

This case study highlights the multiple agency response required to respond to DFV for a co-tenant occupancy. The case study focuses on how a CHP would use the *Strengthening Practice in Responding to Domestic and Family Violence – A Toolkit for Community Housing Providers* when responding to Sarah and the services required to develop a web of accountability when responding to Joe.

Sarah and her partner Joe have been living in social housing through a community housing provider (CHP) for three years. Sarah and Joe are co-tenants and they have a Residential Tenancy Agreement. Sarah and Joe have two children, Jenny (8) and Felix (5). Sarah contacts the CHP and discloses to the housing worker that Joe has been experiencing frequent anger outbursts resulting in physical violence towards her. Sarah states the children have not been witness to these incidents, however the police were called to the property last night as Joe had been violent to Sarah.

Joe was removed by the police and an interim Apprehended Domestic Violence Order (ADVO) was placed. The police completed a Domestic Violence Safety Assessment Tool (DVSAT) with Sarah. The assessment score identified that Sarah and her children were at high risk of harm if Joe returned to the property. The police referred Sarah to the Safer Pathways Safety Action Meeting (SAM). Joe was charged with domestic violence offences and is due to appear in court in two weeks. Joe has previous convictions related to domestic violence.

The housing worker engages with Sarah, she states that she is fearful for the safety of her children and herself. The housing worker applies the decision making flowchart in the *Strengthening Practice in Responding to Domestic and Family Violence – A Toolkit for Community Housing Providers* and Sarah identifies that she would like to stay in the property. The CHP refers Sarah to a DFV specialist service; the DFV specialist organises a meeting to co-ordinate a safety plan.

The safety plan will address the following:

- Inform Sarah of her legal rights and the legal process of an ADVO
- Undertake a home safety checklist
- Review safety modifications
- Develop a risk management plan should Joe return to the property
- Communicate with FACS to develop a child protection response relative to Joe's future access to his children
- Discuss the option of making a referral to Family Relationships Centre to develop a parenting plan.

Joe has been charged with domestic violence offences and is due to appear in Court in two weeks.

An interim ADVO has been placed, the conditions state that Joe is not to approach, harass or intimidate Sarah.

As Joe's ADVO conditions prevent him from accessing the property, he is at risk of homelessness. Joe contacts his CHP and they provide him with the contact details for Link2Home. Link2Home refer Joe to short term accommodation at a Specialist Homelessness Service (SHS). Joe resides at the SHS and his support worker facilitates communication between Joe and the CHP in relation to his future tenancy and discusses with Joe the option of being referred to a men's behaviour change program (MBCP) to assist him to address some of his behaviours. Joe agrees to the referral and attends an intake interview with the MBCP.

Throughout the interview Joe is assessed on his willingness and suitability to participate in a MBCP and is placed on a waiting list. Joe views this referral as a positive step towards his court case and in being reunited with his family.



DIAGRAM 1: Highlights the multiple agency response that is required to support a web of accountability for Joe to work towards changing his behaviour.

While Joe understands the key purpose of the program is to assist him to change his behaviour, he is reluctant to accept responsibility and breaches his ADVO conditions by contacting Sarah.

Sarah contacts the police and Joe is taken into custody. The following day he appears in court and is granted bail.

The court also assigns a Community Corrections Officer (CCO) to support Joe to maintain his bail conditions and to coordinate a response plan between the services that are working with Joe - these services are:

- Community Housing Provider (CHP)
- Specialist Homelessness Service (SHS)
- Family and Community Services (FACS)
- Legal System
- Community Corrections Officer (CCO)
- Men's Referral Service (MRS)
- Men's Behaviour Change Program (MBCP)

Housing options explored with Joe include: temporary accommodation provided by the local SHS or temporarily residing with family/friends whilst longer term options are explored, including the possibility of a transfer to another social housing property and exploring the private rental market.