

CFV 92 WEAVE Inc

Please note 2 attached in separate files.

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I wish this submission to be treated as:

Public

If you are making this submission on behalf of an organisation, please provide the name:

WEAVEINC

State or Territory:

Question 14-1:

Proposal 14-1:

Agreed.

Proposal 14-2:

Agreed.

Proposal 14-3:

Agreed.

Question 14-2:

Question 14-3:

Proposal 14-4:

Agreed.

Question 15-1:

JSA and DES providers should be required to have policies which commit them to the safety of people attending the service; which require them to have annual training in best practice in identifying and responding to family violence; which require them to document and report data on violence victimisation in the client population including critical incidents; which require them to take account of the impact of violence victimisation on the dependents of clients; which require them to adhere to policies for the protection and support of victims of violence. For example the Financial Suitability Test does not seem to be applied. See attached documents describing the test. The test is supposed to be used to see whether the parent is more than \$25 better off per week after the costs of working have been deducted. This would assist victims of violence and others who are only able to access poor job conditions yet it does not seem to be implemented.

Question 15-2:

Clients of JSA providers have complained that their personal information has been inappropriately shared with members of the public making telephone inquiries. The example given was that the perpetrator had called the service stating that he had arranged to pick up the person after her appointment and needed to know when she would be finished - and he was given a time! Non government staff need more training in privacy provisions.

Question 15-3:

A Centrelink Deny Access Facility should reflect the client's choice and current status. If Centrelink were to comply with the domestic violence exemption legislation, victims who disclose violence would be left alone by the jobseeker system for 16 weeks with renewable options and while they were exempted they should not be accessible to anyone but Centrelink - certainly not the jobs services system. The point of an exemption is recovery not constant

harrasment and threats. Once the person is no longer exempted the context of safety concern should be flagged and a contact for the person should be available either directly or through a Centrelink staff member who is authorised to provide selected information on behalf of the client.

Proposal 15-1:

Agreed.

Proposal 15-2:

Agreed. In fact a person with family violence concerns who is no longer exempted as per the legislated protections should be invited to identify if there are any reasons for them to be concerned about their safety when attending a job seeker service - with the example that where a victim attends a service, and their perpetrator is also unemployed, they might attend the same service. This gives the opportunity to identify a potential problem before it occurs and to inform the person that they would be able to change service provider if they had such a problem.

Question 15-4:

JSA and DES providers should routinely advertise their willingness to receive information about clients' past or current problems with regard to their personal safety. Posters and brochures should be available in community languages inviting disclosure and informing people of protections and referrals. Staff should be routinely required to inquire about clients' well-being at every interaction and to signal their willingness to protect support and refer people with past or continuing safety concerns.

Question 15-5:

The JSCI process needs to be made transparent to the client and they need to be provided with information about the process to dispute its wrongful application or a failure to properly respond to the identified concerns. Currently the JSCI is 'done to' people, judgements made and actions determined without genuine informed consultation with the client. The Participation Taskforce report into the Welfare to Work system identified that the domestic violence exemption provisions were not widely known or used by centrelink and service provider staff and no information was available to the community and recommended better information and access to domestic violence protections. There has been no discernible change in the availability of information or the application of domestic violence exemptions. It must be noted that jobs service providers get paid to provide services to clients rather than by referring them back to Centrelink for exemptions and the service providers therefore enjoy a material benefit by keeping violence victims in the system and ignorant of their rights. Clients need to be empowered with information and appeal processes and jobs services providers need to have the cash incentive to deny people their rights removed.

Proposal 15-3:

A targeted job placement program would further stigmatise and marginalise people whose primary problem is other people using coercive force to control them. The Welfare to Work participation policies are experienced by victims as a continuation of coercive controlling relationships using financial abuse (The threat of loss of income support). Victims NEED TIME to recover. Constant harrasment to participate is when the government takes on the perpetrator role. Victims of violence need (1) safety for themselves and their dependents (2) secure suitable affordable housing (3) time to attend to the legal, health, re-establishment and care demands AND a responsive and consultative system. It may be that services develop specialist staff teams who are additionally skilled to respond to victims or violence but victims should not be herded into a particular type of job or job program. Many victims of violence find that engagement in higher education is a way to gain the time to recover whilst developing their workplace skills for the longer term - exit pathways into higher education should be a recognised and rewarded part of the job seeker system. Currently the jobs

services providers gain from keeping the stock of unemployed churning through the system with low paid short term jobs.

