

## Media Release

31 October 2024

# Service offers vital support for victims of violence

For victims of family, domestic or sexual violence the trauma doesn't end once the immediate crisis is resolved, and many have a long journey of recovery ahead of them.

The Supporting Recovery from Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Program aims to address the critical need for comprehensive support services for victim-survivors of family, domestic and sexual violence in South Western Sydney.

Tragically, there were about 5,200 domestic violence-related assault offences across South Western Sydney from July 2022 to June 2023, with Campbelltown, Liverpool and Fairfield having the highest representation.

South Western Sydney Primary Health Network (SWSPHN) has been funded by the Department of Health and Aged Care to deliver the pilot program, which aims to fill a gap in services and ensure the thousands of people affected by domestic violence-related assault in our region have every support they need to get back on their feet.

There are two components to the service.

Anglicare and CatholicCare began delivering mental health support in May, and SWSPHN has now commissioned The Benevolent Society to provide the Local Care Team (LCT) component, beginning in November.

The LCT's role is to help clients coordinate and manage their recovery journey, and connect them with services such as legal, financial and housing supports; trained psychologists, social workers and counsellors who specialise in providing trauma-informed and client-centred mental healthcare.

The LCT will focus on receiving referrals, providing case and care management to victim-survivors, and referring them to necessary social services, including psychological therapies.

It will also continue to support existing clients if they find themselves in crisis situations throughout their recovery journey in recognition of the fact that recovery is not linear, and that victim-survivors may continue to experience different forms of violence even after receiving support.

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**This service is supported by funding from the Australian Government through the PHN program.**

South Western Sydney PHN is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to supporting general practitioners, practice nurses and other primary health providers to deliver the best possible care for their patients. Our aim is to improve access to quality local healthcare for all residents living in the Bankstown, Fairfield, Liverpool, Campbelltown, Camden, Wollondilly and Wingecarribee LGAs. We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land, water and skies of South Western Sydney, the Darug, Dharawal and Gundungurra peoples, and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

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The holistic, culturally appropriate service is available at no cost for a period up to two years for each client.

SWSPHN Chief Executive Officer, Dr Keith McDonald PhD, said commissioning the LCT service was an important step in ensuring better outcomes for victim-survivors of violence.

“I congratulate The Benevolent Society for taking on the role of offering our community this much-needed service. Such ongoing support will help the people of South Western Sydney to create a better, safer life for themselves and their families,” he said.

The Benevolent Society’s Centre for Women’s, Children’s and Family Health will facilitate the LCT service in the Campbelltown, Liverpool and Fairfield local government areas. The centre has provided integrated support services to women, children and families since 1994.

The Benevolent Society Chief Executive Officer, Lin Hatfield Dodds, said access to ongoing supports was critical for victim-survivors as they worked towards healing and recovery.

“The Supporting Recovery from Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Program is about providing trauma-informed long-term recovery care,” she said.

“The Benevolent Society is proud to be the Local Care Team service provider to help coordinate access to support services for victim-survivors in South Western Sydney. Our staff have strong local community ties, and we remain committed to supporting their health, wellbeing and healing.”

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