

Approved: October 2023

Review due: October 2026

1. Objective

This Policy sets out Goulburn-Murray Water (GMW) commitment to support customers affected by family violence.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to customers who are impacted by family violence. GMW has a separate policy outlining support for staff impacted by family violence.

3. Policy

GMW is committed to showing leadership against forms of family violence and promoting a safe and welcoming community.

GMW seeks to create a safe and secure environment where customers are aware of the support available and are comfortable in requesting confidential assistance for family violence related concerns.

GMW is committed to supporting customers who have experienced, or are experiencing, family violence. There is a range of measures GMW has implemented to achieve this:

- **Ongoing Training for Staff:** All relevant staff receive regular training to effectively identify and appropriately deal with customers affected by family violence.
- **Confidential Information Management:** GMW handles all personal information of those affected by family violence with utmost confidentiality and security. Access to suppressed information is minimised, and staff with access undergo the same training as customer-facing staff. When an account is associated with a family violence concern, account information is restricted at a system level to limit access to designated, trained staff.
- **Debt Management and Recovery:** GMW acknowledges that family violence may lead to difficulties in making payments. Customers who disclose their situation or are identified as experiencing family violence will be directed to the Revenue Team for case management. GMW will assess each customer's situation and provide tailored assistance. GMW's debt management and recovery procedures include specific guidelines for the recovery of debt, circumstances in which interest accrual will be suspended or waived, and payment support for customers affected by family violence.
- **Joint accounts:** GMW acknowledges customers with joint accounts may face additional barriers to accessing debt assistance, particularly where the other person on the account is a perpetrator. This may include not having access to financial information, being unaware of a debt and being apprehensive about the prospect of encountering the perpetrator. To ensure customers with joint accounts can access the same debt assistance as other customers affected by family violence, GMW will:



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- ensure customer confidentiality is protected from other person/s on the account,
 - ensure that support can be accessed without contact with the perpetrator, and
 - provide the same tailored approach to managing joint debts as applies to individual accounts.
- Streamlined Internal Processes: Internal processes are streamlined to ensure customers affected by family violence do not have to repeat their disclosure and can receive uninterrupted service. Customers who disclose their situation or are identified as experiencing family violence will be assigned a designated officer to communicate with.
 - Referral Process: As part of staff training, GMW staff are informed about how to refer customers affected by family violence to external assistance for further support.
 - Further information about GMW's debt management and hardship procedures can be found on our website here: [Payment Assistance - Goulburn Murray Water \(g-mwater.com.au\)](https://www.goulburnmurraywater.com.au).

4. Responsibilities

Responsibility	Who
Approval	General Manager Customer & Stakeholders
To ensure staff have access to training, including information on referrals is available for customers.	People and Culture Team
To negotiate payment agreements when customers attribute financial difficulty due to family violence	Finance team
To ensure information about customers impacted by family violence is managed securely	IT and relevant staff
To deal appropriately with customers affected by family violence	All relevant staff

5. Definitions

Family Violence is defined as any of the following:

- Behaviour by a person towards a family member of that person if that behaviour:
 - is physically abusive behaviour; causing personal injury or threatening to do so i.e. punching, slapping, kicking and pushing
 - is sexually abusive i.e. forces themselves sexually onto another person without permission
 - is emotionally or psychologically abusive behaviour; i.e. constant criticism, blame, put downs, sulking
 - is economically abusive; withholds monies from joint/family accounts



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- is threatening; yelling, screaming, stating that they would harm a friend, child or other family member
- is coercive; manipulative and controlling
- is dominating a family member resulting in fear by threatening to commit suicide or self-harm, unauthorised surveillance, unlawfully stalking, intimidate or frighten a person, depriving a person of their liberty, controlling their freedom and choices.
- Behaviour by a person that causes a child to hear or witness, or otherwise be exposed to the effects of, behaviour referred to above.

6. Document history

Doc #	Date approved	Approved by	Approval #
A4687361	7/07/2023	General Manager Customers & Stakeholders, Kate Biglin	A4688592
	31/10/2023	General Manager Customers & Stakeholders, Kate Biglin	

7. Associated documents

Document name	#
Customer Charter	Intranet
Financial Management Compliance Framework	A1428864
Debt Management and Financial Hardship Procedures	Intranet
Information Management	A3248132
Training and Development Policy and Procedure	A3659202
Privacy Policy	A2291827
Family Violence Customer Assistance Guidelines	A3339049

