Family Safety Hub
Co-creating pathways to sustainable safety

DESIGN REPORT

January 2018
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Section 1

Why do we need a Family Safety Hub?
Background

Several 2016 reports made findings about the critical importance of services working together to provide effective responses to domestic and family violence in the ACT.

In recognition of the need for a focal point in the ACT service system for domestic and family violence response, the ACT Government committed to establish a Family Safety Hub. It was intended that the Hub would facilitate the integration of services, across government and the community sector, responding to domestic and family violence.

The Office of the Coordinator-General for Family Safety was tasked with co-designing the Family Safety Hub with government, the community sector and people with lived experience of domestic and family violence.
Our approach

The experience we sought to understand

This project sought to listen to and co-design with groups of people who are least likely to access domestic and family violence services. These groups were:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and families
- CALD women and families
- LGBTIQ+ community
- Women with a disability
- Young men with lived experience of violence in their family

To better understand the challenges and barriers faced by these groups, we spoke to service providers and people who have experienced and used violence.

The premise behind this approach was that if we can understand and overcome barriers for these groups, our response will make services more accessible, responsive and effective for all groups.

“\textit{The voice of the people is very much heard. The gaps are being highlighted - I have hope this will make a difference.}”
- INSIGHTS WORKSHOP ATTENDEE

“\textit{I like what this team have done, this process. It’s good we are slowing down and targeting those most in need. I can’t imagine a better way.}”
- INSIGHTS WORKSHOP ATTENDEE
Research insights

The key insights gained from listening to service providers and people who have experienced or used domestic and family violence are summarised, below.

Do we hear what people are saying?
People are offered generic pathways that do not meet their needs or aspirations.

A lot of people and communities who experience violence do not recognise it as violence

A gendered system excludes some people and communities

Power and control is not recognised as violence by victims, perpetrators or the system

People are afraid to access services and want a non legal response for safety

Trust is critical for vulnerable people seeking help

Transactional referral based systems are a barrier

Communities are seeking culturally competent and trauma informed services that work with the whole family

Some victims are incredibly isolated

There is not enough focus on the children and the impact of the significant trauma they experience

Complex and fragmented services make it hard for people to navigate the system to achieve safety

The approach to men is not sufficiently focused on accountability and change

I have left but I am still not free
Harassment continues long after leaving and the system is complicit in these games
Defining the problem

Our research insights helped us to understand and define the problems experienced by families accessing our current domestic and family violence service system. Our problem definition is outlined below. Our co-design work sought to address these problems.

1. People are not seeking help or achieving safety because the available supports do not meet their needs. Generic responses create fear in some communities.

2. The dynamics of domestic and family violence are not well understood by the service and justice systems, or the community. Early intervention opportunities are missed and the system is used to perpetuate abuse.

3. Victims are most likely to disclose to trusted people, but trusted people are often not equipped to respond. Opportunities to identify and respond to isolated victims are missed.
4. Children are lost in the response to domestic and family violence and the long-term impacts of trauma on children are not addressed.

5. The service system is predominantly funded for crisis response. There are limited services for prevention, early intervention and recovery support.

6. Fragmented and transactional services make it hard for people to navigate the system and achieve safety.
Current state: A system focused on crisis

As highlighted in the problem definition, the current domestic and family violence system in the ACT is focused on crisis response. For the groups we spoke to, there are service gaps in prevention, early intervention and recovery. Some of the stories of the people we spoke to are highlighted in the diagram, at right.

A robust system would focus equal effort on preventing violence from occurring, intervening, early, so that violence does not escalate, responding to crisis and post-crisis therapeutic support to help people recover.

“People’s’ reaction to my trauma made me feel like it was my problem.”

“I found out later that two previous partners had taken him to court for domestic violence.”

“The only reason I went to the police was a friend called out to me how outrageous his behavior was.”

“I got offered a place on the other side of the city. My daughter’s school was here and she was struggling so much already. It was so far, so disruptive for her and I don’t drive.”

“He put a lot of fear into me. He called care and protection and told them I was crazy and couldn’t take care of the children”.

“I ended up going back because I had nobody and someone is better than no one.”

EARLY INTERVENTION

PREVENTION

RECOVERY

CRISIS

Number of services operating in this space

- High
- Medium
- Low
Our co-design process

To define a role for the Hub in responding to the problems identified, we worked through a co-design process with a core design team and a network of critical friends.

