



Families,  
Fairness  
and Housing

# Making social services safer

We want to know what you think

An Easy Read paper



## How to use this paper



The Victorian Government Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) wrote this paper. When you see the word 'we' or 'us', it means DFFH.



We wrote this paper in an easy to read way. We use pictures to explain some ideas.

**Bold**  
Not bold

We wrote some important words in **bold**. This means the letters are thicker and darker.



We explain what these bold words mean. There is a list of these words on page 27.



This Easy Read paper is a summary of another paper. This means it only includes the most important ideas.



You can ask for help to read this paper. A friend, family member or support person may be able to help you.

## What's in this document?

What are social services?	4
What is this paper about?	6
The standards	9
1. Deliver services safely	12
2. Respect a person's rights	14
3. Social services are delivered in safe places and spaces	16
4. Support people to give feedback	17
5. Social services providers have good ways to make decisions	19
6. Have a safe workforce	21
How to tell us what you think	23
Questions for you to think about	25
Word list	27
Contact us	31

## What are social services?



**Social services** are lots of different services that help people manage their day to day lives.



Organisations that deliver social services are called **social service providers**.

Social services include



- disability services



- child and family services.

It also includes services for **out-of-home care**.

When a child or young person can't live with their parents, they live in out-of-home care.

They might live:



- with a different family
- in a home for children in out-of-home care.

And social services include **homelessness support services**.



These services help people who:

- are at risk of being homeless
- don't have a home
- must find a place to sleep each night.



Social services support people who experience **family violence**.

Family violence is when you are hurt by someone close to you, such as:



- your partner or ex-partner
- someone who takes care of you
- someone you live with.

Social services also include services for people who experience **sexual assault**.



Sexual assault is when someone:

- makes you do sexual things you don't want to do
- does something sexual to you that you don't want them to do.

## What is this paper about?



On 16 September 2021, the Government made a new law called the *Social Services Regulation Act 2021* (the Act).

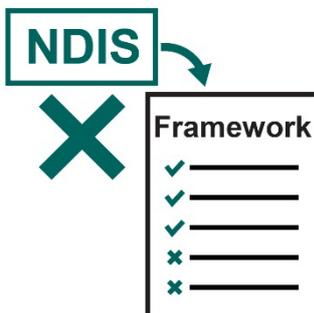


The Act lets the Government make a new **framework**.

A framework is a plan for how things should work.



The new framework requires social service providers to deliver their services safely.



But it doesn't include social services the **National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)** pays for.



The NDIS is a way of supporting people with disability all around Australia.

The new framework also helps protect people who use these services from:



- harm



- neglect – when someone is not helping you the way they are supposed to help you



- abuse – when someone treats you badly.



The Act makes a list of **standards** social service providers must follow.

Standards are rules about how to do things well.

Social service providers can:



- meet standards
- go above standards.



The Act also lets the Government make a list of goals.

These goals explain what we want to happen when:



- people use social services



- social service providers follow the standards.



We want to know what you think about the goals.

# The standards

There are 6 standards.



1. Deliver services safely



2. Respect a person's rights



3. Social services are delivered in safe places and spaces



4. Support people to give feedback



5. Social services providers have good ways to make decisions



6. Have a safe workforce



Each standard has a list of goals we want to work towards to make social services safer.



We explain the standards and goals on the following pages.

## Who are the standards for?



All social service providers must follow the standards.



When social service providers follow the standards, it will help protect people who use those services from:

- harm
- abuse
- neglect.

# 1. Deliver services safely



Social service providers must deliver their services in safe ways.

This includes:



- having ways to keep people safe



- working out what people need.

## What are the goals?



We want social service providers to protect people who use their services from harm.



And we want them to think about what:

- a person needs
- is happening in the person's life.



We want people who use social services to have support for their:

- health
- wellbeing.



And we also want social services providers to deliver services that are safe for people from different **cultures**.

Your culture is:



- your way of life
- your beliefs
- what is important to you.

## 2. Respect a person's rights



**Rights** are rules about how everyone should be treated:

- fairly
- equally.



Social service providers must respect the rights of people who use their services.



They must also make sure people can take part in decisions about their services.

## What are the goals?



When people use social services, we want the providers to:

- help them understand their rights.
- support their rights.



And we want social service providers to let people take part in decisions about the services they need.



We also want social service providers to support people to connect with their:

- family and friends
- culture
- community.

### 3. Social services are delivered in safe places and spaces



Social service providers must deliver their services in spaces and places that are safe.

#### What are the goals?



We want social service providers to deliver services in spaces and places that support a person's:

- safety
- health
- wellbeing.



And we also want social service providers to:

- plan for **emergencies**
- manage emergencies when they happen.



An emergency is something dangerous that:

- we don't expect to happen
- can put your health at risk.

## 4. Support people to give feedback on safety



Social service providers must support people who use their services to give **feedback** on safety.



When you give feedback, you tell a social service provider what they:

- are doing well
- can do better.



