



Family Violence Policy – Safe At Home

Policy Intent

The intent of Housing Tasmania's Family Violence Policy is to:

- Support the Tasmanian Government's Safe At Home criminal justice response to family violence;
- Support victims of Family Violence to maintain and secure safe accommodation; and
- Support victims of Family Violence to link with services who can enhance their safety and provide ongoing support.

Why does Housing Tasmania need a policy?

Studies conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics and Access Economics indicate that family violence incidence in Australia is at a level that means it is highly likely that families living in Housing Tasmania homes and many other clients who contact us for assistance, will be affected by family violence.

Although a high proportion of reported cases of family violence in Australia involve a male offender, men are also victims of family violence perpetrated by women, and family violence also occurs in same-sex relationships.

Research also indicates a high level of children witness family violence.

This policy aims to ensure that the needs of clients who have been affected by family violence are recognised and service is delivered in a way that is sensitive, appropriate and assists in the recovery process for victims.

The provision of safe and appropriate housing can assist clients to break long term patterns of violence. This leads to the achievement of improved health and well being outcomes for the individual, their family and for the community as a whole.

What is Family Violence?

Family Violence means any of the following types of conduct committed by a person, directly or indirectly, against that person's spouse or partner (this also includes ex-spouse or ex-partner):

- Assault, including sexual assault;
- Threats, coercion, intimidation or verbal abuse;
- Abduction;
- Stalking;
- Attempting or threatening any of the above; and
- Economic abuse;
- Emotional abuse or intimidation; and/or
- Breaching an existing order.

The procedure associated with this policy provides greater explanation of these terms.



Referral and reporting

Housing Tasmania staff are not prescribed persons for reporting under the [Family Violence Act 2004](#). However, Housing Tasmania has a social obligation to assist in the health and wellbeing of clients.

It is the preferred procedure of Housing Tasmania that staff report a belief, suspicion or knowledge of family violence to Tasmania Police. Ideally, this should be done with the knowledge and consent of the victim.

Children and Family Violence

Under the [Children, Young Persons and the Families Act 1997](#) Housing Tasmania staff are legally mandated to report a belief, suspicion or knowledge of family violence that involves actual or suspected child abuse. Children witnessing family violence are considered to be victims of child abuse.

Supportive behaviour

Clients who contact Housing Tasmania should be positively supported and not blamed for the family violence.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is particularly important for clients experiencing family violence.

Housing Tasmania is bound by the [Personal Information Protection Act 2004](#) (PIP Act 2004) regarding the gathering, use and disclosure of personal client information.

Clients with special needs

Clients for whom the effects of family violence may be compounded include clients who are young, older, from culturally and linguistic diverse backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, people with disabilities, people with mental health issues and/or people living in rural and remote areas.

Occupational Health and Safety

Staff must use a risk management approach in dealing with clients in a family violence situation. This is particularly important when conducting field visits. The risk management process includes the identification, assessment, treatment, communication and monitoring of risks.

For further information relating to this policy please email the helpdesk housing.policyhelpdesk@dhhs.tas.gov.au