

WHO DOES THE WORK?

Strengthening Australia's Domestic and Family Violence Workforce

Flinders University's Social Work Innovation Research Living Space (SWIRLS) has successfully received funding from the Australian Research Council for the project 'Strengthening Australia's Domestic and Family Violence Workforce' which seeks to investigate:

What is the nature of domestic and family violence (DFV) work and what does this mean for strengthening and planning for Australia's domestic and family violence workforce?

The research team is made up of Professor Sarah Wendt (Lead Chief Investigator), Associate Professor Kristin Natalier (Chief Investigator), Dr Kate Seymour (Chief Investigator), and Dr Sharyn Goudie (Research Fellow). Furthermore, analysis and conceptualisation of the data will be supported by two international scholars in DFV – Professor Donna Baines (University of British Columbia, Canada) and Professor Jeff Hearn (Hanken School of Economics, Finland).

At SWIRLS, we recognise that expectations placed upon the DFV workforce are multiplying and the sector faces pressures related to high demand for services, as well as workforce issues including insecure funding, low remuneration, burnout, lack of role clarity and limited access to professional development. However, despite these rising expectations there is not currently a clear understanding of the nature and reality of DFV work. We believe, without detailed and contextualised data and related theorising of the work and workforce, policy makers, educators, managers and practitioners will continue to struggle to address the complexity of DFV.

The project aims to:

1. Generate a coherent, qualitative evidence base on the nature and experiences of DFV work across three key domains: victim services, perpetrator services and Aboriginal specialist services.
2. Conceptualise the DFV workforce with reference to the nature of the work across these three domains.
3. Recommend workforce development strategies that are responsive to the context and needs of DFV.



The project will run for three years (2022 - 2024) and we are seeking to partner with five DFV services across South Australia, Western Australia and Victoria. Each service involved in the research can expect:

- Two SWIRLS researchers to conduct a one week site visit - observing day to day work, analysing documents and policies and completing individual interviews with both managers and workers
- A three-month post site visit and focus group with workers in order to clarify and confirm initial research findings. A further interview with the service manager will also occur at this point.
- Representatives of all participating services will be supported to attend two separate feedback and recommendation roundtables held throughout the project. Each service will also receive an individual findings report at the end of the project.
- De-identified study findings will also be written up in practice and policy publications (e.g. Australian Social Work; The Conversation), as well as in peer reviewed journal articles (e.g. British Journal of Social Work; Gender, Work and Organisation; Qualitative Social Work) and presented at relevant conferences.

For further information about the project and how you might participate, please contact Dr Sharyn Goudie at Sharyn.goudie@flinders.edu.au or phone 08 8201 7715.