supporting Young Parents • Young People Life Skills • Young People Transitioning from Care • Family Reconciliation and Mediation Program • Links to Education 	
94846	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal client support 	
94841	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rough sleeping supportive housing teams 	

12.5 Staffed Accommodation

Purpose

The Homelessness Staffed Accommodation response provides access to crisis and medium to long term supported accommodation.

Staffed homelessness accommodation includes 24/7 access to case management and accommodation, including upkeep and maintenance of facility. The support includes trauma informed and client centred practice that recognises the need for a tailored approach to each individual and support to assist with client stabilisation and effortless transition into greater independence.

A contribution to facility re-establishment is applied to the funding model (under the same activity) to some homelessness staffed accommodation.

Youth Refuges

Youth refuges work with young people, aged 16-25 years, in housing crisis and provide a period of stabilisation and support with their social, emotional, and practical needs within the context of a case management model.

Youth Foyers

Youth foyer models of housing and support are for young people aged 16-25 years who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Youth Foyers provide young people with safe and stable accommodation and personal support services for up to two years, with an emphasis on engagement in employment, education, and training.

Congregate Supportive Housing

Congregate supportive housing is an effective housing intervention model that combines permanent, affordable housing with flexible support services on-site. Supportive housing models differ from traditional social housing by focusing on building pathways into independent living, building life skills and offering renter-led support that is tailored to individual support needs. It is particularly designed for people experiencing chronic homelessness with high needs, including people on low incomes with mental health, drug and alcohol and other concerns that restrict their ability to access secure housing and the support or treatment that they need.

Congregate Crisis Accommodation

Congregate crisis accommodation provides short term accommodation for people who have nowhere to live and may be sleeping rough and require immediate access to housing and is a pathway to long term housing.

Congregate crisis accommodation provides individuals with safe short-term accommodation and access to services which will help to stabilise and improve the individual's health and wellbeing and address issues which may impact on their ability to live independently.

There are three crisis accommodation centres in Melbourne which deliver a therapeutic response, which includes access to a range of on-site support services such as counselling, health professionals, material aid, assistance to navigate other income and employment options.

Objectives

These programs respond effectively in the immediate and longer term to achieve better client engagement, integrated care, and positive outcomes for people through:

- trauma-informed service delivery principles that offer choice, control, and continuity of care to people seeking to create or rebuild a life, home, and community that they value
- integrated services for clients with complex needs who may struggle to follow through with treatment or case plans or access conventional community-based settings
- improved connectedness to family, education, employment, and community
- generating suitable longer-term housing options for clients.

Activities and guidelines

Homelessness activity	Service response	Link to Guidelines
94847	Youth Refuge Supported Accommodation	
20081	Congregate Care Facilities	
94840	Supportive Housing	
94848	Youth Foyers	
[TBD]	Better Health and Housing Program	

12.6 Transitional Housing and Tenancy Administration

Purpose

Transitional Housing and Tenancy Administration includes management of both THM (Homes Victoria owned and leased properties), and head leased properties managed by Community Housing Providers.

The tenancy administration function includes both tenancy and property management, where properties are efficiently tenanted, and properties meet the minimum standards under the *Residential Tenancy Regulations 2021*.

Head leasing – Head leasing involves the leasing of properties on the private market by housing providers under a funding and service agreement with DFFH. Housing providers that head lease properties guarantee the bond and rental payments for the leased property to the rental provider. The housing provider in turn sub-leases these properties to people who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

Objectives

Homelessness Transitional Housing and Tenancy Administration provides:

- efficient property management to ensure all properties within the portfolio are effectively maintained to an appropriate standard.
- tenancy support for people who require crisis and transitional accommodation
- support to assist people to maintain their tenancy and meet their obligations as a renter.

Activities and guidelines

Homelessness activity	Service response	Link to Guidelines
94587	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenancy Administration Crisis • Establishment and refurbishment for new properties 	THM guidelines link
94588	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenancy transitional administration • Establishment and refurbishment for new properties 	THM guidelines link

12.7 Capital Grants

Purpose

Capital Grants are provided to build or improve infrastructure of SHS and accommodation to assist people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness. There are also provisions that allow for other fixed and non-fixed assets to be funded to improve the quality standard and amenity of accommodation on private or government owned land.

