

Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Customer policy

Purpose

Domestic, family and sexual violence (DFSV) is a serious issue that poses substantial risk to the health and wellbeing of our communities. As an essential service provider to South Australians, if you are impacted by domestic, family and sexual violence we will actively support you, with your safety a key priority. We also recognise that domestic, family and sexual violence can lead to payment difficulty and financial hardship.

Government, corporate and community sectors all have a responsibility to work together to support people affected by domestic, family and sexual violence. A collaborative and integrated response is essential to bring about long-term systemic change.

This document sets out our approach to supporting residential customers who disclose to us they are affected by domestic, family and sexual violence.

Principles

If you are a residential customer disclosing domestic, family and sexual violence, SA Water will ensure that:

- you are treated with respect and confidentiality
- there is a clear process for you to access support from SA Water, via our customer service team
- staff receive training to appropriately respond to disclosures of domestic, family and sexual violence
- your privacy and safety is of paramount importance in how we design and use the information we collect and store in our systems
- you are protected from debt collection activities and supported to manage your SA Water bill
- you are offered information on other services and networks that can provide the support you need.

Scope

This policy applies to all residential SA Water customers who disclose they are experiencing domestic, family and sexual violence and require assistance regarding SA Water matters. Some parts of the policy and protections also apply to residential tenants, as outlined throughout the document.

Definitions

Customer Care Team The Customer Care Team supports customers with specific challenges including financial hardship. They are trained to understand the needs of customers experiencing domestic, family and sexual violence.

Domestic, family and sexual violence Family violence is a term used for violence that occurs within family relationships, such as between parents and children, siblings, intimate partners or kinship relationships. Family relationships can include carers, foster carers and co-residents (for example in group homes or boarding residences).

Domestic violence is a type of family violence that occurs between current or former intimate partners (sometimes referred to as intimate partner violence).

Family violence, domestic violence and sexual violence can include a range of behaviour types such as:

- physical violence
- sexual violence
- emotional abuse
- psychological abuse
- coercive control
- financial abuse
- technological abuse
- social abuse/isolation
- spiritual/religious abuse
- pet abuse
- cultural abuse
- stalking.

More detail on the context of these forms of abuse can be found at the [Women's Safety Services SA](#) website.

Residential customer A property owner of a residential property in South Australia. This includes both metropolitan and regional areas.

Residential customer is defined in the [Water Retail Code - Major Retailers \(PDF, 784 KB\)](#) as a customer which acquires retail services primarily for domestic purposes.

This is underpinned by the definition of customer in the [Water Industry Act 2012 \(PDF, 579 KB\)](#) where customer means a person who owns land in relation to which a retail service is provided and includes:

- a) where the context requires, a person seeking the provision of a retail service; and
- b) in prescribed circumstances—a person supplied with retail services as a consumer or user of those services (without limiting the application of this definition to owners of land); and
- c) a person of a class declared by the regulations to be customers.

Tenant A resident of a property who does not own the property but is renting it from the owner.

If you are a tenant, we may still be able to help. Please contact our customer care team to discuss your situation.

How you can access support

Direct access to our team

If you are affected by domestic, family or sexual violence you can call our Customer Care Team on [1300 SA WATER \(1300 729 283\)](tel:1300729283).

We understand that sharing your story multiple times can be difficult. If you prefer, we can minimise the need for you to repeatedly disclose your situation.

Members of the Customer Care Team are trained to ensure that we:

- protect your privacy
- believe you without you having to provide proof of your situation (unless needed when considering debt management)
- provide connection to specialised domestic, family and sexual violence support services, and
- provide access to our financial support and assistance options, including protection from debt recovery action.

The Customer Care Team will confirm your preferred methods of communication.

You can also visit SA Water in person at 250 Victoria Square, Adelaide/Tarntanyangga, between the hours of 8:30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.

Protecting your privacy and safety

Additional privacy and identification processes

We ensure the secure handling of all customer information is in line with our [privacy policy](#) and relevant legislation.

We will ensure you feel confident that your personal information will not be shared without consent, especially in the case of joint accounts where we have received a domestic, family and sexual violence disclosure.

Your personal details can only be accessed by SA Water staff who have a need to access it as part of their duties.

Financial support available

Tailored financial support and protection from debt recovery

If you are affected by domestic, family and sexual violence you can access the support available under our [customer hardship policy](#).

Our team will tailor support to suit your individual needs. This may include:

- affordable payment arrangements (that are not means-tested)
- support with managing debt
- referrals to support networks and financial counsellors.

If you enter a payment assistance plan with our team, and maintain that arrangement, you will be protected from further debt recovery action related to SA Water bills.

Additional support

We provide additional support and assistance if you are left with debt as a result of domestic, family and sexual violence.

We may waive all or part of your debt based on several factors, including the amount of the debt, the circumstances in which the debt was incurred (including if it was incurred because of financial abuse), the payment assistance options that have been (or could be) effective, your personal circumstances and capacity to pay the debt

If your circumstances change, we will work with you to ensure that the financial and debt assistance also changes as required.

If you have a joint account, you may be left with debt by the other account holder(s) due to a domestic, family and sexual violence situation. Being part of a joint account may raise additional concerns about your financial situation and information privacy. In these situations, we will:

- keep your personal information confidential from other people on the account
- ensure that you can access support without having contact with the other people on the account
- offer the same types of financial support whether you are on a joint or individual account.

