

Child Information Sharing Scheme and Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme Fact Sheet

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What are the Information Sharing Schemes?

The Victorian Government is progressing information sharing and family violence reforms to make it easier for professionals to collaborate with each other, and better support the children and families they are working with:

- The Child Information Sharing Scheme forms Part 6a of the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*. The Child Information Sharing Scheme, or CISS, enables the sharing of information to promote the wellbeing or safety of a child or a group of children.
- The Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme forms Part 5a of the *Family Violence Protection Act 2008*. The Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme, or FVISS, enables the sharing of information for family violence risk assessment or risk management in relation to both children and adults.

The Schemes aim to streamline information sharing arrangements and are designed to work together to supplement existing legislation. The Schemes expand legal permissions to support professionals that work with children, families, victim survivors and perpetrators of family violence and help to create a more collaborative, integrated system to improve safety and wellbeing outcomes for all Victorians.

For more information, see the [Victorian Government information sharing <https://www.vic.gov.au/information-sharing-schemes-and-the-maram-framework>](https://www.vic.gov.au/information-sharing-schemes-and-the-maram-framework) website.

Child Information Sharing Scheme

The Child Information Sharing Scheme enables prescribed organisations and services to share information with each other to promote the wellbeing or safety of children.

For the more limited purpose of managing risk to a child's safety, the CISS permits sharing with an adult with parental responsibility or with whom the child lives.

The CISS prioritises wellbeing and safety over privacy. This allows professionals to collaborate and share information, without consent, where they can prevent potential future harm or help a child thrive.

Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme

The Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme enables information to be shared to assess or manage family violence risk in relation to children or adults. The FVISS enables the service system to manage victim survivor safety and hold perpetrators accountable for their actions and behaviours.

Consent is not required to share information from anyone when a child is involved. Where no children are involved, consent from the adult victim survivor is required, only when it is appropriate, safe and reasonable to do so.

Information sharing requests made under FVISS must relate to one of the following purposes:

- for a family violence assessment purpose
- for a family violence protection purpose (to manage risk, including ongoing risk assessment and management)

Under the FVISS, prescribed organisations/workforces can share perpetrator (or alleged perpetrator) information without consent.

The [Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management \(MARAM\) Framework](https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/family-violence-risk-assessment-and-risk-management-framework)

<<https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/family-violence-risk-assessment-and-risk-management-framework>> should guide information sharing in a family violence context.

Information sharing should also be guided by relevant professional practice frameworks.

What information can you share?

Information that is relevant to assessing and/or managing family violence, or promoting the safety or wellbeing of children can be shared provided that:

- the information is not excluded
 - excluded information includes information that may endanger a person's life or physical safety, prejudice an investigation or a coronial enquiry, contravene legal professional privilege, contravene a court order or law that prohibits the disclosure of the information, is contrary to public interest or contravenes a court order or law that prohibits the disclosure of the information (See Section 41Q of the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act and Section 144C of the Family Violence Protection Act)
- sharing the information does not contravene another law
- the applicable consent requirements have been met.

You are still required to share information the way you currently do under your existing permissions and legislative responsibilities. The Schemes do not affect reporting obligations to Child Protection or Police.

Who can you share information with?

Organisations/workforces who are prescribed under one or more of the Schemes are referred to as Information Sharing Entities (ISEs).

You may only share information using the Schemes with organisations/workforces that are also ISEs. In addition, you can also share perpetrator information with the victim survivor to manage a risk to safety and information under CISS to manage risk to a child's safety. You may however be able to share information with other organisations/workforces using your existing permissions to share.

Victoria Police, Child Protection and state-funded family violence specialist services are ISEs.

All organisations and services prescribed as ISEs can access the online ISE list. This online list is a searchable database that can be used to identify other organisations and services prescribed under the Schemes. Access the list via the [VicGov website](https://iselist.www.vic.gov.au/ise/list) <<https://iselist.www.vic.gov.au/ise/list>>.

Is my organisation or workforce prescribed under the Schemes?

Prescription of ISEs has occurred in different phases. Phase One commenced in September 2018. The following DHHS organisations/workforces were prescribed as part of Phase One:

- Child Protection – Department of Health and Human Services
- Department of Health and Human Services Housing
- Designated mental health services
- Maternal and Child Health services
- Care services (Out-of-home care services)
- Registered community-based child and family services including Child FIRST
- State-funded alcohol and other drugs services
- State-funded homelessness accommodation or homelessness support services (providing access point, outreach and accommodation services)

Phase Two will commence on **19 April 2021** with universal services including schools and early childhood education and care services. Department of Health and Human Services workforces that will be prescribed as part of Phase Two include:

- Ambulance Victoria
- Bush Nursing Centres
- Community Health services
- Community-managed mental health services
- Early Parenting Centres
- Forensic disability
- General practice nurses
- General practitioners
- Hospitals
- Homelessness (all remaining services)
- Multiple and Complex Needs Initiative (MACNI)
- Refugee Minor Program
- Registered community housing associations or registered housing providers
- State funded Aged Care services
- Supported Playgroups (DHHS funded)

Access the [Victorian Government's information sharing website](https://www.vic.gov.au/information-sharing-schemes-and-the-maram-framework) < <https://www.vic.gov.au/information-sharing-schemes-and-the-maram-framework> > to see other prescribed organisations and workforces to enable more collaboration on sharing information.

How can information be shared with or requested from the Department of Health and Human Services

Under the FVISS and CISS, prescribed organisations can request information from, or share information with, the Department of Health and Human Services relating to Child Protection or Housing. This can be done at a local level – for example, with a department case worker or housing officer currently involved with a child or family, including victim survivors or perpetrator.

This includes making a report to Child Protection if you have concerns that a child is at risk of significant harm as a result of abuse or neglect. For more information about making a report see [Child Protection contacts](https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/child-protection-contacts) <<https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/child-protection-contacts>>.

To report concerns about the immediate safety of a child outside of normal business hours, you should contact the After-Hours Child Protection Emergency Service on 13 12 78.

To report concerns that are life threatening, in relation to an adult or a child call Victoria Police 000.

In circumstances where the existing worker is unknown, or if the information is historical or relates to a closed Child Protection case, prescribed organisations can [email Department's Information Sharing Unit](mailto:info.exchange@dhhs.vic.gov.au) <info.exchange@dhhs.vic.gov.au> or phone 1300 090 979.

Training and resources

- [Information Sharing eLearn modules](https://elearn.childlink.com.au/login/index.php) - <<https://elearn.childlink.com.au/login/index.php>>
- [Ministerial Guidelines](https://www.vic.gov.au/guides-templates-tools-for-information-sharing) – <<https://www.vic.gov.au/guides-templates-tools-for-information-sharing>>
- [ISE searchable database](https://iselist.www.vic.gov.au/ise/list/) – <<https://iselist.www.vic.gov.au/ise/list/>>

Further information, training options and resources are available on the [Victorian Government's information sharing website](https://www.vic.gov.au/information-sharing-schemes-and-the-maram-framework) <<https://www.vic.gov.au/information-sharing-schemes-and-the-maram-framework>>.

Further information

The Department's Information Sharing and MARAM Reform team can provide further information and guidance, infosharing@dhhs.vic.gov.au <infosharing@dhhs.vic.gov.au>.

To receive this publication in an accessible format email infosharing@dhhs.vic.gov.au <infosharing@dhhs.vic.gov.au>

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Available at [Providers web site Information Sharing page](https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/information-sharing) <<https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/information-sharing>>