

Frequently asked questions for General Practitioners (GPs)

Information Sharing Schemes

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Summary

- From 19 April 2021, GPs and practice nurses will be included in Victoria's legislated Family Violence and Child Information Sharing Schemes. This expands information sharing obligations for GPs and practice nurses.
- The schemes require Information Sharing Entities (ISEs) to share information to assess and manage family violence risk and to promote child wellbeing and safety.
- GPs will be required to share relevant information when requested (recording what is shared). The schemes will also allow GPs to request information from other ISEs and to voluntarily (proactively) share information.

What are the new legislated information sharing schemes?

- The Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) enables the sharing of information to promote the wellbeing or safety of a child or a group of children.
- The Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS) enables the sharing of information for family violence risk assessment or risk management in relation to both children and adults.

Who with, why and what information do I share under these schemes?

Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme

Who	Why	What
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information Sharing Entities (ISEs) are authorised to share information. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To identify organisations that are authorised to share information, access the ISE list <p>< https://iselist.www.vic.gov.au/ise/list></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To access and manage family violence risk to both adults and children voluntarily with an ISE in response to a request from an ISE. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family violence risk relevant information information regarding adults without children, regarding children or relating to perpetrators.

Child Information Sharing Scheme

Who	Why	What
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information Sharing Entities (ISEs) are authorised to share information. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To identify organisations that are authorised to share information, access the ISE list <p>< https://iselist.www.vic.gov.au/ise/list></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To promote the wellbeing or child victim or safety of a child or group of children proactively or in response to a request from an ISE includes concerns regarding physical, psychological and emotional health, nourishment, supportive relationships and development, housing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information regarding anyone to assist the receiving ISE to conduct an assessment or investigation, make a decision or plan, provide a service or manage a risk to a child or children.

When can you share information under the information sharing schemes?

- GPs will be required to share information when requested by an ISE, where the request meets requirements of the CISS or FVISS scheme.
- GPs will be permitted to share information proactively (or voluntarily) without receiving a request.
- GPs will be able make their own requests for information to other ISEs.
- GPs will be required only to share information that is relevant to managing and accessing:
 - risk to victim survivors of family violence
 - risk of perpetrators committing family violence
 - to promote the wellbeing or safety of children.
- GPs can also share information about the perpetrator directly with victim survivors and/or their other parent or guardian (if a child) to assist them to manage their safety or that of their child under the FVISS.
- Under the CISS, they can share any information with a child or their parent/guardian to manage a risk to the child's safety.

A written record of information sharing, including through a verbal exchange, must be made and stored securely on file, consistent with current policies, procedures and record keeping requirements. (There are specific record keeping requirements for these schemes).

The scheme does not affect information sharing obligations or powers that already exist as part of mandatory reporting to Child Protection.

Information can also continue to be shared under Commonwealth or state privacy laws, including where there is a serious threat to an individual's life, health, safety or welfare.

Do I need my patient's consent to share information under the schemes?

Under the FVISS:

Consent is required to share:

- information about an adult survivor, unless the threat is serious; or there is a child that is also at risk.

No consent is required to share:

- perpetrator information or
- information where there is a serious threat to a person
- information to assess or manage family violence risk to a child.

Although consent is not required, the views of the victim survivor should be sought when sharing the information where safe, appropriate, and reasonable to do so.

Under the CISS:

No consent is required:

- to share any person's information to promote the safety or wellbeing of a child/ren.

Although consent is not required, the views of the child and other family members who do not pose a risk to the child should be sought when sharing the information where safe, appropriate and reasonable to do so.

Under both the information sharing schemes, if a GP/practice nurse seeks views, and the relevant person/people doesn't agree that the information should be shared, the GP/practice nurse can still share the information with another prescribed organisation if they believe it meets the requirements of the relevant scheme.

How can I be sure the person requesting information is from an ISE?

You can [check the searchable database of ISEs](https://iselist.vic.gov.au/ise/list/) to confirm their organisation/workforce is on the list <<https://iselist.vic.gov.au/ise/list/>>.

If you don't know them, you can verify where they are from by asking them to send an email from their work address or by calling their organisation's reception.

Should I share information directly with a victim survivor?

GPs are permitted to share information about a perpetrator with a victim survivor if you think they need to know that information to manage their safety and that of their child. GPs are not required to share this information on request. If you know a service that is engaged with the victim survivor, you may wish to consider sharing the information with the service to ensure that the victim survivor has appropriate support.

Will I be covered from professional liability?

Offences and penalties may apply where information is shared unlawfully under the schemes.

However, a person who is authorised to share information under the schemes, who acts in good faith and with reasonable care when sharing information will:

- not be held liable for any criminal, civil or disciplinary action for providing the information
- not be in breach of any code of professional ethics or considered to have departed from any accepted standards of professional conduct.

This protection from liability applies only to individuals, not organisations.

Where can I get more information, guidance or access to training and resources?

More information about the reforms, requirements under the legislation, guidance on what can and cannot be shared with who including the list of ISEs can be found at:

- [Ministerial Guidelines](https://www.vic.gov.au/guides-templates-tools-for-information-sharing) <https://www.vic.gov.au/guides-templates-tools-for-information-sharing>
- [DHHS Information Sharing Schemes factsheet - DHHS Service Providers](https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/dhhs-information-sharing-schemes-factsheet) <https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/dhhs-information-sharing-schemes-factsheet>
- [ISE searchable database](https://iselist.www.vic.gov.au/ise/list/) <https://iselist.www.vic.gov.au/ise/list/>
- [Record keeping requirements for FVISS and CISS](https://www.vic.gov.au/tips-information-sharing-record-keeping) <https://www.vic.gov.au/tips-information-sharing-record-keeping>

Training and support

- There are three new 20-minute Information Sharing eLearn online modules: *Essentials for Health and Community Services Professionals*; *Purpose and Requirements* and *Consent and Privacy*, accessible through the link above on Department of Health and Department of Families Fairness and Housing. [Information Sharing Schemes Online Learning](https://elearn.childlink.com.au/login/index.php) <https://elearn.childlink.com.au/login/index.php>
- Tailored training for GPs is currently under development.

For more information or assistance with the schemes

Phone: 1800 549 646

Email: [Department of Education and Training \(Child Information Sharing Scheme\)](mailto:childinfosharing@education.vic.gov.au) <childinfosharing@education.vic.gov.au>

[Family Safety Victoria \(Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme\)](mailto:infosharing@familysafety.vic.gov.au) <infosharing@familysafety.vic.gov.au>

Website: [Information sharing and MARAM reforms | Victorian Government \(www.vic.gov.au\)](https://www.vic.gov.au/information-sharing-schemes-and-the-maram-framework) <https://www.vic.gov.au/information-sharing-schemes-and-the-maram-framework>

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Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne.

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Available at [Information sharing - DHHS Service Providers](https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/information-sharing) <https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/information-sharing>