



Policy

AGL Family and Domestic Violence Policy

All States

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1. We're here to support you.

If there's an immediate threat to your safety, call emergency 000.

AGL is committed to supporting the health, safety and wellbeing of its customers. AGL does not tolerate family and domestic violence.

AGL is committed to supporting all customers who are experiencing or are impacted by family and domestic violence. We'll provide a supportive and confidential environment where you can inform us of your situation and seek the support you need.

We recognise family and domestic violence can happen to anyone, in any postcode, in any community. It can be used by a perpetrator to significantly undermine a person's rights, inhibit their options, undermine their safety, mental and physical health, and limit opportunities for learning and participation, access to material basics and economic wellbeing, relationships and connections.

When in this situation, your safety, wellbeing and dignity are often, if not always, under threat or undermined by the use of violence. We understand that being safe is no single or simple decision or task. We also know that violence is not the responsibility of the person experiencing it; the responsibility rests solely with the person perpetrating the violence.

Women and children are more often the victims of family and domestic violence and those who use violence are overwhelmingly male. Family and domestic violence can be perpetrated by a partner (current or former), family member, carer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kinship relation, family of choice relation, house mate, boyfriend or girlfriend. Family and domestic violence can occur across a diverse range of relationships and communities.

This policy is for all customers who are experiencing, or have experienced, family and domestic violence.

So, we can best support you, we invite you to communicate with us about your context. This can be by any method you feel comfortable with and you'll find our contact details at the end of this policy and on our website. If you're the account holder, you may want to nominate someone to contact us on your behalf. This may include:

- Financial counsellor;
- Social worker;
- Family member or friend;
- Someone who helps you manage your energy bills.

Let us know who your support person or representative is when we speak with you so you can provide consent for them to act on your behalf.

With your approval, we'll engage with them as we would with you, consistent with your consent, instructions and in line with our privacy obligations.

2. What is Family and Domestic Violence?

Family and domestic violence can take many forms and may be known as different things such as relationship violence or intimate partner violence¹.

Family and domestic violence is not limited to physical abuse. Other forms of family and domestic violence can include but are not limited to²:

- Economic or financial abuse: behaviour that is coercive, manipulative or unreasonably controls a person in a way that denies their personal or financial independence – often in a way that involves fear or intimidation, for example by coercing a person to hand over control of assets and income or forcing a person to put bills under their name and then not taking financial responsibility for them.
- Emotional or psychological abuse: behaviour that does not demonstrate respect for someone's feelings, opinions and experiences – for instance, name-calling or ridiculing someone, or threatening to institutionalise a person.
- Sexual abuse: any actual or threatened sexual contact without consent.
- Threatening or coercive behaviour, and/or
- Any other behaviour that controls or dominates you and causes you to fear for your safety or wellbeing, or that of someone else. For instance, isolating a person from their family or friends.³

3. Respectful Communication and Specialised Staff

You will always be treated with respect and dignity whenever you interact with us.

Our staff have undergone specialised training to help understand identify and respond to family and domestic violence in any form, in an educated and non-judgemental way. Our staff are equipped to identify the particular methods of support that can be tailored to your unique situation. Our first priority when you call will be to check whether you are calling from a safe place. Your safety is our priority above all else.

If you are comfortable and safe to do so, we encourage you to confide in us that you are experiencing family and domestic violence so we can quickly and accordingly apply the best support options to your account. Otherwise, if you are communicating in a way that indicates that you may be experiencing family and domestic violence, our agents have an obligation to verify your safety and determine if we can provide you with further personalised support.

AGL regularly reviews and updates its Family and Domestic Violence Program training which includes staff induction training, ongoing specialist agent education, and mandatory annual refresher courses. Our Family and Domestic Violence Policy is regularly evaluated and updated no less than every two years, and earlier upon the amendment of regulations, best practices or stronger protection methods becoming available to us.

¹ Vic.gov.au. (2012). What is family & domestic violence, Better Health, viewed 13 November 2019, www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/HealthyLiving/What-is-family-&domestic-violence.

² Family & domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria. (2013). *What is family & domestic violence?* Viewed 13 November 2019: <https://www.dvrcv.org.au/about-us/relationship-violence>.