The core design team was comprised of Government and non-Government members with specialist expertise in domestic and family violence. The core design team completed a series of six workshops to develop directions for the Hub. The design process followed is shown, at right.

“It’s given us a lot of options. I was sceptical, but this process has give me hope. I am excited about what will come next.”

- CORE DESIGN TEAM MEMBER
The Hub will **not** provide case coordination

The core design team found that developing a Hub that directly coordinates services or provides case management for clients would not solve the current barriers people face in getting the right support because:

- people seek help through **trusted relationships**, which means many front doors and **many locations** need to have the capacity to respond;

- centralising our response risks **pulling capability out** of existing services, which would damage existing trusted relationships;

- we already have coordination and intake mechanisms and there is no guarantee that producing more of the same will achieve better results or **address systemic problems**;

- service integration requires capability to respond to domestic and family violence being **distributed across the system**; and

- it is only through working as a **whole community** that we will be able to meet people’s diverse needs.
The Hub will **innovate and catalyse change**

It was agreed that innovation is needed to meet people’s actual needs. The Family Safety Hub will provide an opportunity to bring the right people together to develop innovative solutions that address identified needs and trial and test these solutions. New solutions that are shown to be effective can then be scaled, catalysing change in the existing service system.
Section 2

What is the change we are seeking?
Long-term outcomes for people

We are seeking to improve the experience of people for whom the current service system creates barriers to accessing help and achieving safety. In the future:

- **Families experiencing violence who are seeking alternative pathways to safety** are able to stay together and receive culturally-appropriate support.
- **Children impacted by domestic and family violence** are kept safe and recover from the impacts of trauma.
- **Families at risk** receive a service response, early, so that violence does not escalate.
- **Victims rebuilding their lives** have their financial, housing and psychological needs met.
- **Victims who are isolated**, including women with disabilities, are helped to manage or leave violence by services equipped to identify their needs.
- **Victims trying to escape** do not experience systems abuse.
- **People experiencing domestic and family violence** are able to have their full needs met by a connected system.
Future experience: Working with the whole family

A trauma informed response that works with the whole family, intervening early to achieve sustained safety for families seeking to stay together.
Future experience: Escaping violence

The community and the system understands the dynamics of domestic and family violence and provides pathways to sustained safety for those seeking to leave.

Current Experience

- Something feels wrong. I have a vision for my life and my partner seems challenged by my independence. Is that normal?
- I don’t feel happy, I don’t know what normal is. I am losing track of what is ok. He accompanies me to every appointment. I try to reach out for help but no one understands.
- I left six little times and two big times. When you leave, you leave with nothing. I leave with my children and nothing else, I have lost my confidence, identity and everything I have ever owned.
- I wasn’t injured badly enough, there was not enough evidence to convict him. There was no accountability for his behaviour.
- Although I have left, the abuse has not stopped, I am constantly harassed, I am afraid for myself and for our child. He uses the system to continue to control me. I will never be the same person again.

Future Experience

- I know what is happening to me is not ok. I know about healthy relationships and I understand my rights.
- I raise my concerns with a trusted person and they immediately validate that it is not ok. They ask me if I am ok and what I need. They connect me to help.
- When I knew there was somewhere to go it gave me the confidence to leave. I do not feel like I am on my own, I am kept informed, I know our safety is a priority.
- When we went to court I felt supported and that my story was heard. He was convicted and placed in a program focused on behaviour change and accountability.
- The long term impact of trauma is recognised, we are supported to reconstruct our lives and wellbeing. I get courage and support from service providers and my peers.
**Future experience: I have left and I am free**

The system can identify when perpetrators are manipulating the system to continue the abuse and has mechanisms in place to prevent this from happening.

**Current Experience**
- I finally leave to start a new life. He starts to cause trouble for me. He tells the police I stole my car. He calls Child Protection and tells lies. Now I have a custody case about my daughter.
- He would come to my new job and threaten, harass and embarrass me in my workplace. My boss had enough, he had to fire me because it wouldn’t stop.
- He knew my car and could predict my movements. He would go through my mail as I had nowhere else to send it. He started to move my property into his name and access my bank account.