Support for tenants

If you are a tenant or someone who pays the water bill but are not the property owner, please contact our Customer Care Team to discuss your individual situation.

Referrals to other support services

Critical support beyond SA Water

To assist navigating what can be a challenging situation, if you disclose domestic, family and sexual violence you will be offered the contact details of community service organisations that provide a variety of wrap-around supports. Organisations include:

Emergency services

Call 000 if you are in immediate danger.

[1800RESPECT](#)

The national domestic, family and sexual violence counselling, information and support service providing crisis assistance for anyone of any gender, orientation, culture or ability.

[Call 1800 737 732](tel:1800737732) (24 hours, 7 days a week)

[13YARN](#)

A First Nations crisis support line for mob who are feeling overwhelmed or having difficulty coping. 13YARN (Thirteen YARN) offers a confidential one-on-one yarning opportunity with a Lifeline-trained Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Crisis Supporter who can provide crisis support.

[Call 13 92 76](tel:139276) (24 hours, 7 days a week)

[SA Domestic Violence Crisis Line](#)

Operated by Women's Safety Services SA to support you or someone you know who is experiencing domestic, family and sexual violence.

[Call 1800 800 098](tel:1800800098) (24 hours, 7 days a week)

[First Nations Healing](#)

The Nunga Mi:Minar program provides crisis accommodation within a secure location to support First Nations women and their children who are experiencing domestic, family and sexual violence.

[Call 08 8367 6474](tel:0883676474)

[QLife](#)

Anonymous, daily support to LGBTIQ+ people about a variety of matters specific to this community including domestic, family and sexual violence.

[Call 1800 184 527](tel:1800184527) (3pm to midnight)

[SA Yarrow Place Rape and Sexual Assault Service](#)

Free and confidential services for people aged 16 years and over for people who have recently been raped or sexually assaulted.

[Call 1800 817 421](tel:1800817421) (24 hours, 7 days a week)

[The Zahra Foundation](#)

For women impacted by domestic abuse, providing free programs, services and education to support economic well-being and a pathway out of poverty.

[Call 08 8352 1889](tel:0883521889)

[Beyond Blue](#)

Free mental health support including phone and online counselling service.

[Call 1300 22 4636](tel:1300224636) (24 hours, 7 days a week)

[MensLine Australia](#)

Free phone and online counselling support for men with concerns about mental health, relationships, anger management, family violence (using and experiencing), stress, and suicidal thoughts.

[Call 1300 789 978](tel:1300789978) (24 hours, 7 days a week)

No to Violence – Men’s Referral Service

The Men’s Referral Service operated by No to Violence is the national counselling, information and referral service for men who use violence and abuse to change their behaviour.

[Call 1300 766 491](tel:1300766491) (24 hours, 7 days a week)

Women’s Information Service

Financial counselling and assistance with Family Court attendance, free internet access, and a wide range of information and assistance.

[Call 1800 188 158](tel:1800188158) (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

Women’s Legal Service SA

Free and confidential legal advice, assistance, referrals and representation for women.

[Call 08 8231 8929](tel:0882318929) (10am to 4pm, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday)

Working Women’s Centre SA

Free legal advice, information and advocacy about issues in the workplace for women.

[Call 08 8410 6499](tel:0884106499) (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

Relationships Australia SA

Working with all peoples to recover from adverse experiences and trauma.

[Call 1300 364 277](tel:1300364277)

Online resources

A range of online resources are also available to help you better understand domestic, family and sexual violence.

[**Break the Cycle**](#) provides support and resources to help South Australians break the cycle of domestic abuse.

[**OurWatch**](#) is a national organisation leading the primary prevention of violence against women.

[**RESPECT.GOV.AU**](#) provides resources to prevent gender-based violence by promoting respectful relationships and addressing harmful attitudes and behaviours.

[**White Ribbon Australia**](#) is a national social movement to help end men’s violence against women through education, advocacy, and community programs.

[**Women’s Safety Services SA**](#) provides support to women and their children who are experiencing domestic and family violence.

Communicating the support available

Information via your preferred channels

You can find information about our domestic, family and sexual violence supports on our [Domestic, family and sexual violence support](#) web page.

We will share information about the supports we offer and the phone line for our team with community organisations and financial counsellors.

Information about our support can be provided via your preferred channels, for example by mail or email, to your nominated address.

Staff training and support

Staff at all levels are trained

We provide training and support resources for our staff to ensure a consistent awareness and understanding of domestic, family and sexual violence and our related policies, procedures and processes.

We provide additional role-specific training for staff with customer-facing roles, including best practice 'Recognise, Respond and Refer' training, and how to apply our policies, procedures and processes to effectively support customers who disclose domestic, family and sexual violence.

As well as ensuring that our staff can work to support and safeguard customers experiencing domestic, family and sexual violence we also train our people leaders to be able to support and/or refer team members who may also be impacted.

Complaints process

Details of our customer complaints and dispute resolution process are available on our [Complaints and compliments](#) web page. We can also make a copy of this process available, upon request at no charge.

As a customer of SA Water you have a right to have any complaint heard and addressed by us, and the right to escalate that complaint to the [Energy and Water Ombudsman SA \(EWOSA\)](#), in the event that your complaint cannot be resolved.