

## Position Description

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| <b>Title</b>           | Specialist Family Violence – Child Protection Practitioner |
| <b>Employment Type</b> | Full Time, fixed term                                      |
| <b>Reports To</b>      | Manager, Integrated Response                               |
| <b>Work Location</b>   | Department of Health & Human Services - Geelong            |
| <b>Date of review</b>  | February 2021  |

### About The Sexual Assault & Family Violence Centre (The SAFV Centre)

Operating across the Barwon, West Melbourne and Wimmera areas of Victoria, The SAFV Centre offers a full suite of services for people impacted by sexual assault and women and children impacted by family violence. Our services include:

- 24-hour crisis care for victims of recent sexual assault and family violence, including advocacy and access to medical care and justice services;
- Intensive case management and court support for women and children who have or are experiencing family violence;
- therapeutic counselling and group programs for women and children who have experienced family violence; and adults, young people and children who have experienced sexual assault (including support for non-offending family members and friends);
- access to high security crisis accommodation for women and their children assessed as being at high risk of further harm; and
- early intervention services for children and young people under the age of 17 years who have engaged in problematic or abusive sexualised behaviours, and young people engaging in family violence behaviours.

Our organisation also delivers professional training and community awareness activities and we participate in a range of prevention activities to promote gender equality and negate violence supportive attitudes and cultures.

Our services are informed by feminist philosophy and we provide empowering, respectful and inclusive services. Our organisation's practice approach is shaped by contemporary research and evidence that highlights what is most effective when working with people who have been impacted by the trauma of sexual assault and family violence.

Our services also exist within the broader context of the Barwon Multi-Disciplinary Centre (MDC), a highly successful model of co-location between our organisation, Victoria Police Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Team (SOCIT) and the Family Violence Police Unit and staff from the Department of Health and Human Services Child Protection practitioners. In this specialised model, partner organisations work together to support adult and child victims from first disclosure of sexual assault or family violence to investigation and criminal prosecution. As a key partner, our organisation provides a highly specialised response for people who are impacted by the trauma of sexual assault and family violence within an integrated and seamless environment.

In addition, our organisation is a partner in The Orange Door (otherwise known as Support and Safety Hub). The Orange Door will include a mix of staff employed by Family Safety Victoria and staff from Community Support Organisations in the Barwon area, including The SAFV Centre. By bringing together different workforces and practices, The Orange Door provides an integrated team and consolidated access point for:

- women, children, young people and families experiencing family violence;
- perpetrators of family violence; and
- families in need of support with the care, development and well-being of children.

## **Role Purpose and Accountability**

### **Purpose**

The Specialist Family Violence Practitioner is a senior practitioner with extensive knowledge of family violence and/or child protection. The role is co-located in the Geelong office of DHHS with a portfolio focussing on greater Geelong. The role is also co-located one day per week in our home agency in Geelong.

The position is responsible for providing operational and strategic advice to Child Protection practitioners and their managers who undertake investigations of families where a child is or may be in need of protection due to family violence. As a senior practitioner, the position is designed to influence and build the capacity of the Child Protection and family violence services responses, understanding and relationships.

The position assists Child Protection in the planning and conduct of investigations and supports the development of plans that aim to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. The Specialist Family Violence Practitioner works collaboratively with the Child Protection senior managers and practitioners to provide effective service delivery and support.

Through co-location at the Child Protection office, the position aims to strengthen and improve responses to families subject to a Child Protection investigation. The aim of the *Family Violence Child Protection Partnership* is to:

- Restore and enhance safe, child-centred parenting;
- Support and promote improved understanding of the perpetrator's pattern of coercive control and its impact on children
- Support the protective parent whose confidence as a parent may have been deliberately undermined by the perpetrator
- Use knowledge to assist Child Protection in achieving the following improved outcomes for the service system and for the families reported to Child Protection.

### **Child Protection Client Outcomes**

To improve assessment, planning and intervention in Child Protection investigations where family violence is, or is suspected to be, present in order to:

- Increase safety and stability for families;
- Reduce the risk of harm to children;
- Safely reduce the incidence of re-reports to Child Protection and the number of children placed in out of home care;
- Strengthen the engagement of victims and perpetrators with support services; and
- Contribute to improved engagement with perpetrators towards changes in perpetrator behaviour and improved child-centred parenting capacity.

### **Service System outcomes**

To contribute to an integrated and collaborative child-centred, family-focused service system.

To achieve this outcome the Specialist Family Violence Practitioner will work with Child Protection to:

- Contribute to an integrated and collaborative child-centred, family-focused service system;
- Understand the gendered nature of violence against women and children;

- Recognise and respond appropriately to perpetrator behaviour and perpetrator-driven risk;
- Identify and address systemic barriers to joint practice by specialist family violence services and Child Protection;
- Strengthen referral pathways between Child Protection and specialist family violence services;
- Encourage joint family violence risk assessments (CRAF/MARAM assessments), safety plans and enhanced information sharing;
- Create a better understanding of each organisation's processes;
- Identify, consistently document and respond to the risk from perpetrators to each child;
- Support cultural safety – facilitating Aboriginal people and other groups connected to their culture;
- Improve the quality and depth of information sharing and documentation, including material that may be relevant for legal processes.

The Specialist Family Violence Practitioner's client is Child Protection. This reflects the intention of the Partnership to promote Child Protection's improved understanding of the dynamics of family violence, including perpetrator's pattern of coercive control and behaviours.