Proposal 15-4:

JSCI interviews should be conducted on terms agreed with the jobseeker. Jobseekers should be able to have a support person with them if they wish.

Question 15-6:

Yes. The JSCI should also inquire about the 'care load' of jobseekers caring for dependent others. This should be assessed according to the number of people the jobseeker provides unpaid care for, the care characteristics of those dependents in terms of the intensity and frequency of care needed - which is in turn related to characteristics such as age and physical and mental health status - and the availability and costs of alternative care. It is common for children who have been exposed to violence to have more frequent physical and mental problems which affect their ability to attend childcare and school. Parents who are themselves recovering from violence are also responsible for getting children through nightmares, bedwetting, truancy, self-harming, anxiety and depression. Currently these demands are invisible to the system and vulnerable victims face system-induced problems as a result.

Proposal 15-5:

Yes and a Care Load Assessment as detailed above.

Question 15-7:

A disclosure of family violence, according to the legislation, should result in a referral to a Centrelink social worker for an exemption of 16 weeks. If the person does not qualify for an exemption or has ended the exemption period the JSCI disclosure of family violence should constitute a significant barrier to work and a referral for assessment.

Question 15-8:

Yes.

Question 15-9:

As noted earlier the factors affecting readiness to work include:

- (1) current safety of the person and their dependents - if children are continuing to spend time with the perpetrator and experience continuing violence due to family law arrangements then this condition cannot be met.
- (2) no current or pending legal proceedings
- (3) current secure, affordable housing
- (4) physical and mental health of parent
- (5) physical and mental health of dependents
- (6) access to suitable schooling and child care or other care needed for dependents

As noted, the needs of dependents are currently invisible yet they constitute a primary demand on mothers trying to end violent relationships.

Question 15-10:

A few victims are assessed as having significant barriers to work however these outcomes appear to relate more to the recognition of the seriousness of their resulting medical problems rather than recognition of the impact of the violence itself.

Proposal 15-6:

agreed.

Question 15-11:

This needs to be reflected in policies; management practices; staff training and system monitoring.

Question 15-12:

Services should receive accredited cultural training in Indigenous needs and perspectives.

Question 15-13:

The systems need to include requirements in accredited cultural diversity training to understand the specific features of diverse community cultures with respect to family violence and family relationships.

Question 15-14:

Having a disability increases vulnerability and risk of being a victim of violence, both within families and across the wider community. People with disabilities are more vulnerable because they are often seen as having reduced capacity to understand or communicate, because others in the caring role can speak for them, because they may need carers to assist with simple tasks and because they may need additional equipment or support to participate. Services need to be able to identify how family violence may be affecting the person and their dependents.

Question 15-15:

In rural and remote areas there is often less access to services such as police, crisis accommodation and family support. Greater isolation also affects access to health, child care and legal services. The Financial Suitability Test is of particular relevance in country areas as the greater costs of transport and child care can make available jobs unsuitable if the test were to be implemented as designed instead of being ignored along with the domestic violence exemptions. Rural and remote service providers should have an active role in ensuring that victims are in fact able to access needed services if they have not been able to. For example if the victims disclose domestic violence, the provider should inquire what support they have and link them to needed supports.

Proposal 16-1:

agreed.

Proposal 16-2 :

Proposal 16-3:

Agreed.

Proposal 16-4:

agreed.

Proposal 17-1:

Agreed.

Proposal 17-2:

Agreed.

Proposal 17-3:

Agreed.

Proposal 17-4:

Agreed.

Proposal 17-5:

Agreed.

Proposal 17-6:

Agreed.

Question 17-1:

Proposal 18-1 :

Agreed.

Proposal 18-2 :

Agreed.

Proposal 18-3:

Agreed.

Proposal 18-4:

Agreed.

Question 18-1:

Yes it should.

Other comments:

Upload supporting documents:

[factsheetfinancialsuitabilitytest.pdf](#)

File 2:

[hansard_reps_ctee_w2w_hearing_see_dr_morehead_p_18.pdf](#)