



Participant Information Sheet: Survey of Adults - Relationship Support and Separation Service Needs

Review of Family Relationship Services

Researchers

Chief investigator

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External co-investigators

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Organisation

Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS)

Introduction

This Participant Information Sheet tells you about this research project. Knowing what is involved in the research will help you decide if you want to take part.

Please read this information carefully. Ask questions about anything that you don't understand or want to know more about.

You will receive a copy of this information sheet to keep.

What is the research about?

The aim of this research project is to assess how well the current Family Relationships Services Program (FRSP) is meeting the needs of families.

The FRSP provides a range of support and education services for separated and separating parents with the aim of improving the wellbeing of Australian families. These form part of a broader range of services available for separated



and separating families (adults and children) in the family law system. The research will help us understand the needs of separated and separating families and whether services funded under Family Relationship Services Program are meeting these needs.

The research program supporting the Review also includes a survey of professionals, interviews with separating or separated adults who have used family law system services as well as those who have not used these services, and administrative data from service providers.

Surveying adults regarding their relationship support and separation service needs is one part of this research project and is the purpose of this participant information sheet. More information is provided below.

Who is involved in the project?

In November 2023, the Australian Attorney-General, the Hon. Mark Dreyfus KC MP, announced that Andrew Metcalfe AO will lead a review of Family Law Services, focusing on those services funded under the Government's FRSP.

The Australian Institute of Family Studies has been commissioned and funded by the Australian Attorney-General's Department to undertake research between late October 2023 and June 2024 that will inform this Review and these interviews are an important part of this research. The research project is being supported by and funded by the Australian Government Attorney-General's Department.

Why have I been invited to participate?

You have been invited to participate because we would like to understand the views and experiences of individuals using, or not using, FRSP and non-FRSP services, and other family law system services. We want to understand the needs of people who are separating or have separated and how well they are being met. Eligibility criteria is outlined below.

Participating in this research might benefit you, as sharing your knowledge, ideas and experiences might be empowering through contributing to potential change and improvements of service delivery.

If you do decide to leave the study, you will need to do this by emailing FRSPreview@aifs.gov.au by **31 January 2024**.

What will the researchers do and when?

As part of this research, the researchers provided a survey link to this survey about relationship support and separation service needs. The link will direct consenting individuals to an anonymous, online survey. If you would like to participate, please open the link below.

Surveys are available from November and must be completed before 29 January 2024. Consenting participants will be able to complete the surveys at a time and location that is convenient for them, though the research team advises participants to complete surveys in a quiet and private location.

Most questions in this survey will ask you to select a response from the options provided. There are a small number of questions that allow you to provide a comment. Please do not include any information that may identify you in these questions.

Completing the survey questions will take approximately 30 minutes. As a thank you for participating in this research, we invite you to enter a random draw for one of five \$100 grocery vouchers as a thank you and to acknowledge any inconvenience for participating in the survey. Vouchers cannot be redeemed for the purchase of alcohol or cigarettes. Details on how to enter are given at the end of the survey. We need as many responses as possible to ensure that the survey findings are representative and reliable.



What will happen to my information?

Your information will be used to inform a final research report.

We take your privacy and personal security seriously and safeguards are in place to protect it.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this research project and that can identify you will remain confidential unless otherwise permitted by you, or as required by law. The procedures for ensuring the confidentiality of your information during the collection phase and the later publication of results include:

- To the extent possible, your participation in this research will be kept confidential. Any information that you provide will be treated confidentially within the limits of the law.
- No-one apart from the research team will know you have participated.
- No identifying data will be collected in this survey. Participants are asked NOT to include any identifiable information, or information that may potential identify them, in their survey responses. If any identifiable or re-identifiable information is provided, it will be identified in the verification process and deleted from the survey responses so that it is de-identified and anonymised.
- You are free to stop the survey at any time, to not answer any questions and to delete your answers prior to submitting your responses.
- Our project report will only include the de-identified/anonymised survey data.

It is important that you know there is a limit to confidentiality. For example, if you tell us about any unreported current illegal activity, unreported abuse, or disclose something that makes us concerned for your safety or the safety of another person, then we may be obliged to pass this information onto the relevant authorities.

