



FAQs

THE DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE INFORMATION SHARING SCHEME

What is the information sharing Scheme?

In 2019, the *Domestic and Family Violence Act 2007* (the Act) was 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 laws aim to remove barriers between services so they can work together to:

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

When did the Scheme start?

The Scheme commenced on 30 August 2019.

What are the DFV Information Sharing Guidelines?

DFV Information Sharing Guidelines (the Guidelines) 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. The Guidelines are available on the Territory Families website.

Can information be shared without consent?

An ISE should obtain consent before sharing unless it is not safe, possible or practical to do so. 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 way that is culturally safe and sensitive, and 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 and evidence-based understanding, language and approach. This is why the Risk Assessment and Management Framework (RAMF), including a Common Risk Assessment Tool (CRAT) has been developed for the NT. The RAMF is available on the Territory Families website.

What do ISEs need to do?

ISEs must:

- comply with the Guidelines; and
- align their policies, procedures, and tools, relevant to the sharing of information, with the RAMF.

The Guidelines and the RAMF were developed in consultation with government agencies and non-government specialist DFV organisations.

It is understood that the process of alignment with the RAMF and the Information Sharing Scheme will take some time. A range of tools and resources are available on the Territory Families website to help ISEs with this process.

How can I access training?

A DFV Information Sharing 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.

Training on an orientation to and use of the RAMF is also being developed.

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?

Your organisation can apply at any time to become an ISE. Because new ISEs must be

prescribed by regulation, this will occur in tranches, with the first tranche planned for late 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 and the RAMF and CRAT, 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: dfv@nt.gov.au