Capital Grants deliver one-off project builds, including self-contained and relocatable accommodation on private or government owned land to assist people at risk of, or experiencing homelessness. Capital Grants may also deliver self-contained, relocatable accommodation to private or government owned land to alleviate overcrowding and prevent youth homelessness. Capital Grants may also include capital improvement works of existing properties.

Objectives

The function of Capital Grants is to:

- increase the number of dwellings on private or government owned land
- improve the amenity of existing homelessness accommodation through the provision of one-off funding for minor capital upgrades to existing properties.

Activities and guidelines

Homelessness activity	Service response	Link to Guidelines
94611	Studio Program	

12.8 System capacity and enablers

Purpose

System capacity and enablers provide a system-wide and/or state-wide support to improve consultation, planning, policy development, program and service linkages and coordination to community service organisations responding to people at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

Programs funded under this activity may provide:

- evidence-based advice to the department and community service organisations on addressing homelessness
- training and/or community education sessions
- forums and consultations
- discussion papers and/or newsletters
- systematic advocacy
- education and training on the impact of trauma on clients' immediate and long-term emotional and physical wellbeing
- an opportunity to improve the homelessness service system.

Homelessness networks include the Victorian Homelessness Indigenous Statewide Network, local area based Homelessness Network. These Networks provide an opportunity for all SHS to come together at the local or state-wide level to improve the

homelessness system and responses to people including children, experiencing homelessness in their local and Indigenous communities.

Homelessness peak bodies aim to improve consultation, planning, policy development, program and service linkages and coordination to support community service organisations responding to people at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

The Statewide Homelessness Resource Program is delivered by the Statewide Children's Resource Program Coordinators. This program aims to build the capacity of homelessness practitioners to improve the service response for children in the homelessness sector. The program provides resources, training, information, and secondary consultation to homelessness practitioners.

Objectives

System capacity and enablers:

- improve consultation, planning, policy development
- program/service linkages and coordination to support funded responding to people at risk of or experiencing homelessness
- improve the knowledge, skills, and confidence of SHS in providing support to children and families who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness.

Activities and guidelines

Homelessness activity	Service response	Link to Guidelines
20084	Council to Homelessness Persons	N/A
20084	Statewide Children's Resource Program	
20084	Statewide Homelessness Network Coordinators	
20084	Statewide Systems stewardship for Aboriginal Services	
20084	Victorian Indigenous Statewide Homelessness Network	
20084	Project Coordinators	
20084	Statewide Family Reconciliation Mediation Program	

12.9 Essential needs centres and mobile drop in centres

Purpose

The program assists people with their mental wellbeing by offering support and community connectedness. The program is funded to provide material aid and community connections activities that may include:

- meals program
- access to showers
- care packages
- laundry facilities
- community activities
- information and referrals
- supports from allied services.

Objectives

- essential needs and mobile drop in centres
- provide access to critical wellbeing supports
- improves economic, housing and health outcomes
- reduce social isolation for people.

Activities and guidelines

Homelessness activity	Service response	Link to Guidelines
20083	The essential needs centres and mobile drop in centres	N/A

Appendix 1 Overview of the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework

The **objectives** of MARAM are to:

- increase the safety of people experiencing family violence
- ensure the broad range of experiences across the spectrum of seriousness and presentations of risk are represented, including for Aboriginal communities, diverse communities, children, and across varying family and relationship types
- keep perpetrators in view and hold them accountable for their actions and behaviours
- guide alignment with MARAM for use across a broader range of organisations and sectors who will have responsibilities to identify, assess and respond to family violence risk
- ensure consistent use of MARAM across these organisations and sectors.

There are three foundational elements of MARAM. These are:

- 10 MARAM Framework **principles** which underpin practice across the service system
- 4 **pillars** to support organisations to align their policies, procedures, practice guidance and tools with MARAM
- 10 **responsibilities** for practice that describe the roles and expectations of Framework organisations.

