

**Response to the Family Violence Reform Implementation Monitor’s call for submissions:  
Review of family violence information sharing and risk management – June to September 2022**

**Submission #25 – Organisation – Kim Schroeder, Berry Street - Take Two Therapeutic Family Violence Services**

**The Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme and Central Information Point**

*Please reflect on your experience in collecting, requesting, using, or disclosing confidential information in the past 3 years when responding to the following questions.*

1. Are the legal requirements in the Act sufficiently clear?

*In responding to this question, please consider whether you feel the Act is sufficiently clear in relation to the meanings of key terms (such as person of concern, primary person, confidential information and excluded information), the circumstances in which confidential information can be requested or disclosed, record-keeping requirements and any other matter*

Yes       N       Unsure

If no, how do you think they could be made clearer?

2. The Act outlines principles, and requires the Minister to issue guidelines, to guide decision-making in relation to the collection, use or disclosure of confidential information.

a) To what extent are the principles reflected in your organisation’s policies, procedures, practice guidance and tools?

Fully       Mostly       Somewhat       Not at all       Unsure

How could this be improved?

The Take Two, Restoring Childhood and Wattle Project outline the Sharing of information with other Professionals through FVISS & CISS requests in their Clinical Operating Manuals. Updated information regarding processes related to the sharing of information and making or responding to FVISS & CISS requests is further outlined in detail on the Berry Street intranet ‘Bagung Ngarrgu’ as follows:

- [The schemes](#)
- [Programs in scope](#)
- [Policy and Templates](#)
- [Training](#)
- [Record Keeping](#)
- [Request Information from Victoria Police](#)
- [Resources](#)

b) Do the principles and guidelines support you to make decisions under the Act?

Yes       N       Unsure

If no, what changes to the principles and guidelines would improve that?

3. Does the Act provide sufficient scope and authority for you to collect, request, use or disclose all information you feel is needed to effectively establish, assess, and manage risks of family violence?

Yes       N       Unsure

Where are the gaps?

4. Have you been able to obtain consolidated and up-to-date information from the CIP about perpetrators of family violence to support your organisation to assess and manage risks of family violence?

Yes       N       Unsure

If no, what were the barriers or challenges?

Current Take Two programs do not have access to CIP and would benefit from access (even if limited to Clinical Team Leaders of Therapeutic Family Violence Programs).

5. Have you observed an increase in the level of information sharing, including:

a) information being disclosed voluntarily?

Yes       N       Unsure

If no, what were the barriers or challenges?

b) information being disclosed on request?

Yes       N       Unsure

Please make any additional comments.

The information schemes have definitely increased the sharing of information and facilitated improved collaboration across the sector. However, it would be beneficial for at least Clinical Team Leaders in the Therapeutic Family Violence programs of Take Two to have access to information from the CIP about perpetrators of family violence. Recently, we have seen family violence incidents escalate very quickly in the Adolescents who Use Violence in the Home (AVITH) program, but have been limited in being able to access information in the timeliest manner that could be used to assist with current risk management and safety planning.

6. Have you observed an increase in the level of collaboration between organisations to support the delivery of coordinated services?

Yes       N       Unsure

Please make any additional comments.

The information sharing schemes have made information more accessible and once that channel is open there continues to be collaboration and voluntary sharing of information regarding the assessment of risk and safety for service users.

7. Have you experienced any legal barriers or challenges in:

a) collecting, requesting, using or disclosing information?

Yes  N  Unsure

If yes, what were the legal barriers or challenges?

b) collaborating with other organisations to deliver coordinated services?

Yes  N  Unsure

If yes, what were the legal barriers or challenges?

c) complying with the Act's requirements?

Yes  N  Unsure

If yes, what were the legal barriers or challenges?

8. Are you aware of any instances of the unauthorised use or disclosure of confidential information under the FVISS or CIP provisions?

Yes  N  Unsure

Please make any additional comments.

## Family Violence Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework

*Please reflect on your experience in aligning your organisation's policies, procedures, practice guidance and tools with the MARAM Framework when responding to the following questions.*

9. Are the legal requirements under the Act sufficiently clear, including in relation to the meaning of *framework organisation* and *section 191 agency*?

Yes  N  Unsure

If no, how could they be made clearer?

Instead of calling them Section 191 agencies it would be clearer to refer to them as Information Sharing Entities (ISE's) and Risk Assessment Entities (RAE's) as known language in the sector.

10. Have you observed greater consistency in organisations' approaches to family violence risk identification, assessment, and management?

Yes  No  Unsure

Please make any additional comments.

## General questions

11. Have you observed any adverse effects of the provisions for particular groups, such as children and young people, adolescents who use violence in the home, or members of the Aboriginal community?

Yes       N       *Unsure*

What types of adverse effects have you observed?

Not adverse effects as such, however, the 'Adolescents who use Violence in the Home' MARAM has not been released yet, however, when operationalised

12. Do the provisions sufficiently provide for the needs and characteristics of diverse communities?

Yes       N       *Unsure*

If no, please indicate why.

The Framework touches on the needs and characteristics of diverse communities, however, is limited in its ability to assess risk in its current form.

13. Do you have any other comments about the operation of the provisions, including any suggestions for improvement?

As above, the release of the 'Adolescents who use Violence in the Home' MARAM and more specific questions in relation to diverse communities. For example – with service users that have a disability or disabilities it is important to assess risk including being aware if the perpetrator is an appointed guardian or has applied for guardianship and/or if the perpetrator is their NDIS plan nominee. For service users who identify as LGBTIQ+A, there is also the opportunity to ask additional questions in relation to risk and safety.