

Family Violence Policy

Evergy Pty Ltd



Policy Statement

Our organisation recognises that family violence is a serious and widespread issue that affects the whole community. We are committed to providing customers affected by family violence with confidential support and flexible payment arrangements to help manage their needs.

Purpose

Our Family Violence Policy (Policy) seeks to empower customers to request assistance in managing any family violence-related issues, regardless of their financial capacity.

Defining Family Violence

We recognise that there are many forms of family violence. Our organisation defines family violence as behaviour that is physically or sexually, emotionally, psychologically, or economically abusive, threatening, coercive, or in any other way controls or dominates a family member and causes them to feel fear for their safety or wellbeing.

Scope

This policy applies to all residential and small business customers, as well as customers in embedded networks who are impacted by family violence.

Customer Rights

- Receive support from our employees in a respectful and supportive manner.
- Have your personal information handled securely, privately, and sensitively.
- Choose a method of communication of your preference.
- Access information about external family violence support services.
- Appoint an authorized representative or a support person to act on your behalf.
- Remove the joint account holders and, if needed, set up a new account in your name (if required).
- Receive payment assistance support, including access to the assistance under our hardship policy.
- Avoid the need to repeatedly disclose your circumstances and receive continuity of service.

Our organisation and staff responsibilities

- Provide all staff with thorough training in awareness of family violence.
- Manage all engagement with affected customers in a respectful, understanding, and sensitive manner.
- Handle information pertaining to customers affected by family violence securely and confidentially.
- Ensure that customer consent is obtained before disclosing their personal information to a third party (unless required under law).
- Contact emergency services (police and/or ambulance) on request by the customer or if they believe further assistance is needed.
- Discuss a safety plan with customers who have disclosed family violence to confirm and ensure the safety of the customer and their children.
- Provide information regarding government support programs, including concessions and the availability of external family violence support services (see below)

Account Security

Our organisation takes our obligations regarding your personal information seriously and we manage this in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and the Australian Privacy Principles. A copy of our privacy policy is available [here](https://evergy.com.au/privacy-policy/) (https://evergy.com.au/privacy-policy/).

When you inform us that you are experiencing family violence, we will:

- Provide you with support, such as flagging your account for family violence, to ensure that your information is only accessed by senior employees within our organisation.
- Request you at the time of notification if you would like to set up a password or security questions to protect your account details and confidential information.
- Send bills and other communications only via your new preferred method of communication.

Your personal information will be securely handled and will remain confidential. We will not disclose a customer's confidential information to any other person without your prior consent.

Debt Management

Our organisation recognises family violence as a potential cause of financial hardship or payment difficulty. We will consider each customer's individual circumstances to find a suitable solution specific to the customer's needs and offer support in accordance with our [hardship policy](https://evergy.com.au/hardship-program/) (https://evergy.com.au/hardship-program/)

The support that we offer may include:

- Flexible payment arrangements.
- Reviewing your energy plan and placing you on a more suitable plan.
- Waiving or suspending the debt.
- Restricting the collections cycle to ensure that your premise is not de-energized for an overdue bill.

Accessing Support

You can access support by contacting:

- our customer service department through various channels such as phone, email, or in-person visit.
- an independent financial counsellor, case worker or an external family violence support services to access resources and support.

Supporting Documentation

We will never request you or a third party acting on your behalf to provide specific documentation or evidence before providing you with support under this policy or the Rules.

Implementation and Review

This policy will be implemented immediately and will be reviewed every 2 years from the date of issue or as required under the regulatory requirements to ensure that it remains current and effective in addressing family violence.

Dissemination

This policy will be published on our website, and a free copy will be made available via your preferred method of communication when you inform us of your circumstances.

Contact us & Complaint Handling

At any time, if you have concerns about your well-being or need support with your energy account, please do not hesitate to contact us. You can reach us via email at support@evergy.com.au or by phone at 1300 383 749 (1300 EVERGY)

We take all your concerns and complaints seriously and will handle them in accordance with our Complaints and [Dispute Resolution Policy](https://evergy.com.au/complaints/) (<https://evergy.com.au/complaints/>)

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of our investigation, you can also contact the state-specific Ombudsman for further assistance.

See below a list of state specific energy ombudsman contact details.

| Ombudsman | Contact no. | Website |
|----------------------------------|--------------|--|
| Energy and Water Ombudsman (NSW) | 1800 246 545 | www.ewon.com.au |

External Support

We will advise you of external support services, including access to a free interpreter service (131 450 – For help using an interpreter visit TIS)

We will also maintain a list of external support services that are published on our website.

We will keep this information up to date, ensuring that customers affected by family violence can easily access this assistance.

| External support services | Contact number |
|---|------------------------------|
| National Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence Counselling Service 24-hour helpline | 1800 RESPECT on 1800 737 732 |
| 24-hour Emergency Accommodation helpline | 1800 800 588 |
| Safe At Home helpline | 1800 633 937 |
| National Violence and Abuse Trauma Counselling and Recovery Service | 1800 FULLSTOP (1800 385 578) |
| SHE (free and confidential counselling and support) | 6278 9090 |
| Sexual Assault Support Services on 6231 1811, or after hours | 6231 1817 |
| Family Violence Crisis and Support Service | 1800 608 122 |
| Bravehearts – Sexual Assault Support for Children | 1800 BRAVE 1 |
| Kids Helpline is for young people aged 5 to 25 | 1800 551 800 |
| Men's Referral Service | 1300 766 491 |
| Don't Become That Man helpline | 1300 243 413 |