MARAM creates a shared responsibility between prescribed services and sectors. This shared responsibility, through the use of tools consistent with the evidence-based risk factors and sharing relevant information to reduce risk, provides more options to keep victim survivors safe and perpetrators in view and accountable.

MARAM acknowledges children as victim survivors in their own right. MARAM provides specific evidence-based risk factors, and tools, to support the identification and assessment of family violence risk to children.

MARAM operates alongside the Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) and the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS). The information sharing schemes enable practitioners to draw on a wider source of information to determine the presence of risk. The CISS allows a prescribed information sharing entity (ISE) to share information to promote the wellbeing or safety of a child or a group of children. The FVISS enables risk relevant information about victim survivors, perpetrators, alleged perpetrators and other people involved in family violence to be collected, used and shared between authorised workforces.

MARAM Framework requirements for each pillar

Pillar	Framework requirements
Pillar 1: Shared understanding of family violence	Demonstrate understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • family violence risk and impact • spectrum of family violence types

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> complexity of experiences in community (intersectionality) use of the evidence-based risk factors to support determination of risk
Pillar 2: Consistent and collaborative practice	<p>Apply consistent, collaborative practice through use of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MARAM tools to screen, identify, assess, manage family violence risk FVISS or other laws to share information Structured professional judgement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> victim survivor self-assessed level of fear evidence-based risk factors info sharing and collaboration own professional judgement
Pillar 3: Responsibilities for risk assessment and management	<p>Organisational leaders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> understand their organisation's responsibilities in family violence risk assessment and management, and those that relate to the operation of the information sharing scheme equip their workforce with the tools, resources and training to meet those responsibilities
Pillar 4: Systems, outcomes and continuous improvement	<p>Contribute to understanding of the evidence base:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> establish governance to oversee alignment collect consistent information about the evidence-based risk factors from use of the tools and client feedback lead change management activities to promote continuous improvement

MARAM practice responsibilities and levels of practice

Practice responsibility	Relevant practice levels
1: Respectful, sensitive and safe engagement	Identification, Intermediate, Comprehensive
2: Identification of family violence	Identification, Intermediate, Comprehensive
3: Intermediate risk assessment	Intermediate, Comprehensive
4: Intermediate risk management	Intermediate, Comprehensive
5: Seek consultation for comprehensive risk assessment, risk management and referrals	Identification, Intermediate, Comprehensive
6: Contribute to information sharing with other services (FVISS and CISS)	Identification, Intermediate, Comprehensive
7: Comprehensive assessment	Comprehensive

8: Comprehensive risk management and safety planning	Comprehensive
9: Contribute to coordinated risk management	Identification, Intermediate, Comprehensive
10: Collaborate for ongoing risk assessment and management	Identification, Intermediate, Comprehensive

The Ten Maram Framework Principles

To help achieve a shared understanding of family violence, there are 10 MARAM Framework principles to support each Pillar and help guide Victoria's family violence system-wide response. The principles are:

- Family violence involves a spectrum of seriousness of risk and presentations, and is unacceptable in any form, across any community or culture.
- Professionals should work collaboratively to provide coordinated and effective risk assessment and management responses, including early intervention when family violence first occurs to avoid escalation into crisis and additional harm.
- Professionals should be aware, in their risk assessment and management practice, of the drivers of family violence, predominantly gender inequality, which also intersect with other forms of structural inequality and discrimination.
- The agency, dignity and intrinsic empowerment of victim survivors must be respected by partnering with them as active decision-making participants in risk assessment and management, including being supported to access and participate in justice processes that enable fair and just outcomes.
- Family violence may have serious impacts on the current and future physical, spiritual, psychological, developmental and emotional safety and wellbeing of children, who are directly or indirectly exposed to its effects, and should be recognised as victim survivors in their own right.
- Services provided to child victim survivors should acknowledge their unique experiences, vulnerabilities and needs, including the effects of trauma and cumulative harm arising from family violence.
- Services and responses provided to people from Aboriginal communities should be culturally responsive and safe, recognising Aboriginal understanding of family violence and rights to self-determination and self-management, and take account of their experiences of colonisation, systemic violence and discrimination, and recognise the ongoing and present day impacts of historical events, policies and practices.
- Services and responses provided to diverse communities and older people should be accessible, culturally responsive and safe, client-centred, inclusive and non-discriminatory.
- Perpetrators should be encouraged to acknowledge and take responsibility to end their violent, controlling and coercive behaviour, and service responses to perpetrators should be collaborative and coordinated through a system-wide approach that collectively and systematically creates opportunities for perpetrator accountability.
- Family violence used by adolescents is a distinct form of family violence and requires a different response to family violence used by adults because of their age and the possibility that they are also victim survivors of family violence.

