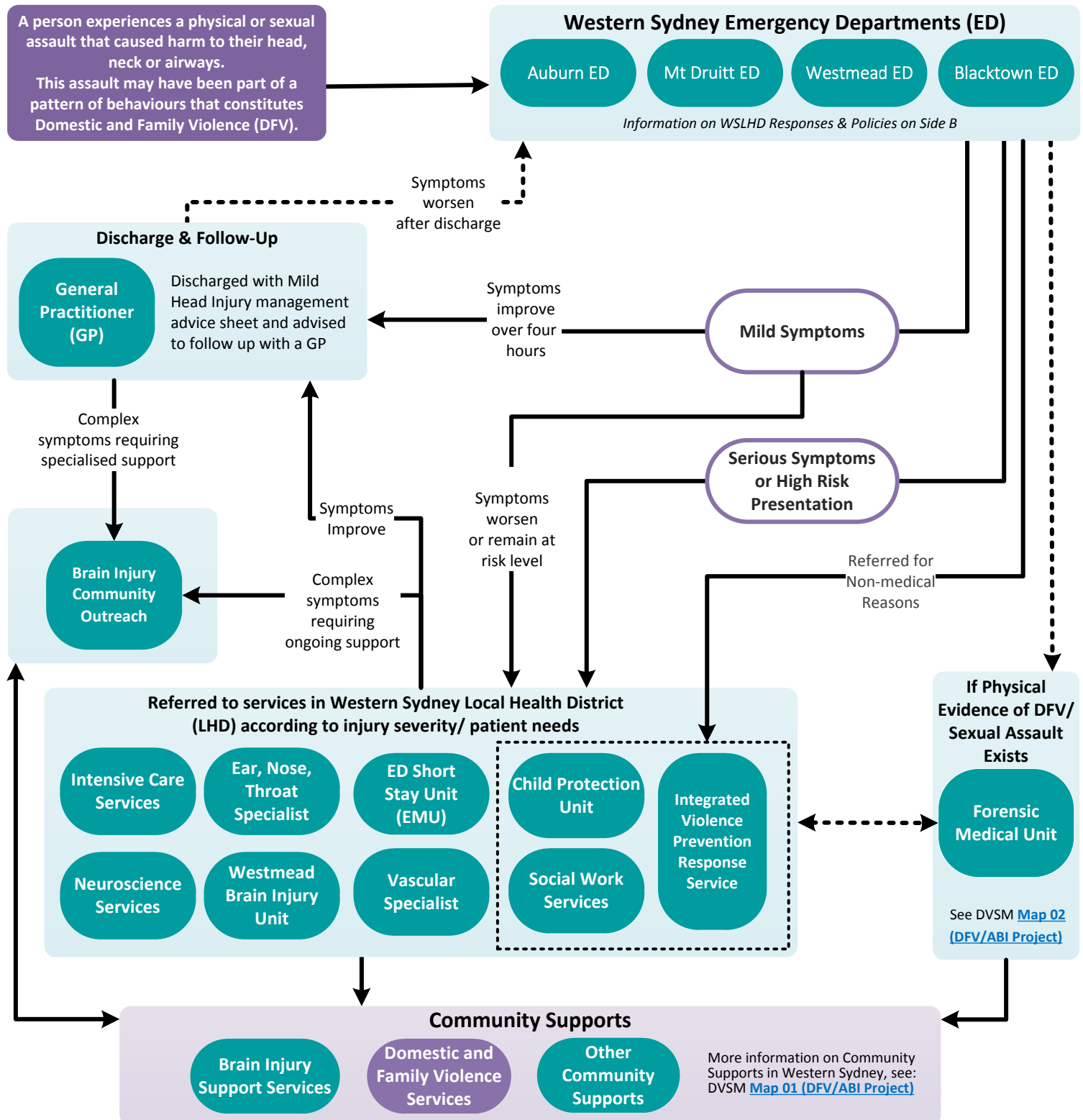


Safety: People experiencing Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) are already navigating their safety before they ever reach out for support. They are self-assessing the risks they face and use strategies to mitigate the risk of harm. Any advice given or action taken by a practitioner may unintentionally or unknowingly increase the harm and threat that a person may face as a result of not fully understanding a person’s situation and context. [Follow My Lead](#) is a resource designed for all social and service responders to build awareness of concepts of safety in order to improve and inform responses.

About these Pathways: these pathways represent certain common responses for a person who attends an Emergency Department after an assault that caused head injury or involved strangulation or suffocation. Some other factors, such as the overall welfare of the patient, other serious injuries, or safety issues, may lead to alternative treatment pathways and hospital responses that are not represented here.



Copyright: DVSM gives permission for excerpts from this resource (excluding [Follow My Lead](#)) to be photocopied or reproduced provided that the source is clearly and properly acknowledged.

Disclaimer: This resource is an excerpt from the [DFV/ABI Project Report](#). Whist great care has been taken to do no harm and to improve responses, DVSM and the contributing organisations assume no responsibility for how the information in this resource is used.

