



# FAQs

## IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE INFORMATION SHARING SCHEME

### What is the information sharing Scheme?

The *Domestic and Family Violence Act 2007* (the Act) has been amended to allow Information Sharing Entities (ISEs) to share relevant information, where it is necessary to protect people from serious threats of domestic and family violence (DFV).

The new laws aim to remove barriers between services so they can work together to:

- improve safety for victims of DFV;
- facilitate timely action from services, and referrals and collaboration between services;
- prevent victims having to tell their stories over and over.

### When does the Scheme start?

The Scheme will commence on 30 August 2019.

### What are the DFV Information Sharing Guidelines?

DFV Information Sharing Guidelines (the Guidelines) have been developed to support ISEs to share information

appropriately in order to assess, lessen or prevent a serious risk of DFV. The Guidelines provide ISEs with information on who can share information, what information should be shared, and the circumstances in which information may be shared.

ISEs are required by law to comply with the Guidelines.

### Can information be shared without consent?

An ISE should obtain consent before sharing unless it is not safe, possible or practical. However, information can be shared without consent if it would help assess, lessen or prevent a serious threat of DFV.

### Who can share information?

An ISE is an agency allowed to request and share information under the Act. An ISE can only share information with another ISE.

The Act designates certain government agencies and non-government schools as ISEs. Other organisations can apply to

become an ISE (see below). A full list of ISEs is available on the Territory Families website.

### Are there limits to information sharing?

Information can only be shared between ISEs if it is necessary to assess, lessen or prevent a serious threat to a person's life, health safety or welfare because of domestic violence.

ISEs must ensure that information shared about an Aboriginal person is done in a culturally safe and sensitive way, and in a way that considers that person's family and community connections. They should also take into account a person's cultural, sexual and gender identity and religious faith.

Information must not be shared if sharing could endanger a person's life or physical safety.

There are also several legal exceptions to sharing information. See the Guidelines on the Territory Families website for more detail.





There are penalties for anyone who discloses confidential information in a way that is not authorised by the new laws.

### **What about existing information sharing laws?**

Existing information sharing and mandatory reporting laws still apply.

### **What is the Risk Assessment and Management Framework?**

When assessing and managing the risk of DFV, it is important that services share a consistent understanding and language. This is why a Risk Assessment and Management Framework (RAMF) is being developed for the NT. ANROWS has been contracted to develop the RAMF, as well as a common risk assessment tool, to be delivered by the end of 2019. This timeframe will allow meaningful consultation time with ISEs, the sector and other affected stakeholders.

### **What do ISEs need to do?**

ISEs must comply with the Guidelines, available on the Territory Families website. These Guidelines were developed in consultation with government agencies and non-government specialist DFV organisations.

ISEs must also align their policies, procedures, and tools with the RAMF once it is developed.

ISEs will need to begin the process of updating and aligning their policies, procedures and tools with the Scheme. It is understood that this will take some time. A range of tools and resources are available on the Territory Families website to help ISEs prepare.

### **How can I access training?**

An e-learning module is available on the Territory Families website. The e-learning provides basic information on the Scheme, including the role and obligations of ISEs.

### **How does my organisation become an ISE?**

Organisations who provide a DFV related service (eg a non-government DFV service) can be prescribed by regulation as an ISE, provided that the Minister for Territory Families is satisfied they will comply with the Guidelines.

A simple application process is available on the Territory Families website. Applying to become an ISE is a voluntary process.

### **When can my organisation apply to become an ISE?**

Since ISEs must agree to align their policies, procedures and tools with the RAMF, organisations will be invited to opt-in to the Scheme after the

RAMF is developed. Because new ISEs must be prescribed by regulation, this will occur in tranches, with the first tranche planned for early 2020.

### **How do I find out more?**

A range of tools and resources are available to help ISEs understand their obligations and ensure information is shared in an appropriate and safe way.

The website (link below) provides relevant information to ISEs and other stakeholders, including links to the DFV Information Sharing Guidelines, useful tools and templates, an e-learning training module, factsheets, a list of ISEs, and information on how to apply to become an ISE.

<https://territoryfamilies.nt.gov.au/dfv/informationsharing>

You can also contact the Office of Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Reduction Policy in Territory Families on (08) 89357803 or email:

[TF.DomesticViolenceDirectorate@nt.gov.au](mailto:TF.DomesticViolenceDirectorate@nt.gov.au)

