

# Family Violence Policy

## 1. Introduction

**If there is an immediate threat to your safety, call emergency services 000.**

LPE recognises our customers may be exposed to family violence and we are committed to actively supporting customers who may be affected. Each year in Australia millions of people experience family violence and impacts are far-reaching.

A key priority of LPE's Family Violence Policy is to ensure all customers affected by family violence are provided safe, supportive and flexible assistance, and all interactions are undertaken in a respectful and sensitive manner.

LPE is committed to providing a supportive and confidential environment where you can inform us of your circumstances and seek the support you need.

## 2. Purpose

This policy sets out LPE's commitment to effectively support customers affected by family violence. This policy applies to all customers who are experiencing, have experienced or are impacted by family violence.

## 3. What is Family Violence

Family violence occurs when one person in an intimate personal or family-like relationship uses violence or abuse to maintain power and control over the other person. Family violence may take different forms, may be known as different things such as relationship violence or intimate partner violence, and is not limited to physical violence.

Family violence can include but is not limited to:

- Emotional or psychological abuse;
- Verbal abuse;
- Financial or economic abuse is a form of abuse when one partner has control over the other partner's access to economic resources, diminishing their capacity to support themselves so they become financially dependent on the perpetrator. For example, the perpetrator prevents a person from accessing funds, deciding when or how to access or use cash, being forced to put bills in your name, or putting bills under their name and then not taking financial responsibility for them. Essential services such as electricity can be used by perpetrators of family violence to coerce and cause harm as a form of economic abuse, due to the critical function essential services play in daily life.

- Physical or sexual abuse;
- Threatening or coercive behaviour;
- Any other behaviour that controls or dominates you and causes you to fear for your safety or wellbeing, or that of someone else.

LPE recognises that family violence can happen to anyone, 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 wellbeing, and limit opportunities for learning and participation, access to material basics and economic wellbeing, relationships and connections.

## 4. Get in touch

LPE understands that experiencing these challenges is difficult and know that every customer's experience is personal and sensitive. We will be guided by the information you provide to us.

To ensure we can provide the support you need with the highest regard for your safety, we encourage you to contact us on 1300 443 735 or email [info@localityenergy.com.au](mailto:info@localityenergy.com.au) to liaise with a member of our Customer Support team, who are trained to provide you with specialist support while you are experiencing or have experienced family violence. Our team will identify your preferred method of communication and if you have a chosen third-party representative who we should communicate with on your behalf.

Our processes aim to avoid affected customers having to repeatedly disclose instances of family violence.

## 5. How LPE will assist affected customers

### Employee Training and Awareness

We have provided awareness training for all employees who engage with customers and their managers, and employees who are responsible for the systems and processes that guide or define our interactions with customers. Some matters the team are trained in are as follows:

- Understanding the nature and consequences of family violence;
- How to apply our family violence policy, including financial impact that may require payment assistance options;
- How to identify signs of family violence and how to engage effectively with a customer affected by family violence;
- Assist you in accessing specialist family violence services.

## Account Security

LPE respects your safety and privacy. Unless you instruct us otherwise, we will not disclose your information to anyone else, even if their name is on the account. All conversations are confidential and access to confidential information will be provided only with the customer's consent. Only staff who are directly involved will have access to the information you provide.

LPE will work with you to identify your preferred method of communicating with or providing information to you to support your safety and privacy.

Here are some examples of the things we do to protect your information:

### 1. 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.
- Personalised passwords are used to prevent unauthorised access to your account by the perpetrator.

### 2. Building Security

- We use a mix of site access cards, alarms, cameras and other controls to protect our offices.

### 3. Account Security

- We have a system in place to apply an identifier to the account of a customer affected by family violence, to avoid having to repeatedly disclose or refer to their experiences of family violence to our team;
- If you disclose to us that you're experiencing family violence, we can assign a code word or PIN to your account to prevent unauthorised access by the perpetrator.

You can view a copy of our Privacy Policy on our website at

<https://localityenergy.com.au/privacy-policy>

## Debt Management

LPE recognises family violence is a potential cause of payment difficulty. LPE provides support and assistance to customers left with debt as a result of family violence. We'll work with you to find a solution for your individual situation. If you disclose to us that you're experiencing family violence, LPE will remove any late payment fees that have been applied to your account.