Key Policies and Procedures in Western Sydney LHD Emergency Departments



NSW ETP Policy – the ETP is a state-wide target that stipulates the time-frame in which a certain number of patients must be admitted, referred or discharged after accessing any ED. This means that people may be discharged quite rapidly after a head trauma – potentially before some symptoms have developed.



'WSLHD Procedure for the Management of Victims of Assault who have Suffered Attempted Strangulation' (Version 3): all EDs in Western Sydney are subject to a strangulation screening policy and procedure. It stipulates how people who have been subjected to strangulation are to be investigated and managed in the ED. If external service providers have concerns for a person's wellbeing after strangulation they may consider advising them to access their local ED for strangulation screening.



NSW Health Management of Closed Head Injury in Adults Policy – this document highlights the processes and procedures by which head injury is initially assessed in NSW hospitals. Pages 28-29 hold a copy of the mild-head injury discharge advice sheet that is given to patients being discharged from an ED.



NSW Health Policy, Infants & Children: Acute Management of Head Injury – this document highlights the processes and procedures by which head injury of infants and children are initially assessed in NSW hospitals. See page 7: a process map for this patient group which differs slightly to this map. The [mild-head injury discharge advice](#) sheet that is given to parents/guardians of infants or children being discharged can be found on the websites of all three children's hospitals in NSW.

Westmead Brain Injury Unit

The Westmead **Brain Injury Unit** is one of the five inpatient Brain Injury Rehabilitation Programs (BIRPs) in Sydney. The unit provides multidisciplinary support for people recovering from a severe traumatic brain injury. Adult brain injury services exist at: Westmead Hospital, Liverpool Hospital, & Royal Rehab. Children's services exist at Sydney Children's Hospital & Westmead Children's Hospital.

Brain Injury Community Outreach

The **Brain Injury Community Outreach** team at Westmead hospital holds a clinic once a fortnight. The clinic will respond to any level of brain injury including concussion and mild-TBI. Referrals can be made by ED doctors, other hospital specialists, and General Practitioners in the community. Written referrals required by Fax: 9635 8892 or Mail: Brain Injury Unit, Westmead hospital, PO Box 533, Wentworthville NSW 2145

Intensive Care Services

Intensive Care Services support patients who are in a critical condition and need intensive support and monitoring.

Forensic Medical Unit

The **Forensic Medical Unit (FMU)** provides forensic medical and nursing services across Western Sydney and the Nepean Blue Mountains. These services include examinations and collection of evidence for sexual assault cases and domestic violence cases. As the FMU exists to document physical evidence of assault referrals can be made regardless of the severity of a person's head trauma, as long as physical evidence exists (i.e. bruises, swelling, cuts etc.). See DVSM [Map 02 \(DFV/ABI Project\)](#).

Neuroscience Services

Neuroscience services include: neurology, neurosurgery and neurophysiology – all specialities that relate to the functioning of the brain and spinal cord.

Social Work Services

Hospitals in the Western Sydney have **Social Workers** available to support people who access hospital services. They provide individual, couple and family counselling and practical support to assist patients in the management of illness, adjustment to changes related to health, or in increasing wellbeing.

Ear, Nose, Throat Specialist

Referral to an **Ear, Nose & Throat Specialist (ENT)** may be required where a person has internal injuries to their neck and throat caused by strangulation. ENTs can conduct tests to rule out certain risks associated with strangulation.

Integrated Violence Prevention Response Service

The Integrated Violence Prevention and Response Service provides a coordinated approach to violence prevention and response across Western Sydney providing counselling and support services in the areas of: sexual assault; child protection; domestic violence, and for victims of crime. For referral to the sexual assault and domestic violence counselling programs: Blacktown Mt Druitt – **9881 8700** or Westmead - **8890 7940**

Vascular Specialist

Referral to a **vascular specialist** may be required where a person has strangulation injuries or internal neck injuries of concern. Vascular specialists are skilled in treating diseases and injuries affecting a person's arteries and blood flow.

Domestic and Family Violence Services

Domestic and Family Violence services – there are a range of services across Western Sydney that can assist women and children experiencing Domestic and Family Violence. These have been outlined in more detail on DVSM [Map 01 \(DFV/ABI project\)](#).

Child Protection Unit

The **Child Protection Unit (CPU)** provides forensic, medical and counselling health services for children, young people and their families following allegations of child abuse and neglect. The CPU incorporate NSW Health Sexual Assault Services for Children. The CPU works in partnership with FACS and the Police.

Brain Injury Support Services

In NSW there are various government and non-government services that provide support to people living with a diagnosed brain injury in the community. Some of these supports are outlined in the NSW Government Resource: [Care and Support Pathways for People with an Acquired Brain Injury](#). Availability of some services in this document may have changed since the introduction of the NDIS.

Acknowledgements – DVSM thanks practitioners from the following service for their feedback and contributions to this map: Forensic Medical Unit (WSLHD & NBMLHD), Blacktown Hospital Emergency Department & the Education Centre Against Violence (NSW Health).