

It Stops Here: Safer Pathway

Results of the Orange and Waverley
launch sites



Overview

What is Safer Pathway?

Alice Stiles, Legal Aid NSW

What has been the experience in the launch sites?

Sophie Farrell, Waverley Local Coordination Point

What did the launch site process evaluation tell us?

Carolyn Thompson, Women NSW

What is WDVCAS NSW?

Tanya Whitehouse, WDVCAS NSW Inc.

What is Safer Pathway?

- A new coordinated way of responding to domestic and family violence in NSW
- The second element in the broader *It Stops Here* domestic and family violence reforms
- Commenced in two launch sites, Orange and Waverley, in September 2014
- Expanded to Tweed Heads, Broken Hill, Bankstown and Parramatta in July 2015

Background

- *It Stops Here* reforms were launched by the Minister for Women in February 2014
- The reforms build upon the recommendations of several key reports:
 - NSW Auditor-General's 2011 Responding to Domestic and Family Violence report; and
 - NSW 2012 parliamentary inquiry into domestic violence trends and issues
- These reports recognised the excellent work being done in NSW but highlighted the need for agencies and services to *coordinate* better

Aim of Safer Pathway

- Provide all domestic violence victims across NSW with a consistent, effective and *proactive* response
- Prevent victims from having to re-tell their stories multiple times
- Promote information sharing between service providers in order to prevent domestic violence homicides

Components of Safer Pathway

Common approach to assessing threat

Domestic Violence Safety Assessment Tool

Streamlined referral pathway

Central Referral Point

Consistent access to coordinated support for domestic violence victims

Local Coordination Points (WDVCASs)

Targeted response to victims at serious threat of injury or death

Safety Action Meetings

Information Sharing

Safer Pathway experience in Waverley

- 14 months and 3,200 referrals
- Feedback from women regarding the new approach:
 - ✓ “Thank you so much for following up. It’s really nice to have some one who wants to help and is proactive about it,”
 - ✓ “I feel really supported and protected”
 - ✓ “You called me four weeks ago the last time Police attended, I wasn’t ready then but I am now and I’m really glad you called.”
 - ✓ “It means so much to be that there is a service that calls and checks in on you.”

Safer Pathway experience in Waverley

- Outcomes from SAMs include:
 - ✓ Clients being rehoused by FACS - Housing within a matter of days
 - ✓ Corrective Services intervening to stop perpetrators continuing to harass women from inside prison
 - ✓ Urgent revocation of parole
 - ✓ Urgent lock changes and safety upgrades
 - ✓ Education being fully informed about ADVO conditions to ensure children are safe
 - ✓ Drug and alcohol and mental health assistance for perpetrators

Safety Action Meeting agenda

(case worker in attendance)	Eastern Beaches	Y	FaCS care	
Why is this serious threat?	18 Yes answers to Police DVSA conducted by referring agency SHLV.			
Where is the victim?	[redacted] lives at [redacted] address.			
Where is the perpetrator?	Other party is in custody with next court date of 15/10/15.			
Where are the children?	[redacted]			
Is there an ADVO? Has it been served? What are the conditions?	There was a previous ADVO that expired in 2013.			
Other information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> [redacted] from Red Cross Young Parent's Program has been doing safety planning with [redacted], have applied for a Housing transfer with her and referred to SHLV. Housing confirmed receipt of the transfer application. Other party has a long criminal and drug history. Other party has been sending many letters to [redacted] from prison as no current ADVO preventing contact, unable to stop this. [redacted] family law solicitor accidentally sent the other party [redacted] address on some paperwork. [redacted] is afraid that now she knows where she lives and that when she is released she will come and find her and hurt her. Their son went into care whilst the other party has been in custody and she is angry with [redacted] about this. Child Protection Counselling Team have a referral for [redacted] but are waiting on more information from FaCS. 			
Previous actions	[redacted]			
New actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing to follow up the priority transfer to [redacted] area to be completed by 16/10/15 Red Cross Young Parents Program to check in with DVLO regarding outcome of bail application on 15/10/15 (on 15/10/15) DVLO to ensure that Red Cross YPP is informed about any change in bail for the other party (15/10/15) FaCS to be in touch with Child Protection Counselling Team regarding [redacted] to be completed by 16/10/15. 			
Member responsible for liaising with victim	Red Cross Young Parents Program			
On or off the agenda?	SAM agreed to keep on the agenda.			

Safer Pathway experience in Waverley

- Automatic referrals from Police – the shift from consent-based Yellow Card Project
- Information sharing and agency of victims
- Working with women from Aboriginal and CALD communities
- ✓ Stronger relationships with government and non-government stakeholders – referrals in and out
- ✓ Breaking down traditional silo approach to working with families to see the whole picture

Launch site evaluation

- Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR) conducted a process evaluation early this year – outcomes evaluation currently underway
- Launch site evaluation asked: Was Safer Pathway implemented as intended? How did stakeholders involved find the process? How are Safety Action Meetings going? Are they useful?
- Evaluation included interviews with Local Coordination Point staff, Safety Action Meeting members and a small number of victims

Key findings

- DVSATs are being administered and victims are being referred through the Central Referral Point
- Safety Action Meetings are being held as intended and action plans are being developed for victims at serious threat
- Stakeholders are very positive about Safety Action Meetings, and support their roll-out across NSW
- Stakeholders report improved relationships between service providers and safety outcomes for victims through the meetings

Safety Action Meetings

- Provide an effective vehicle for sharing information
- Ensure collaboration between service providers so that actions are not duplicated and immediate needs are prioritised
- Promote service provider accountability through reporting back to the meeting
- Facilitate consistent and timely responses to victims
- Increase understanding of domestic violence within mainstream agencies

Things to work on

Stakeholders recommend:

- Refining the DVSAT to better identify those victims at greatest threat of further harm
- Improving data collection within SAM member organisations
- Improving data collection through the Central Referral Point

These recommendations have informed roll-out of Safer Pathway in other sites.

WDVCAS NSW Inc.

- We are the peak body for the 28 WDVCASs in NSW
- We are an independent voice for our members to support better outcomes for women and children by identifying and advocating on domestic violence issues within a social, political and legal context
- We are funded by Legal Aid NSW and advocate at a state and national level
- We are informed by a feminist analysis of power and recognise domestic and family violence as a crime and violation of the human rights of women and children

WDVCAS NSW Inc.

- Our Board consists of WDVCAS coordinators from all over NSW. Two special advisors provide expert advice regarding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and CALD communities
- We believe that WDVCASs represent best-practice for supporting women and children through domestic and family violence
- WDVCASs are the only state-wide domestic violence specialist service that operates on a local level
- We support the roll out of Safer Pathway sooner rather than later, as long as WDVCASs are appropriately resourced

Questions?



www.domesticviolence.nsw.gov.au