³ Current definitions in family violence legislation | ALRC and What is family violence? | Safe and Equal

4. Our protections

We have many ways in which we will provide extra protections for you, for as long as you need. Our methods are designed with your safety in mind and ensure that your account information can only be accessed by a specialised team through additional security. This helps to ensure your data is protected and your energy requirements continue to be provided. We also work with you to find ways to reduce the additional stressors of payment difficulties and debt.

AGL, and our third parties, won't ask you for evidence before offering you these account protections.

- If you tell us you're experiencing family and domestic violence, we'll protect your account so that when you communicate with us, you'll be directed to a specialised team. We use multifactor authentication and code word protection to ensure a perpetrator, or third party can't gain access when contacting us. We won't need you to repeat or refer to the details of your circumstances when you contact us again, or to send us evidence.
- An account holder's information will only be disclosed to a third party under your explicit directive, or if we must disclose your information as a result of extenuating circumstances required by law.
- If you are an authorised contact person on an AGL customer's account, then the account holder can access your personal information that is stored on the account. As an authorised contact person, you can ask us to remove you from the account, which will remove your ability to access the account and also remove your personal information from the account records.
- When you speak to us, we'll confirm and record your preferred method of communication so that we can endeavour to make contact with you this way. If a method of communication you propose is not reasonably practicable, we will offer you an alternative method of communication.
- We will always assist customers experiencing payment difficulties due to family and domestic violence and understand that sometimes, debt may be the result of a perpetrator's financial abuse. We assess each situation individually and discuss various ways with you in which we can help, like payment plans, extensions or deferrals. If you are eligible, we will also consider reducing or waiving the debt that you are liable for on your AGL energy account.
- Our agents are trained to recognise your circumstances and will refer you to a range of support services that are better equipped to respond to your unique situation.
- We will not arrange for the gas or electricity at your supply address to be disconnected, other than in accordance with the energy laws and regulations that apply at your address. We understand that each customer's experience is different and talk with you to determine the best ways in which we can help. Find out more about our different types of protections, below.

5. Account Security

We take our customer's privacy and protecting their personal information seriously. We manage this information in line with the *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)* and the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs).

You can view a copy of our Privacy Policy on our website at agl.com.au/privacy.

How we handle your information



We're focused on keeping your information secure and will talk with you about suitable options to protect your information. Here are some examples of the things we do to protect your information.

- System security
 - > Access to your personal information is controlled by access and identity management systems.
 - > Your information is stored in secured systems, within protected data centres.
 - > We have technology that prevents malicious software or viruses and unauthorised persons from accessing our systems.
- Building security
 - > We use a mix of ID cards, electronically locked doors, alarms, cameras, guards and other controls to protect our offices and buildings.
- Account security
 - > If you tell us that you're experiencing family and domestic violence, your account will be restricted from general staff access, and can only be accessed by specific, authorised team members on an as needs 'basis.
 - > In general, we use multifactor authentication and we can assign a code word to your account to prevent unauthorised access by a perpetrator or third party.

Our programs and services

You can access a range of services to help you take control of your energy usage and AGL account. Everyone's circumstances are different so please let us know if you'd like some help to set these up:

- AGL App;
- AGL My Account (access to manage your AGL account online);
- Preferred payment options (direct debit, over the counter payments);
- Preferred method of communication.

6. Payment Assistance

If you're experiencing temporary financial difficulty as a result of family and domestic violence, there's different payment options available to you, including:

- Payment plans;
- Direct Debit;
- BPAY;
- Online payments;
- PayPal;
- SMS Pay;
- Centrepay.

You may also be able to access payment arrangements to help you over the short term, like:

- Payment extensions/deferrals;

- Instalment plans;
- Assisted payment arrangements.

For help with longer-term financial difficulty which makes it hard to pay your energy bills, visit agl.com.au/help-support. Under the 'Financial support and customer assistance' section you'll find information on how to access our hardship programs that can help you with confidential and personalised support. If you're in NSW, QLD, SA or WA, you'll learn about our [Staying Connected](#) program, and our Victorian customers will see information about [Payment Support Victoria](#). Read your state's program policy to know more about the support on offer. We are here to support you and will offer you multiple payment arrangements if your financial circumstances require extra support.