As part of our commitment to supporting all customers including those impacted by family violence, LPE aims to provide hardship assistance as quickly as possible, where possible. This could include

minimising the need for additional documentation or providing longer term assistance with repayments.

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

- Payment plans;
- Direct Debit;
- BPAY;
- Online payments;
- Centrepay;
- Payment extensions/deferrals.

You can view a copy of our Hardship Policy on our website at:

<https://localityenergy.com.au/hardship-policy>

## 6. External Support

LPE has identified some external support services who can provide assistance to customers affected by family violence. We may refer you to these services for further assistance at a time and in a manner that considers your immediate circumstances. This is not an exhaustive list and there may be other available services.

SERVICES SPECIALISING IN FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	
AGENCY	CONTACT
<b>Police</b>	Phone: 000
<b>Emergency Services</b> (24 hours)	Phone: 000
<b>Lifeline:</b> Crisis support and suicide prevention services (24 hours)	Phone: 13 11 14
<b>National 1800 RESPECT Line:</b> National counselling and support service for people impacted by family and domestic violence, sexual assault and abuse.	Phone: 1800 737 732 Website: <a href="http://www.1800respect.org.au/">www.1800respect.org.au/</a>
<b>Queensland:</b> <b>Dvconnect WomensLine:</b> Free state-wide telephone service that provides confidential counselling and referral to crisis accommodation for women and children affected by family and domestic violence	Phone: 1800 811 811 Website: <a href="http://www.dvconnect.org/womensline">www.dvconnect.org/womensline</a>

<p>and those who are concerned about a friend or family member.</p> <p><b>Dvconnect Mensline:</b> Free state-wide telephone service that provides counselling and referral for men for a range of issues especially those who have experienced or use family and domestic violence and those who are concerned about a friend or family member.</p>	<p>Phone: 1800 600 636</p> <p>Website: <a href="http://www.dvconnect.org/mensline">www.dvconnect.org/mensline</a></p>
<p><b>New South Wales:</b></p> <p><b>NSW Family &amp; Domestic Violence Line:</b> Provides phone counselling, information and referrals for women and same sex partners who are experiencing or have experienced family and domestic violence.</p> <p><b>NSW Sexual Violence Helpline:</b> Provides phone and online counselling for anyone who is or has experienced sexual violence and their supporters.</p>	<p>Phone: 1800 656 463</p> <p>Phone: 1800 385 578</p> <p>Website: <a href="http://www.fullstop.org.au/get-help">www.fullstop.org.au/get-help</a></p>

## 7. Complaint Handling

If you are dissatisfied with an interaction or outcome, you can request to have your complaint reviewed by an LPE representative at a higher level to the initial LPE representative who handled the matter by contacting LPE on [complaints@localityenergy.com.au](mailto:complaints@localityenergy.com.au) or calling on 1300 443 735

If you remain dissatisfied with our response to your complaint, it is your right to contact the Energy Ombudsman in your state. The Energy and Water Ombudsman in each state is a free and independent service that can provide information, advice and assistance to customer who feel any complaint is not satisfactorily dealt with. Their details are outlined below.

<p><b>Energy &amp; Water Ombudsman QLD (EWOQ)</b></p> <p><b>Free-call:</b> 1800 662 837</p> <p><b>Fax:</b> (07) 3087 9477</p> <p><b>Online:</b> <a href="http://www.ewoq.com.au">http://www.ewoq.com.au</a></p> <p><b>Mail:</b> PO Box 3640, South Brisbane BC Qld 4101</p>	<p><b>Energy &amp; Water Ombudsman NSW (EWON)</b></p> <p><b>Free-call:</b> 1800 246 545</p> <p><b>Free-fax:</b> 1800 812 291</p> <p><b>Online:</b> <a href="http://www.ewon.com.au">www.ewon.com.au</a></p> <p><b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:complaints@ewon.com.au">complaints@ewon.com.au</a></p> <p><b>Free-mail:</b> Reply Paid 86550, Sydney South NSW 1234</p>
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For further information about how complaints will be dealt with please visit the website at <https://localityenergy.com.au/complaints>.

## 8. Review

LPE Policies are subject to routine reviews, as well as review in accordance with applicable legislative and internal changes and/or requirements.