

Family Violence Guide – Making a Start

The following is a brief overview of first steps/considerations for businesses developing policies for customers who experience family violence.

See our [other guides](#) which have been developed for businesses and government departments to assist the development of family violence policies.

A ‘whole of business’ approach is needed, where staff and customers are supported

Board and senior management ‘buy in’ is vital.

- Consider how you might demonstrate the importance of FV policies (for customers and staff) to senior management or other key personnel.
 - Consider sharing customer case studies – or even relevant customer call recordings.
 - Share examples of approaches taken by other businesses
- Identify where a family violence strategy fits within your corporate plan and how it links with other policies, for example:
 - HR policies
 - Responding to vulnerable customers
 - Privacy

Ensure support for staff is in place before implementing policies for customers

Provide family violence training for all staff on understanding the nature of family violence, how to respond to colleagues (those who experience family violence as well as perpetrators) and where to go (or refer to) for help.

Staff who feel supported, and understand the nature of family violence, will be better able to make a valuable contribution to the development of family violence policies for customers.

Choose the right training provider

Family violence is complex and some harmful myths abound. The trainer must have appropriate knowledge and experience, and be able to present in a way that is meaningful and practical for staff. See [Family Violence Guide – Training](#)

What change is needed?

- Consider the range of processes and products offered by your business and identify various points where risks might arise for customers who are experiencing family violence.
- Identify how the business currently responds to your customer base, where the gaps are, and what systems and processes are needed to support customers and staff.

Develop policies & processes to respond to FV experienced by customers

Involve all relevant sections of the business. This will include those that don't directly interact with customers but which can have an impact on customer outcomes, for example, product development and IT.

Consider hearing from your customers with lived experience. There are organisations such as [Speak Out](#) which can link you with trained survivor advocates who can share their experience and expertise.

Training for staff who connect with customers (or supervise/manage them).

Consider your staff's current understanding of family violence issues and design training accordingly.

A reputable training provider should take into account that there are likely to be victim/survivors and perpetrators in training sessions.

Staff who deal with customers need training to recognise family violence, respond and refer.

Different types of training can be provided depending on the person's role. Consider co-facilitated training with a family violence specialist working with a trainer who is familiar with the business' processes.

Learn from other businesses which have already implemented policies and be prepared to share your experience.

Questions you might ask others include:

- How did senior management come to understand the importance of a family violence response?
- What were the first steps?
- What went right?
- What would be done differently?
- Can they share their policy or other resources?

- Can they recommend a training provider?

Economic Abuse Reference Group –24/9/18 - updated 29/10/18

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