



**Australian Government**

**Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet**

OFFICIAL

# Safety by Design

Office for Women

Content warning: this presentation includes some description of acts of family and domestic violence. Please feel free to leave this presentation as necessary.

If you need further support, you may wish to contact your EAP provider or 1800RESPECT ([1800 737 732](tel:1800737732)).



# What is Safety by Design?

- A preventative approach to systems design, which aims to:
  - ensure safety considerations in the design and operation of systems
  - prevent abuse/harm before it occurs
- Applying safety by design principles to government systems from policy design through to implementation and service delivery can prevent their misuse to perpetrate family and domestic violence.

## What is systems abuse?

- Deliberate misuse or ‘weaponisation’ of systems by perpetrators of family and domestic violence to control, threaten or harm someone.

# Weaponisation of government systems by perpetrators of family and domestic violence – what can this look like?

## Child support and tax – financial abuse

Victim-survivors may be reliant on former partners for child support, and many do not receive child support payment on time or in full. s47E(d)

## Technology facilitated abuse

s47E(d)

## Corporate regulation – coercion and financial abuse

Victim-survivors are made liable for company debts they did not incur or consent to, including through:

s47E(d)

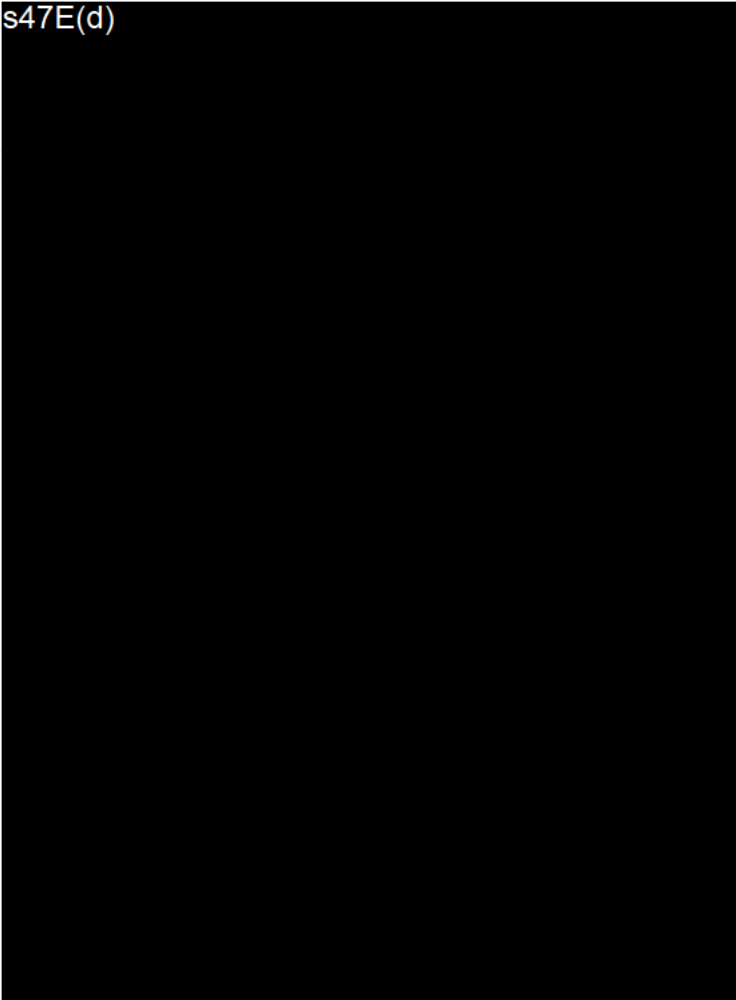
## System operationalisation

There are a range of ways the operationalisation of government systems can inadvertently put victim-survivors at further risk or compound the hardships they face. s47E(d)

# Development of the Safety by Design Implementation Guide

- Supports the implementation of the audit of Australian Government systems
  - and any other systems reviews or reforms across the Commonwealth
- Developed by the Office for Women, in close collaboration with:
  - government agencies
  - experts in adapting safety by design to address financial abuse
- Draws on significant work by the eSafety Commissioner to develop safety by design principles for the development of online products and services.

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# Safety by Design Principles

## 1. Government Role

- Government systems should work for the **best interests** of users and uphold human rights.
- The burden of ensuring safety is not compromised **should not fall solely on the individual** using government systems.

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- Systems should be **trauma-informed and accessible** across the diverse range of users.