The Australian Government, Attorney-General's Department will retain the Intellectual Property in the data.

If the Attorney-General authorises the release of the public research, you will be provided with a shorter summary of the research results. Please let us know if you do not wish to receive the summary.

What are the potential risks?

It can be upsetting to talk about the experiences of separated/separating families. We have listed the contact details for some supports at the end of this sheet. Contact details for support services are also provided at the start and end of the survey.

Additionally, you are free to stop the survey at any time, to not answer any questions and to delete your answers prior to submitting your responses.

Data storage and security

Data collected in this research will be securely stored and retained by AIFS on the AIFS cloud services, in accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth). Only authorised members of the research team AIFS staff will have access. The information you provide will not be used in any way that may identify you. You may access our privacy policy at aifs.gov.au/aifs-privacy-policy

If you choose to enter a random draw for a grocery voucher, any contact information collected for this purpose will be stored on an AIFS password-protected Cloud service in a database separate to the survey data, and the link between your survey data and any contact details that you provide for the purposes of entering the random draw will be destroyed within 72 hours of your completion of the survey.

If you choose to provide your contact details to the research team at the end of the survey to enter the random draw for the grocery voucher, you will automatically be given a copy of the final report if it is published and made publicly available by the Attorney-General's Department. You will also get a short summary of the research results in these circumstances.



It is important that you know there is a limit to confidentiality. For example, if you tell us about any unreported current illegal activity, unreported abuse, or disclose something that makes us concerned for your safety or the safety of another person, then we may be obliged to pass this information on to the relevant authorities.

At the conclusion of the project, the de-identified/anonymised information will be retained at the Australian Institute of Family Studies indefinitely.

Culturally restricted information

It is not the intent of this project to collect culturally restricted information. If the survey touches on topics which pertain to culturally restricted information, you can refuse to answer any questions, and/or provide guidance on how any information you do provide is handled and used.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

We invite you to participate in this survey if you are:

- Over 18 years of age
- Separated, or have currently separated (i.e., within the past 5 years) from your spouse/partner.

You do not have to have used services in relation to separating to participate in this research, as we are wanting to survey adults who have and have not used FRSP and non-FRSP services.

Take the survey

If you would like to participate, please open the [online survey](#) or scan the QR code.

The survey will close on 29 January 2024.



Contacts

The research is being led by the Institute's Family Law, Family Violence and Elder Abuse Research Team. Concerns relating to project ethics may be directed to the AIFS Ethics Committee Secretariat via ethics-secretariat@aifs.gov.au or (03) 9214 7888.

About the Australian Institute of Family Studies.

The Australian Institute of Family Studies is based in Melbourne. It is an independent statutory agency, established by the Commonwealth Government in 1980, and aims to help in the development of better policies for the future of Australian families.

More detailed information can be obtained from our website: aifs.gov.au

Complaints

You can complain to:

- The Executive Director of Research, AIATSIS, 51 Lawson Crescent, Acton ACT 2601, (e) ethics@aiatsis.gov.au
- The Chair of the AIATSIS Research Ethics Committee, AIATSIS, 51 Lawson Crescent, Acton ACT 2601, (e) ethics@aiatsis.gov.au

If you think there has been a breach of your privacy you can write to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner, GPO Box 5218 Sydney NSW 2001 or call 1300 363 992.



Ethics Committee Clearance

The AIFS Ethics Committee and the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) Research Ethics Committee have reviewed and approved this research.

Getting help

We are unable to provide advice or to assist with specific concerns in relation to individual matters. These contacts may be able to provide support:

- Call **13YARN** (13 92 76) to speak with an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Crisis Supporter, available 24 hours, 7 days a week.
- Contact **QLife**, an anonymous and free LGBTIQ+ peer support and referral service on from 3pm to midnight every day on 1800 184 527 or via webchat at qlife.org.au
- Contact the **Family Relationship Advice Line** about family relationship issues and parenting arrangements after separation. Phone 1800 050 321 or go to www.familyrelationships.gov.au
- Contact the **National Sexual Assault Domestic Family Violence Counselling Service** for 24/7 support about domestic and family violence. Phone 1800 737 732 (1800 Respect) or go to www.1800respect.org.au
- Call **000** if you are worried about your safety or the safety of another person.