Once we agree to a payment plan, we'll send you information including:

- who to contact for help;
- the amount you'll pay each time; and
when you need to make your payments (or the frequency of payments)

We will not apply late payment fees to your account, and we'll consider your individual financial situation and what you can afford to pay before we make any recommendations – that way, the program is tailored to your circumstances.

Financial Counselling Services

AGL can help connect you with a free Financial Counselling service. Contact us on **131 245** for more information regarding financial counselling, or see our external support referenced in this policy.

7. External Support

The following external support services may be able to assist with support aligned to your needs and safety requirements. It's not exhaustive, and there are other agencies that may provide similar services.

SERVICES DIRECTLY RELATED TO FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	
AGENCY	CONTACT DETAILS
National	
Police	Phone: 000
Emergency Response (24 hours)	Phone: 000
National 1800 RESPECT Line: National counselling and support service for people impacted by family and domestic violence, sexual assault and abuse.	Phone: 1800 737 732 Website: www.1800respect.org.au/ 24/7
Men's Referral Service: An anonymous and confidential telephone counselling, information and referrals service to help men involved in family and domestic violence matters	Phone: 1300 766 491 Website: www.ntv.org.au/mrs/

Kids Helpline Free confidential counselling for children and young people aged 5 to 25.	Phone: 1800 55 1800. 24/7
State-based	
<u>Victoria:</u> Safe Steps: For crisis support for women and children affected by family violence. Sexual Assault Crisis Line Are You Safe At Home? website: Provides state-based services directories with information and where to go for help for those who are experiencing family violence or do not feel safe at home. The site also provides resources for those who may know someone that is unsafe, aimed at understanding and responding with conversation starters and information to have potentially lifesaving chats. InTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence Tailored support for women from migrant and refugee backgrounds experiencing family violence, available in many languages Elizabeth Morgan House Aboriginal Women's Family & Domestic Violence Services: Crisis accommodation and support for Aboriginal women, their children, parents of Aboriginal children, as well as partners and ex-partners of Aboriginal people. Djirra Culturally safe family violence and legal support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Rainbow Door Information advice and referral for LGBTIQA+ people, their friends and family	Phone: 1800 737 732 24/7 Phone: 1800 806 292 Website: www.areyousafeathome.org.au/find-a-service/ Phone: 1800 755 988 Website: www.intouch.org.au/ Mon-Fri 9am-5pm Phone: 1800 364 297 Website: www.emhaws.org.au 24/7 Phone: 1800 105 303 9am-10pm Monday-Friday Website: www.Djirra.org.au Phone: 1800 729 367 10am-5pm everyday

<p><u>New South Wales:</u></p> <p><i>NSW Family & Domestic Violence Line:</i> Provides phone counselling, information and referrals for women and same-sex partners who are experiencing or have experienced family and domestic violence.</p> <p><i>NSW Sexual Violence Helpline:</i> Provides phone and online counselling for anyone who is or has experienced sexual violence and their supporters.</p> <p>Immigrant Women's Speakout Association NSW For migrant and refugee women who are victims of violence. Counselling and bilingual workers.</p> <p>ACON LGBTI health organisation offering information, referrals, counselling and support for LGBTI people in NSW experiencing domestic and family violence</p>	<p>Phone: 1800 656 463 24/7</p> <p>Phone: 1800 424 017 24/7</p> <p>Phone: 02 9635 8022 Mon-Fri 9.30am-5pm. <i>This phone number is not a free call number and may appear on your telecommunications bill</i></p> <p>Phone: 02 9206 2000 9am-6pm Monday-Friday <i>This phone number is not a free call number and may appear on your telecommunications bill</i></p>
<p><u>Queensland:</u></p> <p><i>Queensland Sexual Assault Helpline (QSAN):</i> The QSAN helpline offers telephone support and crisis counselling to anyone – adults and young people of any gender identity – who has been sexually assaulted or abused.</p> <p><i>DVConnect WomensLine:</i> Crisis counselling and support for women affected by domestic or family violence</p> <p><i>DVConnect Mensline:</i> Counselling support and information for men who have experienced violence in their relationship.</p> <p>Brisbane Domestic Violence Service Crisis Support and assistance for families, women, men, young people and children.</p>	<p>Phone: 1800 010 120 Website: www.dvconnect.org/sexual-assault-helpline/ 7 days a week 7.30am-11.30pm</p> <p>Phone: 1800 811 811 Website: www.dvconnect.org/womensline 24/7</p> <p>Phone: 1800 600 636 Website: www.dvconnect.org/mensline 9am-midnight 7 days a week</p> <p>Phone: 07 3217 2544. 24/7 <i>This phone number is not a free call number and may appear on your telecommunications bill</i></p>