And social service providers must support people who use their services to make a **complaint** about safety.



When you make a complaint, you tell a social service provider:

- you're not happy about something
- something isn't working well.

## What are the goals?



We want social service providers to support people to give feedback about how safe the service is.

This includes making a complaint about safety.



And we also want social service providers to protect people who use their services when they:

- give feedback
- make a complaint.



For example, social service providers won't tell anyone who made a complaint.



And we want social service providers to quickly deal with:

- feedback
- complaints.

## 5. Social services providers have good ways to make decisions

Social service providers must:



- be clear about what they do



- have good plans to manage how their organisation works.



This helps social service providers deliver services that are safe.

### What are the goals?



We want social service providers to have good ways to make decisions about what they do.

And we also want social service providers to have leaders that can help them:



- deliver safe services



- protect people who use their services



- respect the rights of people who use their services.



We want these social services to:

- check if people who use their services are at risk
- stop those risks.

## 6. Have a safe workforce



A **workforce** is a group of people who:

- work in the same type of job
- offer the same services.



The social services workforce must know how to deliver services that are safe.

### What are the goals?



We want the social services workforce to know how to deliver safe services.



And we want social service providers to have the things they need to deliver safe services.

For example, equipment to deliver safe services.



We want the social services workforce to also have:

- support
- training.



And we also want them to be guided to deliver safe services.

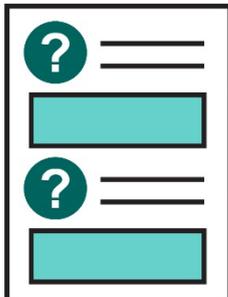
## How to tell us what you think



We want to know what you think about our goals.



We will use your feedback to make our final goals.



We have some questions for you to think about.

They are just a guide.



You can think about:

- all of the questions
- some of the questions.



You can share your ideas in different ways.



You can send us an email.

[regulationreform@dfh.vic.gov.au](mailto:regulationreform@dfh.vic.gov.au)



You can write us a letter.

Department of Families, Fairness and Housing  
System Reform and Workforce Division  
Social Services Regulation Reform Unit  
17/50 Lonsdale Street  
Melbourne 3000

## Questions for you to think about



Do the goals talk about important things that will help social service providers be safer?



Are the goals for each standard:

- clear?
- easy to understand?

What goals should we:



- include?



- take out?



- change?



Will the goals help social services deliver services that people can trust?



Do you have any other ideas you want to share?

## Word list

This list explains what the **bold** words in this document mean.



### **Complaint**

When you make a complaint, you tell a social service provider:

- you're not happy about something
- something isn't working well.

### **Culture**

Your culture is:

- your way of life
- your beliefs
- what is important to you.



### **Family violence**

Family violence is when you are hurt by someone close to you, such as:

- your partner or ex-partner
- someone who takes care of you
- someone you live with.



### **Feedback**

When you give feedback, you tell a social service provider what they:

- are doing well
- can do better.



## Framework

A framework is a plan for how things should work.



## Emergency

An emergency is something dangerous that:

- we don't expect to happen
- can put your health at risk.



## Homelessness support services

Homelessness support services help people who:

- are at risk of being homeless
- don't have a home
- must find a place to sleep each night.



## National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

The NDIS is a way of supporting people with disability all around Australia.



## Out-of-home care

When a child or young person can't live with their parents, they live in out-of-home care.

They might live:

- with a different family
- in a home for children in out-of-home care.



## Rights

Rights are rules about how everyone should be treated:

- fairly
- equally.



## Sexual assault

Sexual assault is when someone:

- makes you do sexual things you don't want to do
- does something sexual to you that you don't want them to do.



## Social services

Social services are lots of different services that help people manage their day to day lives.



## Social service providers

Organisations that deliver social services are called social service providers.



## Standards

Standards are rules about how to do things well.

Social service providers can:

- meet standards
- go above standards.



## Workforce

A workforce is a group of people who:

- work in the same type of job
- offer the same services.

## Contact us



You can send us an email.

[regulationreform@dfhh.vic.gov.au](mailto:regulationreform@dfhh.vic.gov.au)



You can write to us.

Department of Families, Fairness and Housing  
System Reform and Workforce Division  
Social Services Regulation Reform Unit  
17/50 Lonsdale Street  
Melbourne 3000



You can visit our website.

[www.dfhh.vic.gov.au/social-services-regulation-reform](http://www.dfhh.vic.gov.au/social-services-regulation-reform)



The Information Access Group created this Easy Read document using stock photography and custom images. The images may not be reused without permission. For any enquiries about the images, please visit [www.informationaccessgroup.com](http://www.informationaccessgroup.com). Quote job number 4829.

To receive this document in another format, email  
[regulationreform@dffh.vic.gov.au](mailto:regulationreform@dffh.vic.gov.au).

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

© State of Victoria, Australia, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing,  
June 2022.

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.