**Future Experience**
- He served me with 7-8 legal letters a day for a month. He hired a team of barristers. In the end I had no money left. He loved it - his plan was to use the court system to bankrupt me.
- He begins to harass me through the legal process. The court, my lawyer and his lawyer identify what is happening and put a stop to it.
- My boss understands what is happening and supports me to get help and contact the Police. The Police prevent further harassment.
- I am able to access a safe car that he will not recognise. I have a safe place to redirect my mail to. My bank realised what he was doing. They notified me and put a stop to it.
- The harassment and abuse has finally stopped. The system prevents his behaviour and prioritises my safety. He is held accountable for his actions and I am finally free.
Future experience: **Recovery is supported**

The complexity of recovery and the impacts of trauma are understood. People are supported in a holistic way to re-establish their lives.

Current Experience

- We received crisis accommodation but there was no certainty. I didn’t know how long we could stay. I was really scared, there were so many unknowns.
- We don’t have any money to eat or any clothes. We got one payment then no more. There was so much paperwork to do and bills to pay.
- We were offered a house on the other side of town but my daughter’s school was here. It was so far, so disruptive for her, and I don’t drive.
- It is so hard trying to do all of this on your own. There was a huge turnover of support workers. I just needed someone I trusted to talk to.
- It is all too hard to do everything on my own. I ended up going back because I had nobody and someone is better than no one.

Future Experience

- We received safe and supported short term accommodation. They helped us to find a suitable long term place to call home.
- When we left we left with nothing. They connected us with support to ensure we had money to eat, clothes and other essentials. They helped me to fill out paperwork and open a bank account.
- There are so many new things to learn. They helped me to manage my finances and get my driver’s licence; all the little and big things I needed to re-establish my independence.
- I have a great support network of people I trust - service providers and peers. There is support for my child and I can access child care when I need some respite.
- It has been a long journey but we are making progress. My daughter is thriving and I am becoming more confident and independent. We have a home and I am starting a new job.
System shifts

We have identified a number of system shifts required to enable us to change people’s experience.

1. FROM: People are not seeking help or achieving safety because the available supports do not meet their needs. Generic responses create fear in some communities. TO: There are flexible, culturally-appropriate and trauma informed responses to different needs. Victims report violence without fear.

2. FROM: Children are lost in the response to domestic and family violence and the long-term impacts of trauma on children are not addressed. TO: Children’s needs for safety and recovery are supported.

3. FROM: The service system is predominantly funded for crisis response. TO: Prevention, early intervention and recovery responses are intrinsic parts of the domestic and family violence service system.

4. FROM: Victims are most likely to disclose to trusted people—but trusted people are not always equipped to respond to domestic and family violence. Opportunities to respond to isolated victims are missed. TO: Trusted people are able to identify and respond to domestic and family violence. Isolated victims receive a response.

5. FROM: The dynamics of domestic and family violence are not well understood by the service and justice systems, or the community. Early intervention opportunities are missed and the system is used by perpetrators to continue abuse after separation. TO: There is broad understanding of the dynamics of domestic and violence across the service and justice systems and the community. Services intervene early and systems abuse is identified and addressed.

6. FROM: Fragmented and transactional services make it hard for people to navigate the system and achieve safety. TO: The system is connected and provides a holistic response.
The Hub is the **start of the story**

The insights we heard helped us to define a range of problems experienced by people currently accessing the domestic and family violence service system. The Hub will help us to go some way to addressing these, but it is just the start of the story.

The insights and the problems they highlight present us with a roadmap for whole of system change, not just a program of work for the Family Safety Hub. Indeed, the changes we are seeking are generational.

To bring about the critical shifts in the system and the changed experience for people that we are seeking, we will require government, the community sector, the private sector and the whole community to play a part.

The Family Safety Hub will work on priority areas for action, identified in the next section. The Hub will also seek to catalyse broader change in the system, through scaling innovative pathways and solutions.
Section 3

What will the Family Safety Hub do?
What will the Family Safety Hub do?

In order to start to bring about the system shifts required, the Family Safety Hub will have three core functions, described below.

**Shared Understanding**
Increase understanding of domestic and family violence among trusted service providers and the community.

- There are flexible, culturally-appropriate and trauma informed responses to different needs. Victims report violence without fear.

**Building Capability**
Develop system-wide capability to provide integrated, evidence-based responses that are culturally appropriate and trauma-informed.

- Children’s needs for safety and recovery are supported.

**Pathways to Safety**
Co-design pathways to safety and solutions to systemic problems that meet people’s needs and reduce fear of the system.

- Prevention, early intervention and recovery responses are intrinsic parts of the domestic and family violence service system.

