

# Strengthening practice in responding to domestic and family violence

A TOOLKIT FOR COMMUNITY HOUSING PROVIDERS



Homelessness NSW



nsw Federation of  
Housing Associations inc



SHELTER  
because housing matters



## A TOOLKIT FOR COMMUNITY HOUSING PROVIDERS

*Other sections available in this series*

**SECTION ONE** Introduction

**SECTION TWO** Guidance tools and checklists

**SECTION FOUR** Case studies

**SECTION FIVE** A resource for employers

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## Tenant lease sign up packs

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Two tenant resources have been developed to be incorporated into all tenant lease sign up packs.

One provides information and advice on domestic and family violence. It identifies what a community housing provider might do if a tenant is experiencing domestic and family violence. It also provides advice about the range of services and supports available for victims of domestic and family violence.

The other provides information about the range of men's domestic violence behaviour change programs available in Queensland.

Incorporating these resources into all tenant lease sign up packs enables community housing providers to more effectively contribute to the community in responding to domestic and family violence.



## Domestic and family violence information and advice for tenants and applicants

### *Information and advice for tenants and applicants*

This leaflet explains what we can do if you are experiencing domestic and family violence.

### *What is domestic and family violence?*

#### **DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE IS A CRIME IN AUSTRALIA**

Domestic and family violence occurs when one person in an intimate personal, family or informal care relationship uses violence or abuse to maintain power and control over the other person.

Broadly, under Queensland law, it includes behaviour that is **physically, sexually, emotionally, psychologically or economically abusive, threatening, coercive** or aimed at **controlling or dominating** another person through **fear**.

The *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012* aims to provide safety and protection for people in relevant relationships who are victims of domestic and family violence.

**Domestic and family violence is against the law.**

### *It's not just physical*

You do not have to be physically hit or hurt to have experienced domestic and family violence. Domestic and family violence is more than physical abuse. It includes behaviour that is threatening and controlling that can cause you to fear for your own safety or another person's safety.

Other types of domestic and family violence include:

- » **Emotional abuse** e.g. manipulation, isolation, put-downs, mind games
- » **Financial abuse** e.g. forcing you to hand over control of income or assets, coercing you to take on debt or sign a contract, not allowing you to earn an income


- » **Sexual abuse** e.g. any unwanted sexual activity.
- » **Social abuse** e.g. insulting you in public
- » **Threats** of physical violence and revenge
- » **Property damage** e.g. smashing your belongings
- » **Harming or threatening** to harm your pets

Domestic and family violence can leave you feeling stressed, anxious and/or depressed and impacts on your health and wellbeing.

### *What will we do to help you?*


#### **ONE WORKING DAY RESPONSE**

You can contact us and report domestic and family violence to us via phone, email or our website. We will respond within one working day (Monday – Friday).

 You can also contact the DV Connect Women's Line 24 hours per day on **1800 811 811**.

If you're in immediate danger, call the Police on **000**.

Other services that may be helpful include:

 National Sexual Assault & Domestic Family Violence Counselling Service 24 hrs per day on **1800 737 732**.

Mensline 9.00am-12 midnight on **1800 600 636**.

Sexual assault line 7.30am-11.30pm on **1800 010 120**.

### *Advice and information*

We know that every case is different so we will advise you of what options you have. We will give you information about other agencies that offer further advice and support on such matters as tenancy advice and legal issues. With your permission, we will refer you for help and coordinate with other services including specialist domestic and family violence services if required.



### *Safe place to meet and safe communication*

Your safety is very important to us. We want to help you secure your ongoing safety from domestic and family violence. You can meet staff in private at our offices or at an agreed safe place. We will also agree how we can stay in contact with you in a safe way.

### *Keeping your information secure*

Your information is strictly confidential and will only be shared with a support service that is bound by law to keep it secure.

We will not give your details, or the information you provide, to anyone without your permission unless there are serious concerns for your or your children's safety. In such cases, we have a legal responsibility to share information.

Your information will never be shared with the person who hurt you.

### *Sensitivity*

We understand if you are more comfortable talking about your situation to someone who is the same sex as you. You should let us know if you want to speak to someone of the same sex and if we can, we will arrange that for you.

### *Check the risk to safety and the safety of your home*

We will facilitate a risk assessment for all domestic and family violence situations. We will go through your options with you which may include increasing the security in your home.

If it isn't safe for you to stay in your home, we will give you advice, information and support to help you get alternative accommodation (such as emergency accommodation).

### *Support*

One way for us to help you is to make a referral to a support service.

A referral includes information about you, for example: your name, phone number, what has happened and information about any court notices or protection orders. The referral includes any relevant information about the person who hurt you, so that the service understands your situation and needs.

A referral is automatic when police officers attend a domestic and family violence incident or where there are domestic violence proceedings in court.

### *Support services for you and your family*

After the referral is made, a support service will contact you and offer you help with different issues you may face.

Support may include:

- » Safety planning
- » Emergency accommodation
- » Counselling
- » Access to financial assistance
- » Court support, or
- » Other services you may need to increase your safety.

### *Working with you*

Important decisions about your safety should be made by you, and in most cases we will seek your consent before making a referral to a support service.



### *Working together we are stronger*

We will work with our partners to support you and to deal with anyone causing domestic and family violence. We know that domestic violence cases involve many organisations and we will work closely with them to ensure you and your family are safe.

### *Translation and interpretation services*

If you need this, we will provide you with translation and interpretation services.

### *Housing management*

We recognise that sometimes it is in the best interest of a victim (and their children) to be provided with support so that they can remain safely in the family home. In other cases, the best action is to assist the victim move to new accommodation. We will work with you to assist you maintain or secure safe and affordable housing.

