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| Family violence Flexible Support Packages Program Requirements/Guidelines Summary of recent changes; September 2021  |
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# Background

Family violence flexible support packages (FSPs) deliver personalised and holistic responses that assist child and adult victim survivors of family violence to access support, move out of crisis, stabilise and improve their safety, wellbeing and independence.

The program requirements are intended to outline the mandatory program requirements to be implemented by service providers. However, FSP providers have told us that the current guidance restricts access to funding for some cohorts and lacks clarity in certain areas which has contributed to inconsistencies in the delivery of FSPs across the state. Further, the current requirements, which were developed in 2016, do not align with recent reforms and policy directions.

Thus, Family Safety Victoria (FSV) commenced a review of the FSP program requirements in 2020 with the aims to:

* support greater efficiency and equity in access to flexible funding for victims’ survivors of family violence
* support greater consistency in how the program is administered across the State
* Align more closely with the MARAM Framework and the Personal Safety Initiative Operational Guidelines
* Reflect the implementation of the new FSP online portal

A number of dedicated consultation sessions were held in late 2020 and 2021 with FSP providers to determine the scope of the review, key issues and strategies. The new program requirements are a reflection of the consolidated feedback from FSP providers, DV Vic and FSV program and policy areas.

# What are the key changes?

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| Key issues in current program requirements | Revisions  |
| Change in scope and structure  |
| Current program requirements are targeted only to FSP providers and have limited contextual information  | The new program guidelines are targeted to both applicants and FSP providers and include:* a clear purpose statement for FSPs
* in-depth guiding principles
* an explanation of how the requirements relate to existing policies
* definition of key terms
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| Eligibility and suitability  |
| Current requirements did not provide any clarity on: * which organisations can apply for FSPs on behalf of victim survivors
* requirements for risk assessments and safety plans
* the eligibility of adolescents who use violence and whether victim-survivors who are residing with adolescents who use violence should be eligible for FSP
* how FSPs should be processed for children, women on temporary visas and victim survivors with disability

Currently, victim-survivors who are residing with the perpetrator, and not planning to have the perpetrator removed the home, are not eligible for FSPs. ACCOs have provided feedback that Aboriginal victim survivors are particularly impacted by this criteria given that many Aboriginal victim-survivors will choose to continue their living arrangements with the perpetrator. A whole-of-family approach underpins Aboriginal communities and services. | The new program guidelines provide clarity on which organisations can apply for FSPs and the requirements for risk assessments in alignment with MARAM responsibilities.The new requirements also include a section explaining the eligibility and additional considerations for different target cohorts including:* children and young people
* victim survivors on temporary visa
* victim survivors with a disability
* Adolescents using violence1
* Aboriginal victim survivors

1 The new requirements allow for supports to be purchased for adolescents using violence as part of the broader package of supports for the adult victim survivor.While the eligibility for victim-survivors who are still in a relationship with the perpetrator has not changed, extra flexibility was provided to ACCO regional providers. ACCOs are able to approve applications that do not meet the standard eligibility criteria in accordance with a culturally safe assessment of the package.  |
| Application process |
| The current program requirements do not provide clear advice on the application process.There is also no advice provided on the need to collect client consent in applications.  | The new program requirements provide a step-by-step guide on the application process, including:* Information sharing and consent (including guidance on privacy collection statements)
* Choosing the right FSP provider
* Process for safety and security responses, as per PSI
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| Service requirements  |
| The current requirements do not explain the roles and responsibilities of applicants, FSP providers and PSI coordinators.There is also lack of clarity on applying for additional packages in the same support period. | The new program requirements provide a description of the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders in the delivery of FSPs and the requirements for applying for additional supports.  |