

Walking Alongside the DFSV Sector

The Role of PHNs in Responding to DFSV

What are PHNs

Primary Health Networks (PHNs) are not for profit organisations funded by the Commonwealth government to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the primary health care system.

Hunter New England and Central Coast Primary Health Network

HNECC PHN covers 130,000 square kilometres across the Central Coast, Hunter and New England regions of NSW. The region has a population of 1.3 million people who live in small and remote rural villages, in regional towns and in densely populated urban centres, across 23 Local Government Areas.

The PHN manages the provision of place-based primary healthcare across the HNECC region. We do this via local planning and service design, workforce and practice support, and funding tailored services such as Mental Health Supports, Suicide Prevention Programs, Aged Care Initiatives, AOD supports and Integrated Team Care.

PHN Involvement in DFSV

PHNs have been thinking deeply about our role within the National Plan. A role where health plays a central role in prevention, early intervention, crisis response, and recovery.

We are investing directly in frontline DFSV services to deliver innovative pilot programs. Partnering with trusted, community-based organisations who provide culturally safe, trauma-informed care we are building bridges between traditionally siloed service sectors.



To learn more scan the QR code or visit
<https://thephn.com.au/what-we-do/domestic-family-violence>

HNECC PHN DFSV Initiatives

- **DFSV Framework** outlines HNECC's and primary care's role in addressing DFSV.
- **Training for Primary Care** on recognising the signs of DFSV and responding to disclosures.
- **Local Link Program** is a designated referral pathway for DFSV, supporting both primary care and the victim-survivor.
- **Healthcare Outreach Program** providing a multidisciplinary health response to women and children in refuge.
- **Supporting Recovery Program** providing a post crisis, whole of family response via mental health services and care coordination.



A Story of Impact

A woman visited her GP after she and her mother had been repeatedly strangled by her ageing father. The behaviour was distressing, but out of character for her father. She hadn't reported to Police fearing criminal charges and separation from her father.

Fortunately, the GP had undertaken the PHN DFSV Training and through curious exploration identified she was at high risk of further violence. The GP urgently contacted their Local Link (DFSV frontline worker).

The Local Link escalated the case to the NSW Safety Action Meeting (SAM), a multi-agency forum for high-risk situations. Rather than a justice-led response, the SAM enabled a health-focused intervention. A geriatrician diagnosed the father with early-onset dementia, the family was linked to aged care supports, further safety planning was undertaken and plain-clothed police conducted welfare checks. The family were connected with the longer term supports to live safely together with appropriate medical care.