We will explore with you financial assistance options that can help you with the costs of new accommodation.

### *More help and advice*

#### **EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION**

If you need emergency accommodation in Queensland because of domestic and family violence, call the

 **24hr DV Connect Women's Line on 1800 811 811**

They can refer you to services in your area. You can also call

 **Homeless Hotline on 1800 474 753**

**Homeless Hotline** is a state-wide information and referral service and they can refer you to Specialist Homelessness Services that support women and children who are escaping domestic and family violence.



#### **SUPPORT FOR MALE VICTIMS**

Men who are victims of domestic and family violence can speak to

 **Mensline on 1800 600 636**

#### **NATIONAL COUNSELLING HELPLINE, INFORMATION AND SUPPORT**

**1800 RESPECT** is a national telephone and online counselling service for people who have been affected by sexual assault, domestic and family violence. Counsellors are qualified, professional and specialist trained and can be contacted on

 **1800 737 732** or  
 **[www.1800respect.org.au](http://www.1800respect.org.au)**  
 → GET HELP



## SUPPORT FOR LGBTIQ COMMUNITIES

LGBTI Legal Service can be contacted on

 **0401 936 232**

## LEGAL SERVICES

Legal Aid

 **1300 651 188**

 **[www.legalaid.qld.gov.au/](http://www.legalaid.qld.gov.au/)**

Women's Legal Service is a specialist legal service for women. They can be contacted on

 **1800 677 278** outside Brisbane or

**07 3392 0672** in Brisbane

 **[www.wlsq.org.au/](http://www.wlsq.org.au/)**

Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Legal Service can be contacted on

 **1800 887 700**

## Other services

Immigrant Women's Support Service can be contacted on

 **07 3846 3490**

Your nearest police station or local court can be found in the front of the White Pages phonebook.

## Tenancy Advice

Tenants Queensland manages the Queensland statewide tenancy advice and referral service (QSTARS).

QSTARS can assist tenants with:

- » Advice and assistance to understand your tenancy rights and responsibilities
- » Support to resolve your tenancy issue
- » Advocacy support to talk to your lessor or agent
- » Help to write a letter or fill in tenancy forms
- » Help to attend or prepare for a QCAT tenancy tribunal hearing
- » Referral to other services if needed

QSTARS can be contacted on

 **1300 744 263**

**Hours of service: 9am-5pm Monday-Friday  
(with extended hours to 7pm Tuesdays and  
Wednesdays)**

 **[www.qstars.org.au](http://www.qstars.org.au)**

## Technology and safety

Internet, email and location features on your computer and mobile devices help connect you to support services. However, this technology can also be used by your partner or ex-partner to monitor you and threaten your safety. If you do not feel safe on your personal phone and computer, you can:

- » Use computers available for public access which can be found at libraries, community centres and internet cafes
- » Create new email, Facebook and messaging accounts using an anonymous user name and new passwords
- » Turn off the location feature on your mobile phone and your Facebook page

More information can be found at

 **[http://www.dvconnect.org/womensline/  
help-for-you-2/](http://www.dvconnect.org/womensline/help-for-you-2/)**

 **[www.facebook.com/safety/tools](http://www.facebook.com/safety/tools)**

## Getting help with money

If you are planning to leave a violent or abusive relationship or the perpetrator of the abuse leaves, you may be eligible for a crisis payment from Centrelink – **you must contact the department within seven days of separation.**





## Behaviour change programs information and advice for tenants and applicants

### *Information and advice for tenants and applicants on services available for men who wish to receive support to manage their behaviours*

In Queensland, there are a range of men's domestic violence behaviour change programs, provided by Government and non-government services. These are provided in various settings by welfare groups and by counselling services, and are a valuable service to men seeking to change their abusive behaviour.

As a Community Housing Provider, we are committed to supporting tenants and applicants to receive information on the range of services and supports available to them should they be seeking support and guidance on addressing issues that they have around their behaviour and attitudes. This is part of our commitment to addressing domestic and family violence across Queensland.

### *Services and supports available*

#### **MENSLINE**

Mensline takes calls from men dealing with family and domestic violence matters. If your behaviour has brought you into contact with the police or courts and you're facing issues such as an intervention order, behaviour change, anger management, access or custody, Mensline offers anonymous and confidential telephone counselling, information and referrals to help men stop using violent and controlling behaviour.

More information can be found at



**1800 600 636** or

**[www.dvconnect.org/mensline/](http://www.dvconnect.org/mensline/)**

#### **MEN'S BEHAVIOUR CHANGE PROGRAM**

Men's Behaviour Change Programs work with men who use violence and abuse with (ex)partners and their children.

These programs typically involve assessment, including risk assessment, and then:

- » Group work, individual counselling and case management for men.
- » Support, information, referral, safety planning and (in some cases) counselling and case management for women and children.

Information on programs currently available can be found through contacting Mensline or at this [link](#).



**NSW Federation of Housing Associations Inc.**

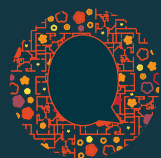
Suite 301, 64-76 Kippax Street  
Surry Hills NSW 2010

**t:** 02 9281 7144

**e:** [nswfha@communityhousing.org.au](mailto:nswfha@communityhousing.org.au)  
[www.communityhousing.org.au](http://www.communityhousing.org.au)



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**Queensland**  
Government

**Q Shelter**

Diamantina House  
515 Wickham Tce Spring Hill QLD 4000

**t:** 07 3831 5900

**e:** [info@qshelter.asn.au](mailto:info@qshelter.asn.au)

[www.qshelter.asn.au](http://www.qshelter.asn.au)