

Domestic and family violence refuges

Information for referral agencies

Refuges (also called shelters) provide a place of safety for women and children escaping domestic and family violence in their homes or community.

Most refuges in Queensland receive government funding to provide temporary supported accommodation and other support services to women and families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Some other places offer domestic and family violence accommodation services without receiving government funding. These are known as self-funded refuges.

Self-funded refuges

Unlike government-funded refuges, self-funded refuges are not required to meet the specific practice standards for working with women affected by domestic and family violence, or the requirements for delivering Specialist Homelessness Services, or comply with the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women Human Services Quality Framework at <https://www.csyw.qld.gov.au/about-us/funding-grants/human-services-quality-framework>

Self-funded refuges that wish to be considered for referral from domestic and family violence organisations or other providers of support services need to demonstrate that their service can appropriately meet the safety, security and support needs of women and children escaping domestic and family violence. Referral organisations must be confident that any self-funded refuges they refer to are safe and appropriate.

Suitability assessment guide

A suitability assessment guide is now available to assist referral organisations to consider the appropriateness of self-funded domestic and family violence refuge services prior to making referrals. The guide may also be used by self-funded domestic and family violence refuges (or organisations seeking to establish a self-funded refuge) to self-assess the suitability of their current and/or proposed services.

The guide outlines five criteria for assessment:

1. Safety
2. Understanding risks and needs
3. Working with clients
4. Staff
5. Governance.

The intention of the guide is not to specify practice standards, or governance, operating and quality requirements for self-funded providers. Rather it is a tool to explore a reasonable set of service components that can help assess the suitability of the service wanting to be included as a referral point. The guide includes suggestions of the types of evidence a referring agency might consider in determining the overall suitability of new and existing self-funded refuges.

The suitability assessment guide can be found at:

<https://www.qld.gov.au/community/getting-support-health-social-issue/support-victims-abuse/domestic-family-violence/domestic-violence-self-funded-refuges>