### **Strategic Focus**

The strategic focus involves supporting the development of a more integrated service response by Child Protection and family violence services through:

- Identifying emerging trends, needs and gaps in service delivery and practice issues, particularly in the investigation phase, and to use this knowledge to generate changes in systems and approaches.
- Facilitating engagement between and promoting joint work by Child Protection and family violence services in the local area.
- Improving the quality and consistency of family violence related information, assessment and interventions in case notes.
- Identifying the need for, participate in, and/or deliver Child Protection training and professional development activities.
- At the local level, supporting the implementation of the government's responses to recommendations from the Royal Commission into Family Violence.

### **Operational focus**

The operational focus will occur through direct engagement with activities and tasks associated with Child Protection investigations to:

- Jointly identify and document, with Child Protection, issues in responses to family violence and develop solutions to system gaps and practice issues.
- Provide specialist advice to Child Protection practitioners undertaking investigations where family violence is present.
- Where permitted, facilitate client information sharing, and where appropriate, support joint work between Child Protection and family violence services to achieve better engagement with services for victims and perpetrators of family violence.

- Where permitted, provide information about the client's history from the Specialist Family Violence Service and other family violence men's and women's services operating in the local area.
- Support Child Protection to understand the dynamics of perpetrator behaviour and use this information to:
  - improve engagement with perpetrators and to create stronger feedback loops between men's services and Child Protection; and
  - enhance understanding and work with the non-offending parent.
- Initiate exceptions conferences<sup>1</sup>, contribute to the rationale for substantiation, and participate in secondary consultation with Child Protection to enable more informed assessments of safety and risk to victims and perpetrator behaviour.
- Assist Child Protection practitioners to understand and navigate the family violence system
- Make outward referrals (where possible warm referrals) in collaboration with Child Protection to specialist family violence services and expediting referrals.
- Maintain an in-depth knowledge of the family violence support services in the area and the eligibility requirements for such services.
- Keep up to date information on waitlists and alternatives for family violence support services in the area.
- Assist Child Protection to secure placement for clients in refuge or crisis accommodation.
- Coordinate other family violence workers in the area to attend joint home visits with Child Protection.
- Target the use of funding and resources in responding to clients that experience and/or use family violence; and
- Build the capacity of Child Protection.

## **Key Selection Criteria**

Your application must address the following:

### **Essential Qualifications and Experience**

- A degree in social work or related community services discipline is essential.
- A minimum of three years experience working in the family violence service system as a senior practitioner with leadership or supervisory experience.

---

<sup>1</sup> Also referred to as case reviews or reflective practice reviews. Usually convened by involved professionals to strategically examine and draw themes and learning from 'exceptional' cases and case outcomes.

## Essential Skills and Knowledge

- Capacity and desire to support improved engagement by Child Protection with both victims and perpetrators.
- Demonstrated knowledge and high level understanding of:
  - the perpetrator's pattern of coercive control and its impact on children and the ability of the protective parent to safely parent;
  - mechanisms to restore and enhance safe, child-centred parenting; and
  - the capacity to use this knowledge to assist Child Protection to achieve improved client and system outcomes.
- A sound knowledge of local family violence support services and approaches in the local area.
- An established strong working relationship with Child Protection is desirable.
- Demonstrated understanding of the *Family Violence Protection Act 2008*, the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005*, *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*, the *Health Records Act 2001*, the CRAF and Victoria Police Code of Practice.
- Understanding of how to engage with perpetrators or with services working with perpetrators of family violence for the purpose of service linkage and referral.
- Demonstrated experience in developing and maintaining relationships with other stakeholders in a multi-disciplinary environment including capacity to problem solve and negotiate with other professionals.
- Highly developed written and oral communication skills including:
  - a demonstrated high level of skill in accurately recording data, correspondence and reporting; and
  - providing written and oral evidence to the Children's Court of Victoria, the Magistrates' Court of Victoria and other relevant courts and tribunals.
- Use a range of IT/web-based applications to manage workflow in accordance with organisational guidelines and privacy principles.
- Keep accurate and complete records of your work activities in accordance with organisational requirements, information security and privacy policies and requirements.

## Other

- Commitment to the vision, values and purposes of The SAFV Centre.
- Commitment to continuous quality improvement and cultural equity in service delivery.
- Current Victorian Driver's Licence.

## Referees

Applicants must provide the name and current contact details of 2-3 professional referees including the most recent or current supervisor.

## Period of Appointment

This position is fixed term for 10 months (parental leave cover), dependent on the continuation of funding to the service.

### **Hours of Work**

- The position is full time.
- Location of the position is at the Geelong DHHS office and the SAFV Centre one day per week.
- Hours will usually be worked during normal business hours of 9:00am to 5:06pm.
- Flexibility in working hours will be required from time to time as the need arises. This role may at times be required to operate outside normal office hours with relevant time in lieu provisions applying.

### **Salary and Conditions**

Annual salary range is \$97,815.64 - \$101,899.20 plus superannuation (pro rata for part time). Salary will be commensurate with experience and skills. Industrial Instrument: The Sexual Assault & Family Violence Centre Enterprise Agreement 2018.

Salary Packaging: Provided via Maxxia. PBI status with other expenses available to package above this cap. The Sexual Assault & Family Violence Centre is a Public Benevolent Institution.

Superannuation: The employer will also make superannuation payments on your behalf in accordance with the *Superannuation Guarantee (Administration) Act 1992*.

Probationary Period - 6 months with a review conducted during this time

### **Employee Responsibility – Mandatory prior to commencement**

Employee expense:

- Valid Working with Children Check
- National Police Records Check – renewed every 3 years of employment at employee expense

*This position description is subject to review and may change in accordance with the needs of our organisation; including our operations, our clients and our stakeholders.*