- Trusted people are able to identify and respond to domestic and family violence. Isolated victims receive a response.

- There is broad understanding of the dynamics of domestic and violence across the service and justice systems and the community. Services intervene early and systems abuse is identified and addressed.

- The system is connected and provides a holistic response.
Function: Shared Understanding

Increase understanding of domestic and family violence among trusted service providers and the community

WHY WE NEED TO DO IT:

We need a broader range of service providers and people in the community to understand what domestic and family violence is. In particular, we need to build understanding of the harm caused by the use of power and control in relationships. If we equip the community with these understandings, victims may access support, sooner. If we equip service providers, the opportunity for perpetrators to use the system to continue abuse will be minimised.

We also need to enhance trusted people’s ability to respond to domestic and family violence. We know that, after family and friends, victims are most likely to disclose to health professionals. When a trusted person responds, meaningfully, some of the most isolated victims are able to access support.

OUR PRIORITY ACTION AREAS:

1. Enhance understandings of the dynamics of domestic and family violence among the service and justice system, including perpetrators’ use of power and control

2. Enhance trusted people’s capacity to respond to victims and perpetrators of domestic and family violence, especially isolated clients
Function: Building Capability

Develop system-wide capability to provide integrated, evidence-based responses that are culturally appropriate and trauma-informed

WHY WE NEED TO DO IT:

Services are siloed in delivering responses to domestic and family violence; they have a lack of capacity to build networks that would allow a more integrated offering for clients. No service is funded to deliver a holistic response. Fragmented services make it harder for people to navigate the system and achieve long term safety. We need to support the integration of services, enabling a connected and holistic response for victims seeking safety.

We also require system capability to support the other changes we are seeking, including creating cultures and systems where risk is managed, rather than escalated, cultural needs are met and the impacts of trauma are understood.

OUR PRIORITY ACTION AREAS:

3. Enhance the integration of services that support families experiencing domestic and family violence

4. Develop capability to respond to and manage risk, without the need to default to statutory services

5. Enhance cultural competency

6. Enhance capability to deliver trauma-informed responses

7. Increase use of data and evidence to drive interventions and improve performance
Function: Pathways to Safety

Co-design pathways to safety and solutions to systemic problems that meet people’s needs and reduce fear of the system

WHY WE NEED TO DO IT:

The current system is not equipped to meet many people’s needs. Our responses are often crisis-driven, focussed on the justice system and oriented towards family separation. This creates fear among many communities.

We need to work with communities to co-design new pathways to safety and solutions to systemic problems.

We need pathways that enable families to stay together, while working with men to reduce their use of violence. We need to better meet the needs of children, women with disabilities and diverse communities who are currently lost in the service response.

We need options that allow us to intervene, early, and post-crisis responses that enable sustained safety and recovery, by addressing financial, housing, psychological and other long-term needs.

OUR PRIORITY ACTION AREAS:

Co-design new pathways to safety, including:

- Responses to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families that are culturally safe and recognise the intergenerational impacts of trauma
- Responses for children in families experiencing violence
- Responses for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse women
- Responses to women with disabilities
- Responses for the LGBTIQ+ community

Co-design solutions to systemic problems, including:

- Government/community/business partnerships for financial and housing support
- Early intervention responses for families at risk
- Recovery responses for people rebuilding their lives
Section 4

How will the Family Safety Hub operate?
Elements of the Family Safety Hub

The Family Safety Hub will require partnerships, processes, resources and governance in order to operate effectively.
Working in partnership

The change we are seeking requires everyone to play a part, including the government, the community sector, the private sector and the whole community.

The Family Safety Hub will bring partners and collaborators together from across the ACT to innovate and pilot new ways of working, based on priority action areas.

For change to occur, we need to build on trusted relationships, as well as create new ones. The co-design work has started this process and the next challenge is to build on these foundations.

The Family Safety Hub partners need to have a commitment to developing new ways of working, contribute to reducing barriers and build capacity to respond to issues.
Innovation process: overview

The innovation process will enable us to understand needs, bring the right people together to develop innovative solutions to meet those needs, test solutions through pilots, learn quickly and scale solutions, thereby bringing about systems change.

Listen & Co-design
The Listen & Co-design stage is about understanding the needs of people experiencing domestic and family violence. This is done through a six week co-design process to identify barriers, gaps and opportunities for change and co-design alternative pathways and supports that meet people’s needs.