MARAM Responsibilities

Responsibility	Requirements
Responsibility 1: Respectful, sensitive, and safe engagement.	Understands the nature and dynamics of family violence, facilitate an appropriate, accessible, culturally responsive environment for safe disclosure of information by service users, and to respond to disclosures sensitively. Recognises that any engagement of service users who may be a perpetrator must occur safely and not collude or respond to coercive behaviours.
Responsibility 2: Identification of family violence.	Uses information gained through engagement with service users and other providers (and in some cases, through use of screening tools to aid identification/or routine screening of all clients) to identify indicators of family violence risk and potentially affected family members. Understands when it might be safe to ask questions of clients who may be a perpetrator, to assist with identification.
Responsibility 3: Intermediate risk assessment	Competently and confidentially conducts intermediate risk assessment of adult and child victim survivors using Structured Professional Judgement and appropriate tools, including the Brief and Intermediate Assessment tools. Where appropriate to the role and mandate of the organisation or service, and when safe to do so, competently and confidentially contributes to behaviour assessment through engagement with a perpetrator, including through use of the Perpetrator Behavioural Assessment and contributes to keeping them in view and accountable for their actions and behaviours.
Responsibility 4: Intermediate risk management	Actively addresses immediate risk and safety concerns relating to adult and child victim survivors, and undertakes intermediate risk management, including safety planning. If working directly with perpetrators attempts intermediate risk management when safe to do so, including safety planning.
Responsibility 5: Seek consultation for comprehensive risk assessment, risk management and referrals.	Seeks internal supervision and consults with family violence specialists to collaborate on risk assessments and make active referrals for comprehensive specialist responses if appropriate.
Responsibility 6: Contribute to information sharing with other services (as authorised by legislation).	Proactively shares information relevant to the assessment and management of family violence risk and respond to requests to share information from other information sharing entities under the Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes.
Responsibility 7:	Trained to comprehensively assess the risks, needs and protective factors for adult and children victim survivors.

Comprehensive assessment	Trained and equipped to undertake comprehensive risk and needs assessment to determine seriousness of risk of the perpetrator, tailored intervention and support options, and contribute to keeping them in view and accountable for their actions and behaviours. Has an understanding of situating their own roles and responsibilities in the broader system to enable mutually reinforcing interventions over time.
Responsibility 8: Comprehensive risk management and safety planning	<p>Trained to undertake comprehensive risk management through development, monitoring and actioning of safety plans (including ongoing risk assessment), in partnership with the adult or child victim survivor and support agencies.</p> <p>Trained to undertake comprehensive risk management through development, monitoring and actioning of risk management plans (including information sharing); monitoring across the service system (including justice systems); and actions to hold perpetrators accountable for their actions. This can be through formal and informal system accountability mechanisms that support perpetrators' personal accountability, to accept responsibility for their actions, and work at the behaviour change process.</p>
Responsibility 9: Contribute to coordinated risk management.	Contributes to coordinated risk management, as part of integrated, multi-disciplinary and multi-agency approaches, contribute to coordinated risk management including information sharing, referrals, action planning, coordination of responses and collaborative action.
Responsibility 10: Collaborate for ongoing risk assessment.	Plays an ongoing role in collaboratively monitoring, assessing and managing risk over time to identify changes in levels of risk and ensure risk management and safety plans are responsive to changed circumstances including escalation. Ensures safety plans are enacted

Appendix 2 Referrals across DFFH local areas

First point of contact

At the entry point that the person initially seeks assistance from, the Initial Assessment and Planning (IAP) worker is required to offer to undertake an initial assessment, regardless of whether the client has links to the local area. The person seeking assistance should also be informed that there may be other entry points in areas where they are seeking to reside.

