

Family Violence

Policy statement

We are committed to being an exceptional service provider that puts customers first and benefits the community. This policy outlines how we seek to meet our responsibilities for customers and employees experiencing or affected by family violence.

Definition:

The Department of Family, Fairness and Housing defines family violence as:

...Family violence is emotional abuse, financial abuse, physical or sexual violence, and coercive, controlling or emotionally or psychologically abusive behaviour from a person in your family or an intimate partner. This can include abusers restricting your movement or isolating you from friends or family. Family violence can make you feel afraid for your own safety or wellbeing, or for a family member.

To meet our responsibilities when supporting customers and employees experiencing or affected by family violence we are committed to:

- Recognising that victims of family violence experience a broad range of behavior that is not limited to physical violence. This can include a high prevalence of economic and emotional abuse.
- Providing a careful and sensitive response in consultation with the victim to achieve the best outcomes.
- Empowering customers, with our support, to manage the financial impacts, security of their data, and future account management in a manner that provides them with outcomes that meet their needs and supports them to move forward.
- Providing a safe environment for customers and employees to access relevant information and support.

This policy will inform our decisions and actions when supporting customers and employees experiencing or affected by family violence, and ensure we meet the obligations outlined in the Essential Services Commissions' Customer Service code clause 14 which requires Greater Western Water (GWW) to have a family violence policy.

Purpose

To outline our approach in supporting customers and employees experiencing or affected by family violence.

Objectives

In meeting our objectives for supporting customers and employees experiencing or affected by family violence, GWW seeks to support the achievement of the following strategic objectives:

Safe connections

- Our people stand by our customers, so we are valued and trusted.
- Flexibility, adaptability, and reliability are the way we work.

Working together to make a real difference

- Risk is responsibly managed in ensuring customer's: safety, privacy, and water supply is not impacted.
- Customers' needs are met responsively and sensitively.

Customers can safely rely on us

- We respect our customers' unique situations and we strive to assist them in this challenging time in their lives to have access to unrestricted water supply.

Scope

This Policy applies to employees, contractors and customers identified by themselves, GWW or an independent financial counsellor or case worker, as experiencing family violence.

Commitment to our Customers

A customer who advises Greater Western Water they are impacted directly by family violence will be offered the opportunity to have their account managed by our Customer Care Program.

- The Customer Care Program will provide a means for customers to be case managed to avoid having to repeat disclosure of their circumstances and to provide continuity of service.
- Greater Western Water will promote customer safety by providing for the secure handling of customer information, in a manner that maintains customer confidentiality.
- Implement the Essential Services Commission's Family Violence requirements.
- Customers in the Customer Care Program will have access to:
- A range of payment options in accordance with the customer's capacity to pay.
- Financial support where appropriate - this may include flexible arrangements, debt waivers or deferment, referral to [Utility Relief Grant Scheme](#) and concessions to those affected by family violence.
- Information and referral to Government Assistance Programs, no-cost independent financial counsellors, and specialist family violence services.
- Information will be provided to customers about Greater Western Water's Dispute Resolution Policy, the customer's right to lodge a complaint with the [Energy and Water Ombudsman Victoria](#) (EWOV) and any other relevant

external dispute resolution forum if their hardship claim is not resolved to their satisfaction by Greater Western Water.

- Information on how to reduce water usage, improve water efficiency and referral to relevant Government Water Efficiency Programs.
- Customer's water supply will not be restricted, and no legal action or additional debt recovery costs will apply while engaging with the Customer Care Program.
- Confirmation will be provided of any alternative payment method as soon as possible and confirmed in writing no later than 10 business days after an agreement is reached with a customer. (The affected person to have a choice in how their mutually agreed arrangements with GWW will be communicated)
- Greater Western Water will seek to promote the agency of the Customer and family members at risk of family violence by considering their wishes where appropriate and plan for the safety of all family members at risk of family violence.

Employees

We will:

- Support our employees affected by family violence and ensure appropriate leave, training, external referrals, and counselling is available. Flexibility, adaptability, and resilience exemplify the way we work.
- Ensure all employees who work with customers who may be affected by family violence; have ongoing training, supporting processes and required knowledge to identify, deal appropriately with and apply our full suite of policies (including this policy) and procedures to customers affected by family violence.
- Provide access to referral points and counselling to support them in their roles.
- Ensure that all staff and contractors are adequately trained to deal compassionately and sensitively with customers.

Strategy/implementation

This Policy will be implemented via GWW's annual business planning processes which will identify areas for action, resourcing requirements, and timeframes for delivery.

Related Policies and Procedures

Protected Disclosures Policy 2013
Privacy Charter issued October 2007
Hardship Policy
Complaints Policy

Accountability for Implementation

Managing Director
General Managers
Manager Communications & Corporate Relations
Managers
Team Leaders

Collections Policy

Implementation will be overseen by Risk and Compliance General Manager, Customer Experience and the General Manager People and Safety.

Roles and responsibilities

The Executive Leadership Team is responsible for incorporating our responsibilities under this policy into our business planning activities.

The General Manager, Customers Experience is responsible for directing, reviewing, and reporting upon the implementation of the Family Violence Policy for our customers and the General Manager, People and Safety is responsible for the same for our employees.

All employees are responsible for developing an understanding of how their work functions are affected by this Policy.

References

- [Ending family violence – Victoria’s 10-year plan for change](#)
- IRD -136 Residential Hardship Guidelines
POL-29 Residential Hardship Policy
PRO-75 Procedure for Managing Enquiries and Complaints
POL-44 Social Policy
POL-20 Risk Management Policy
**Employee policy (NB: there are 2 separate enterprise agreements for employees WW & CWW)
Esc Clause 14 – customer service code – urban business
(order these into external, through to internal policies)
***Subject to change as per: National Cabinet

Collections Policy
Customer Service Charter
Personal Privacy Charter

Review process

The policy will be reviewed annually or more frequently as required

Approved by ELT on 26/03/2021

Next due for review by the ELT in 26/03/2022