<p><u>South Australia:</u></p> <p>Domestic Violence Crisis Line Crisis counselling, support and referral to safe accommodation</p> <p><i>Family & Domestic Violence and Aboriginal Family & Domestic Violence Gateway Services:</i> Counselling and support for Aboriginal women experiencing family and domestic violence.</p> <p><i>Yarrow Place Rape and Sexual Assault Services:</i> Lead public health agency responding to adult rape and sexual assault in South Australia for people aged 16 years and over.</p>	<p>Phone: 1800 800 098 Website: www.womenssafetyservices.com.au 24/7</p> <p>Phone: 1300 782 200 24/7</p> <p>Phone: 1800 817 421 Website: www.wchn.sa.gov.au/yarrow-place 24/7</p>
<p><u>Western Australia:</u></p> <p><i>Sexual Assault Resource Centre:</i> A statewide service providing emergency services and counselling for people who have experienced both past and recent sexual assault.</p> <p><i>Women's Domestic Violence Helpline:</i> State-wide service providing support and counselling for women experiencing family and domestic violence.</p> <p><i>Men's Domestic Violence Helpline</i> Information, referral and telephone counselling for men seeking help for their violence behaviour, or for male victims of family and domestic violence.</p>	<p>Phone: 1800 199 888 24/7</p> <p>Phone: 1800 007 339 Website: www.wa.gov.au/service/community-services/community-support/womens-domestic-violence-helpline 24/7</p> <p>Phone: 1800 000 599 24/7</p>

8. How to Contact Us and Complaint Handling

For further information on how AGL can provide assistance under the Family and Domestic Violence Policy, please contact us:



Visit **agl.com.au/familyviolence**



Call us on **131 245** – Customer Solutions



AGL understands the important role that Community Agencies have in supporting customers in remote areas, CALD and Indigenous communities, customers with limited or no access to the internet, low English literacy, or have a disability. We provide information to various Community Agencies about our Family and Domestic Violence Policy.



Each bill we send you contains a section on Payment Assistance options available to eligible customers, including energy concessions and rebates, AGL payment plans and the Centrepay scheme. We can also send you a copy of our Family and Domestic Violence Policy by mail, free of charge.



We have an interpreter service available for customers whose first language is a language other than English. To access this service contact 1300 307 245. The AGL Family and Domestic Violence Policy will be translated into other languages to improve accessibility for culturally and linguistically diverse communities. These are available on our website.



A TTY service is available for hearing and speech impaired customers. To access this service, please contact us on **133 677** quoting 1300 664 358.

Once in a while, things can go wrong but if this happens, we're committed to making it right.

We offer a simple approach to addressing complaints about our products or services. Our customer service representatives will work with you to resolve any issues quickly, fairly and collaboratively. Your privacy is important to us, and all complaints are treated confidentially. Most complaints are resolved



within a few days while more complex matters may take a little longer. We'll keep you updated on the progress of your complaint.

If you experience a problem or want to provide some feedback, our Customer Solutions team are your first point of contact and will investigate your concern then work with you to resolve it. We'll share your feedback about our products and services with relevant areas to make improvements.

If you're not satisfied with the resolution you've received, your matter can be reviewed by our Complaints specialists who'll work closely with you to resolve your concerns.

Most matters can be resolved through our internal complaint process, and we ask that you give us the opportunity to explore all avenues in resolving your complaint. If you're not satisfied with the handling of your complaint, you can contact the Energy & Water Ombudsman in your state for free independent advice and information.

Energy and Water Ombudsman New South Wales	1800 246 545	www.ewon.com.au
Energy and Water Ombudsman South Australia	1800 665 565	www.ewosa.com.au
Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland	1800 662 837	www.ewoq.com.au
Energy and Water Ombudsman Victoria	1800 500 509	www.ewov.com.au
Energy and Water Ombudsman Western Australia	1800 754 004	www.energyandwater.ombudsman.wa.gov.au