

## Addressing abusive behaviour of alleged perpetrators

### Guidelines for Family Safety Meetings

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These guidelines support Family Safety Framework (FSF) process to address the abusive behaviour of alleged perpetrators. While the central focus of the FSF is on the safety of the adult victim and children, this can only be achieved if the behaviour of the alleged perpetrator is addressed effectively.

It is essential that the Family Safety Meeting considers information about the alleged perpetrator, and that actions within the safety plan address their abusive behaviour wherever possible.

#### At Family Safety Meetings

##### The role of agency representatives: Sharing relevant information

It is the role of FSF agency **representatives** to bring known information about the alleged perpetrator's circumstances and behaviour for each case at a Family Safety Meeting, as well as bringing information about the victim and any children.

##### FSF agency representatives should research and share information which may include:

- Accurate, up to date personal details, including any aliases.
- Whether the person is a serial perpetrator.
- Intervention Order status and pending court matters and dates.
- Access to weapons.
- Child protection concerns.
- All intimate relationships and children they have contact with.
- Offending behaviour and police intelligence relevant to domestic abuse including arson, threats to kill, sexual violence, extreme levels of control, or stalking.
- Drug or alcohol misuse.
- Disability issues including mental health.
- Risks to professionals.
- Health or wellbeing issues which affect their likelihood of further perpetration.
- Other relevant information, eg financial difficulties, pet abuse, cultural practices, fire setter status.

##### The role of the SAPoI Chair: Identifying the risks and action planning

The **Chair** should ensure that all relevant information concerning the perpetrator and factors that are likely to increase the risk of re-abuse to the victim, harm to children, other vulnerable parties and risk that agency staff could be harmed, is heard at the meeting.

##### Some examples of risks specifically relating to the alleged perpetrator may include that they are:

- Homeless.
- Self-harming or threatening suicide.
- Misusing drugs or alcohol.
- Have a disability such as acquired brain injury or mild/moderate intellectual disability.

- Demonstrating behaviours which suggest they may be suffering from a mental illness, and that these behaviours may be exacerbating the risk of continued abuse of the victim and any children.
- Ignoring or breaching bail conditions or court orders, including Intervention Orders.
- Stalking and harassing the victim or their friends/family/colleagues.
- Threatening the victim or their friends/family/colleagues.

**If the alleged perpetrator and / or victim are Aboriginal additional factors to consider include:**

- Lateral violence
- Is the family of the perpetrator the stronger family?
- Does the victim have family links in her current location?

**Other circumstances that will likely impact on risk to the victim include:**

- The victim, or children of the victim/alleged perpetrator, have a disability.
- A child has been recently diagnosed with a disability.
- The victim, or children, are from a CALD community, or newly arrived family/community.

**Once the meeting has heard of all known risks associated with the victim, children and alleged perpetrator, actions should be developed which address victim safety and where possible, perpetrator behaviour.**

Actions to address these risks and behaviours in relation to the alleged perpetrator fall under 4 main headings:



**Examples relating to the alleged perpetrator are provided below but agency representatives need to be creative in the actions they offer and this list is not exhaustive.**

- Arresting and charging the perpetrator for a criminal offence.
- Monitoring, surveillance, testing, targeting, flagging.
- Non-compliance action, Parole Board notification
- Mental health assessment.
- Applying for an Intervention Order
- Consideration of Tenancy Order as part of Intervention Order.
- Referral to substance misuse services.
- Ensuring links are made with Child Protection work and Family Court.
- Refer to community perpetrator programme, where appropriate/available.
- Referral to other local support networks.

**Perpetrators can go to extreme lengths to facilitate their abuse; the FSF agencies need to keep one step ahead of the alleged perpetrator and make continuing abusive behaviour difficult, if not impossible.**

\*Material sourced from SafeLives, United Kingdom.

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## Guidelines for Family Safety Meetings

These questions are for use by agencies to support the visibility of the alleged perpetrator in safety planning. These questions support the primary goal of the Family Safety Framework, in enhancing victim safety, as well as the secondary goal of increasing perpetrator accountability.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>QUESTIONS</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>For agency discussion at Family Safety Meetings</b></p>	
<p>1. Do we have all the basic information we need about the alleged perpetrator?</p>	<p>Where is the perpetrator now?</p> <p>What is the best way to make contact with the perpetrator?</p>
<p>2. Which agencies are currently / have recently been in contact with the perpetrator?</p>	
<p>3. Which agency is best placed to work with the perpetrator <b>now</b>?</p>	<p>Some agencies may have contact in relation to their statutory roles however this question relates to the <b>best placed agency to engage with/ have a discussion with the perpetrator</b> about their use of violence and the current situation – this could be provided as part of a statutory response or by another agency.</p>
<p>4. What information can be used to “open” discussion with the perpetrator about their behaviour and use of violence - <b>without increasing risk to the victim / children</b>?</p>	<p><b>Safety first.</b> The safety of women and children must always be front and centre in considering what we say and do.</p> <p>What is the reason the engaging agency will give the perpetrator in relation raising this issue now?</p>
<p>5. What specific information is needed (from discussion with the perpetrator) to inform risk assessment and decision making by the FSM?</p>	<p>What does the FSM need to know about the perpetrator?</p>
<p>6. Does the perpetrator have any financial/carer responsibility for the victim or children?</p>	<p>Does the perpetrator have control over the victim’s finances?</p> <p>Is the perpetrator a designated (or paid) carer for the victim or any children of the relationship?</p> <p>Is there any Order in place regarding guardianship of trusts?</p>

Once the above questions have been considered at the Family Safety Meeting, the following questions can guide work by agencies.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>QUESTIONS</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>For the agencies working with the perpetrator</b></p>	
<p>1. What types of violence and abuse has the perpetrator been using and to what does the perpetrator attribute the violence ?</p>	<p>What is the perpetrator’s pattern of coercive control?            How could this information assist the FSM in its consideration of the victim’s actions and issues impacting on risk?            How does the perpetrator’s violence and control impact on the victim’s decision making and actions?</p>
<p>2. Are red flag risk indicators evident in what the perpetrator is currently doing or saying?</p>	<p>Alternatively, what is the perpetrator doing or thinking that is lessening or likely to lessen risk?</p>
<p>3. Does the perpetrator acknowledge his violence and regard it as problematic?</p>	<p>What is the perpetrator acknowledging exactly?            How is the perpetrator acknowledging it?            How long has the perpetrator been worried about it if he is?</p>
<p>4. Is the perpetrator open to addressing his violence?</p>	<p>Is there a chance of finding some ethical ground with the man?            What matters to him or is important to him?            What kind of man / partner / father is he striving to be?</p>
<p>5. Are there any strengths which can be worked on to reduce risk?</p>	<p>Has the perpetrator ever talked to anyone about what has happened?            Is this a step in the right direction or not?</p>
<p>6. What are the perpetrator’s intentions now? How likely is it he will pursue the victim / children?</p>	<p>What is telling the perpetrator that the victim / children might need some space?</p>
<p>7. Which pursuit strategies is the perpetrator likely to use?</p>	<p>Eg promises / threats / helplessness / violence</p>
<p>8. What is the perpetrator saying / indicating in relation to his intention to comply with no-contact orders?</p>	<p>Eg Intervention Orders, bail conditions</p>
<p>9. What needs to happen next?</p>	