A client should receive financial assistance for purchased emergency accommodation at the first entry point they contact for assistance, regardless of the geographical area.

Client's local area

If the person would like to be assisted in a different local area, the person should be provided with the option of contacting an IAP worker in the local area they wish to reside in, if they would like to have a more localised, informed discussion about resources in that area. This decision should be made by the person seeking assistance and **no person is to be turned away due to geographical restrictions.**

If the person wishes to reside outside of the area covered by the entry point they have accessed, the entry point is required to:

- undertake an assessment with the client (unless the client prefers to go to their nominated entry point for an assessment)
- make a warm referral to the entry point nominated by the client
- use the IAP e-referral tool, available on the Specialist Homelessness Information Platform (SHIP), to provide a copy of the initial assessment to the clients nominated entry point
- maintain contact with the client until the clients nominated entry point have available resources (such as interim response, housing or support)
- advise the clients nominated entry point on any changes for the client which will impact on the prioritisation of resources at the receiving entry point.

Information and consent for a referral

Clients should always be asked how much detail can be included in the referral and specifically if there is anything they do not want to be passed on. Signed consent or acknowledgement of verbal consent must accompany any information being transferred between entry points. The e-referral should include the following information so the clients nominated entry point can prioritise the client:

- client details
- needs and risks
- housing assistance provided or planned, and
- support needed or arranged.

The clients nominated entry point should:

- contact the entry point to acknowledge they have received the referral
- contact the client to make an appointment
- place the client on the organisation's prioritisation list, and
- contact the client when a resource has become available.

SHS who do not use the SHIP platform will be required to have the e-referral function integrated into the organisation's platform to allow workers to easily transfer information between local areas.

Clients receiving support outside their nominated local area

If a client is receiving support outside of their nominated local area (for example they are in crisis accommodation), whilst waiting for resources to become available in their nominated local area, the client will remain on the nominated local area's prioritisation list until a resource is secured or the client is closed (using the SHS criteria for closing a support period).

The entry point will advise the client that a referral to their nominated entry point is not a guarantee of access to housing and support in that area, only to an initial assessment, but that the receiving entry point will contact them.

.

Appendix 3 - Client safety in purchased accommodation

Flexible funds and HEF purchase a range of private accommodation, including rooming houses and motels. SHS need to complete due diligence prior to utilising private accommodation providers.

Prescribed accommodation including those listed below, are regulated by Consumer Affairs Victoria and the relevant local government area authorities.

SHS should raise any concerns relating to the safety of a building or facility with the local council responsible for issuing the occupancy permit.

If there is an issue with an accommodation provider that can't be resolved by reporting the breach to local councils who holds the permit, SHS should email Homes Victoria at hhs@homes.vic.gov.au for review.

Under the *Public Health and Wellbeing (Prescribed Accommodation) Regulations 2020*, prescribed accommodation businesses include:

- hotels and motels
- hostels
- student dormitories
- holiday camps
- rooming houses
- residential accommodation
- labour hire accommodation (from February 2023).

Prescribed accommodation providers are required to meet hygiene, maintenance and other standards and requirements to minimise public health risk that may arise from shared use of facilities, high turnover of occupants and/or overcrowding.

The objective of the regulations is to set out the standards necessary to minimise the public health risks associated with prescribed accommodation.

[Public health and wellbeing prescribed accommodation amendment regulations](https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/as-made/statutory-rules/public-health-and-wellbeing-prescribed-accommodation-amendment-regulations)

<<https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/as-made/statutory-rules/public-health-and-wellbeing-prescribed-accommodation-amendment-regulations>-0>

For further detail, please refer to the HEF program guidelines.