



# Humenergy Family Violence Policy

Family Violence Policy



## 1. Overview

This policy applies to all residential and small business customers of Humenergy who may be affected by family violence. It explains how we will help you if you tell us that you are experiencing family violence, including our obligations to protect your energy-related information, and support you if you are having trouble paying your bills.

**If you believe you are in immediate danger, please call emergency services on 000.**

## 2. Introduction

Humenergy Group Pty Ltd t/as RMS Energy Management ("Humenergy") is committed to supporting customers who may be affected by family violence.

Humenergy recognises that family violence can impact a customer's safety, wellbeing, and ability to manage their energy account. We are committed to responding with sensitivity, respect, and confidentiality.

This policy operates in addition to any rights you may have under applicable laws.

## 3. What is Family Violence

Family violence is when a person in a family, domestic, or intimate relationship is violent, threatening, coercive, controlling, or causes a person to feel unsafe.

Family violence can include, but is not limited to:

**financial** abuse, such as controlling your money, taking away your financial independence, or refusing to provide necessary financial support for you or your dependents

**emotional or psychological** abuse, such as manipulation, intimidation, or behaviours that undermine you or make you feel controlled

**physical** abuse; intentionally using physical force against you, another person, or animal

**sexual** abuse, including any forced, unwanted or exploitative sexual activity

**social** abuse, such as isolating you from your family, friends or culture

**elder** abuse, such as a single or repeated act or failure to act, including threats, that results in harm or distress to an older person. These occur where there is an expectation of trust and/or a power imbalance between the party responsible and the older person.

## 4. What we will do to help you

If you tell us that you are affected by family violence, we will take extra precautions with your energy-related information.

We will only discuss your energy contract or energy bills with you, or someone you choose to communicate with us. Our staff are trained to respond sensitively and respectfully to disclosures of family violence.

We will **not** ask you to give us evidence that you are affected before we can help you.

We will **not** ask you to repeatedly disclose your personal circumstances.

## 5. You can choose how you want to communicate with us

We will request your preferred form of communication, and we will only use that form of communication to talk to you about your energy account.

If we cannot use your preferred form of communication, we will offer other ways to communicate with you.

## 6. You can nominate a support person

You can choose a support person to communicate with us:

A support person could include a:

- family member or friend
- financial counsellor
- social worker
- someone who helps you manage your energy bills.

We will only do this if you give us your permission and provide us the contact details of your preferred person(s). If this happens, we will note their details in our records.

We will only communicate with you and/or the person you choose, according to your instructions. If you prefer, we can communicate solely with your chosen support person.

### 7. Protecting your information

If you tell us you are affected by family violence, we will take extra steps to protect information related to your energy account. This includes restricting access to your information to authorised employees or agents who need it to manage your account and storing your information in secure password-protected systems.

With your consent, we may flag your account so that staff managing your account take extra care to keep your information confidential and communicate with you using your preferred and safe method of communication and/or through your chosen support person.

We will not disclose your energy-related information unless you give us permission or we are required by law to do so.

### 8. Assistance for payment difficulties

Family violence can include **financial abuse**, which may make it difficult to pay energy bills. Financial abuse can occur when someone controls or restricts your access to money, manipulates financial decisions, or uses your money or assets without your consent. Energy accounts can also be used as a tool for financial abuse, including where an account is opened in your name without your consent, costs are unfairly imposed on you, or your account details are used to control or manipulate you.

We recognise that family violence is a likely cause of payment difficulties. If you are experiencing financial hardship due to family violence, we will take this into account when supporting you with matters relating to payment of your energy bills.

If you are affected by family violence and are struggling to pay your energy bills, you can contact us for help at any time. We may offer support options, including:

## Waiving late payment fees

We will waive late payment fees on your energy bill.

## Payment plans

If you are a residential customer on a payment plan and have missed payments, we will work with you to set up a new or revised payment plan that takes your circumstances into account.

## Hardship support

If you are a residential customer experiencing payment difficulties, we will tell you about the assistance available under our Hardship policy. We can provide this information on request.

## Protection from disconnection

We will consider how family violence has affected your ability to pay and will not disconnect your energy supply where unpaid bills are a result of family violence or where disconnection would impact your safety.

## 9. Support services

If you are affected by family violence, the support services below may assist you.

### Family Violence Support Services

Services	Contact Details
<p><b>National 1800 RESPECT Line</b> (24 hours)</p> <p>Free advice and counselling for both people experiencing family violence and professionals responding to family violence</p>	<p>Call 1800 737 732</p> <p>Text 0458 737 732</p> <p><a href="http://www.1800respect.org.au">www.1800respect.org.au</a></p>
<p><b>Lifeline</b> (24 hours)</p> <p>Crisis support and suicide prevention services.</p>	<p>Call 13 11 14</p> <p><a href="http://www.lifeline.org.au">www.lifeline.org.au</a></p>
<p><b>Kids Helpline</b> (24 hours)</p> <p>Free, confidential counselling for children and young people aged 5 to 25. Web chat available.</p>	<p>Call 1800 55 1800</p> <p><a href="http://www.kidshelpline.com.au">www.kidshelpline.com.au</a></p>

<b>13 YARN (24 hours)</b> Service for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in crisis.	Call 13 92 76 <a href="https://www.13yarn.org.au/">https://www.13yarn.org.au/</a>
<b>QLife</b> Free support for LGBTIQ+ Australians wanting support around gender, sexuality and relationships. Web chat available.	Call 1800 184 527 <a href="https://qlife.org.au/">https://qlife.org.au/</a>
<b>Men's Referral Service</b> An anonymous and confidential telephone counselling service to help men involved in family and domestic violence matters	Call 1300 766 491 <a href="http://www.ntv.org.au/get-help/">www.ntv.org.au/get-help/</a>
<b>Elder Abuse Helpline</b> A trained operator will talk to you about your concerns and provide referrals to the relevant support services.	1300 651 192 (Queensland) 07 3867 2525 (rest of Australia)

## Financial Help Services

Services	Contact Details
<b>National Debt Helpline</b> Free advice coordinated by Financial Counselling Australia.	Call 1800 007 007 <a href="https://ndh.org.au/">https://ndh.org.au/</a>

## Ombudsman Schemes

Energy ombudsman schemes can help resolve a complaint about your electricity and gas seller. Their services are free and available if you are a residential customer.

If you have a complaint that you cannot resolve with your energy seller, you should contact the ombudsman scheme in your state.

Services	Contact Details
<b>Energy &amp; Water Ombudsman NSW</b>	1800 246 545 <a href="http://www.ewon.com.au">www.ewon.com.au</a>
<b>Energy and Water Ombudsman QLD</b>	1800 662 837 <a href="http://www.ewoq.com.au">www.ewoq.com.au</a>