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# Safety by Design Principles

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## 2. User empowerment and autonomy

- People using government systems and services should be empowered to make decisions.
- The interaction between privacy and safety should be carefully considered.
- Giving control back to a victim-survivor.

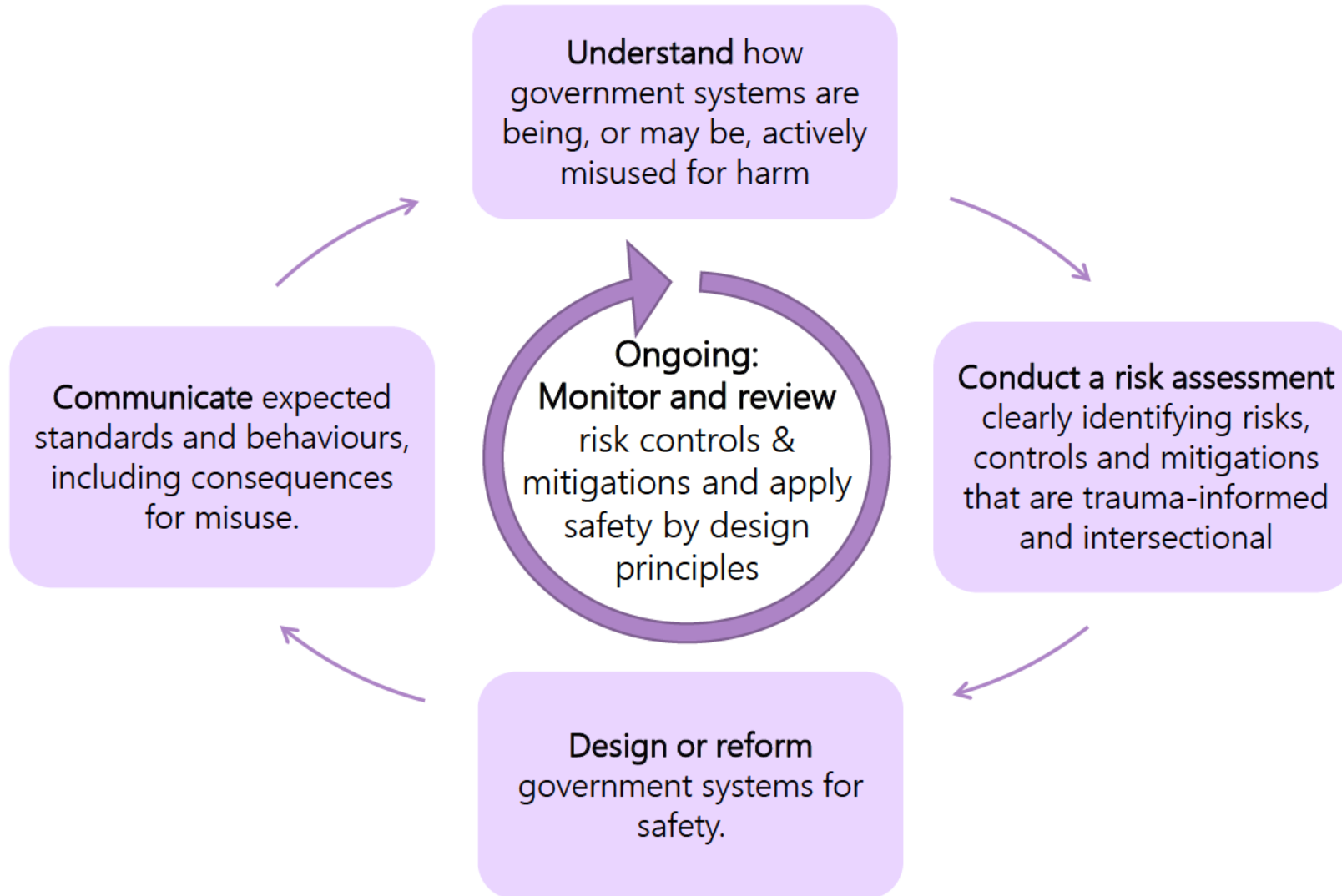
# Safety by Design Principles

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## 3. Transparency and accountability

- Government should be accountable for and transparent about its approach to safety in systems.
- Clear and proactive communication so users understand how systems are designed, including how systems protect them and what the consequences are for misuse.

# Implementation approach



# Embedding the guide across government

- Share the guide across government agencies and work areas

## Engaging with OFW:

- Email the team at <sup>s22</sup> [REDACTED] [@pmc.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@pmc.gov.au)