

Family violence assistance

1. Overview

1.1 At a glance

Our policy explains how we can help you if you're experiencing or have been affected by family violence.

1.2 Scope

Our policy covers you if you self-identify or are identified by us or a community service provider as experiencing family violence.

1.3 Objective

Our policy helps you:

- keep the water on – regardless of your capacity to pay
- explain your circumstances as few times as possible
- keep your personal information, including your location, safe.

2. Policy in detail

We want to help you when you need it and make it as easy as possible.

2.1 We'll keep your information safe

All customers identified as experiencing or affected by family violence will be entered into our BillAssist program, regardless of their financial situation.

We do this as a means of protecting sensitive customer information and assigning a case coordinator to be a single point of contact. Being in the BillAssist program means all enquiries will go through our dedicated Customer Care team who have access to the confidential information section on a customer's account. This helps to ensure information is not inadvertently provided to the perpetrator or other connected parties. The team all hold a tertiary qualification in social services and have received specific training in domestic and family violence.

2.2 We'll make it easy if you need help with your bill

We understand that every customer's situation is different. We know that water as an essential service makes it a target for financial abuse. Our staff will offer you a payment arrangement to help you pay your bill. Our payment arrangements are flexible and you can re-negotiate them if your circumstances change. We'll check in with you every three months to make sure everything is staying on track.

2.3 We'll offer support if you need a little more help with your bill

For residential customers, whether you're an owner or a tenant, we can offer you more help if you need it. If you get in touch, we can work together to get on top of your bill and offer you specialised help. We can:

- make sure you get the government concessions you're entitled to
- give you the right payment plan
- help you set up Centrepay payments if you get Centrelink support
- refer you to a community service agency that we partner with for help. This might be for counselling services, emergency financial relief and medical advice and support
- offer you help through our Payment Assistance Scheme (PAS)
- help you use less water by giving you tips on ways to save
- offer emergency and essential plumbing work through our PlumbAssist® service (if you own and live in your home).

2.4 We won't restrict your water supply or take legal action if we're helping you

We'd like to work with you to keep the water on. We won't restrict your water supply or take legal action in any of these situations:

- We're helping you through our BillAssist® program or Payment Assistance Scheme (PAS).
- You've asked for a payment plan and are making payments.
- You've set up Centrepay payments through Centrelink and are making payments.
- You've lodged a complaint about your bill and we're looking into it or you've lodged one with the [Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW](#).

2.5 We'll give you a respectful, confidential service

Our staff work respectfully with you and care about your [privacy](#). We take it very seriously and comply with NSW privacy laws.

2.6 We'll give you help for free

Our help and advice is free. We also offer a free:

- interpreter service if you need help with English
- teletypewriter (TTY) service if you're hearing impaired.

We promote [help with your bill](#) on bills for your home, reminder notices and on our website. We also publish water wise tips on our website.

3. Context

3.1 Accountabilities

Position	Accountabilities
Head of Customer Programs	Policy endorser
Customer Care Team Manager	Policy subject matter expert
Customer Programs Team	Policy verifier
GM of Customer Services	Policy owner

3.2 References

Document type	Title
Compliance obligations	Sydney Water Act 1994 Customer Contract

4. Ownership

Role	Title
Group	Customer Delivery
Owner	Head of Customer Services
Author	Customer Access and Information Specialist – Customer Programs

4.1 Change history

Version	Issue date	Approved by	Brief description of change and consultation
1	01/04/2020	Head of Customer Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of policy

