

Report on a page

Domestic and family violence (DFV) is a complex societal problem that needs a comprehensive, coordinated response. The complexity arises because of the mix of victims, perpetrators, types of violence, involvement of children, and the sheer scale of the problem.

This audit examined how effectively state public sector entities keep people safe from DFV, prevent it from occurring, and rehabilitate perpetrators to minimise re-offending. We also assessed how they coordinate with non-government DFV services.

A holistic approach and more education and rehabilitation are needed

The Queensland Government recognises the size of the domestic and family violence challenge and is taking steps to deal with it, but more training, more information-sharing, and more monitoring of efforts is required. This, together with a holistic focus and a concerted, coordinated approach, will help the entities involved to make a difference. At present, no entity has overall responsibility for coordinating case information and management. Each manages cases independently and focuses on its specific role.

The number of young people under supervision for DFV offences has increased by 57 per cent, yet minimal services and programs are available for them. The Department of Education's *Respect* program (formerly the *Respectful Relationships Education* program), which is a preventative measure, is not measured in terms of use, detail, or outcomes. The Department of Justice and Attorney-General has limited knowledge of the rehabilitation programs it funds, and few rehabilitation programs and services are available for adult DFV perpetrators in prison and community settings. Prisons are also limited in how they monitor the behaviour of DFV offenders.

Responses to domestic and family violence

The system that responds to DFV in Queensland is under pressure. As first responders, the Queensland Police Service (QPS) recorded over 139,000 DFV occurrences in 2021–22 – an increase of nearly 48 per cent in the last 6 years. The QPS is assigning a lower-priority response category (requiring a reduced police response) to more DFV calls, and is not responding within the target time frame to all of those calls it assesses as urgent. The police's job of responding is complicated by a lack of consistent access to relevant and accurate information, such as warning flags, partly because limited information is shared across the DFV sector. At a time when demand is increasing, there are significant gaps in the quality and coordination of responses and services. Responders lack training, are missing information or not using it, and are not adequately assessing risk.

It is positive that QPS is referring more people for support. It is also applying for more domestic violence orders on behalf of victims. Police applications have a higher chance of being granted than those victims apply for, indicating victims need more support from the courts.

Recommendations

We have made 21 recommendations. Many are aimed at enhancing responses, training, case management, interagency coordination, and preventing domestic and family violence. We have also made recommendations to better support young people and tackle intergenerational violence.