Challenge
The Challenge stage brings together the right people to tackle challenges and opportunities identified during the Listen & Co-design stage. These Innovation Challenges could be about embedding shared understanding, building capability or developing pathways to safety/solutions to systemic problems. The Innovation Challenge consists of two stages: Generate Ideas and Ideas to Action, described in detail on the next page.

Pilot
The Pilot stage identifies willing services and businesses in the community to trial the solutions developed through the Innovation Challenge stage. Through the pilots, we will engage in action learning.

Learn & Refine
During this stage, ongoing throughout the pilot, the lessons learnt will be captured and refinements will be made.

Scale & Embed
The Scale & Embed stage identifies the priority areas to scale and embed the solution. If a pilot has merit for scaling, it should be put through another intensive Ideas to Action process, in order to plan for embedding and scaling it.
Innovation process: The Challenge

The Challenge step of the process works in two stages: Generate Ideas and Ideas to Action. The projects that come out of this process will then be piloted.

Criteria for anything moving from an idea to a pilot should be the extent to which the pilot can help us to achieve the change we are seeking. Pilots should demonstrate value in the first 100 days and potential to be scaled throughout the service system.

**Generate Ideas**
- **Explore the challenge**
  
  This stage can be run over two days. Participants should be from a variety of backgrounds, sectors and industries to enable game-changing ideas.

  This stage will focus on breakthrough thinking around priority action areas.

  Viable ideas generated during this stage will be developed into pilot proposals in the next stage.

**Ideas to Action**
- **Prepare for action**
  
  This stage can be run as a multi-day intensive, for example, over three days, or spread over a number of weeks.

  During this stage, ideas will be scoped into pilots. Outputs from this stage should include a description of the team and resources required for the pilot and a project plan for implementing the pilot.
Resources

The Family Safety Hub will require a range of other resources to operate. Below are some of the key resources needed.

A space
A flexible, physical space will be needed for the Challenge to be run in.

People
The right people will need to come together, including an innovation lead, a Hub team and subject matter and cultural expertise.

Data collection mechanisms
Strong data collection mechanisms will be key to the success of the Hub evaluation.

Dedicated funding
A flexible innovation fund will be needed to support pilots. The Hub will also seek co-investment, including funding and expertise, in-kind.

Beyond the Hub, resources will also be required to scale successful pilots.

Communications mechanisms
Strategic engagement and collaboration with diverse community sector providers, service users and other partners will be critical to the success of this project. A comprehensive communications and engagement strategy will be necessary to the Hub’s success.

Evaluation framework
An integrated evaluation framework will be developed ahead of the roll out of the Family Safety Hub.

The Hub will require a mix of evaluation methods in order to evaluate the innovation process and the impact of the pilots. This is described more in Section 5.
Collaborative governance

The Family Safety Hub will require collaborative governance to oversee the Hub programme of work. The collaborative governance structure will be built around the partnerships with community and other stakeholders. This model will drive the buy-in that we are seeking from our partners.

The Family Safety Hub Steering Committee will establish a collaborative governance for the Hub’s work programme. The Steering Committee will advise the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence on the innovation and investment priorities for the Family Safety Hub.

The membership will be chosen by the Government on the basis of expertise. The Steering Committee’s role will be to:
• provide advice on the priorities for the Hub’s work programme;
• attract different people, sectoral expertise and co-investment to support the achievement of the Hub’s priorities; and
• provide advice on investable projects to the Coordinator-General for Family Safety.

The expertise we will be seeking from this group will include:
• community sector and service delivery;
• lived experience of domestic and family violence;
• innovation;
• government policy and service delivery; and
• private and philanthropic.
Section 6

How will we measure success?
Theory of change

An integrated evaluation framework will be developed ahead of the roll out of the Family Safety Hub. In 2018-19, we will evaluate our innovation process and conduct action learning through the pilots. An interim evaluation which summarises our learning will be produced by December 2019. Our theory of change is described, below.

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<th>Outputs: pilots</th>
<th>Impacts: system shifts</th>
<th>Outcomes: long-term outcomes for people</th>
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<td>The Hub requires:</td>
<td>The Hub’s action learning pilots will focus on shared understanding, building capability and pathways to safety that meet people’s needs.</td>
<td>With further investment, the refined pilots can be scaled and embedded, effecting change in the system.</td>
<td>When people reach out for help, they will be heard and the response will meet their needs. The system will work together to ensure sustained safety for:</td>
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