



TAILOR

DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE (DFV) ACTION PLAN REPORT



Optus Pty Limited

Submitted to Telco Together Foundation on 6 March 2024

OPTUS

FOREWORD

At Optus, we stand united against all forms of domestic and family violence, and we pledge our support for victims, survivors, and the people who support them. We commit to seeking to understand ways to continually improve the assistance we provide and the best and safest way we can deliver it.

At Optus, we understand the vital role of telecommunications as a lifeline in domestic and family violence situations. We are acutely aware of its potential for misuse in instances of control and abuse, whether that be physical, sexual, emotional, financial, or psychological abuse . Optus is dedicated to ensuring customers and employees receive the compassionate support they need, precisely when they need it most. The safety and well-being of all Australians, along with staying connected to their support networks, are our highest priorities.

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DEVELOP

We have developed our Organisational DFV Position Statement.



We have developed our DFV Action Plan for our customers. This includes our ability to provide a customised tailored DFV response if and when necessary, within our Customer Support Policy. This is how we support our vulnerable and/or marginalised customers:



Providing dedicated Specialist Care

We are committed to appropriately and efficiently serving our vulnerable customers through any of Optus' direct channels to have their telecommunication needs addressed with appropriate regard to their vulnerability.

- Heightened Support

Where heightened support is needed, Specialist Care serves as a dedicated team for customers facing vulnerability. They are equipped with the necessary expertise, delegations, and resources to effectively assist those who are experiencing significant challenges in accessing and managing their communication service. They offer guidance to frontline staff and act as the next level of support if a customer needs additional care.

- Hardship Support

Our specialist teams are also empowered to provide appropriate assistance to any customer deemed to be in financial hardship or considered vulnerable. They explore multiple options with customers, enabling them to regain control of their account payments and stay connected to their service via mutually agreed arrangements. Financial counselling is also offered to all customers experiencing financial hardship at no cost.

- Vulnerable Customer Complaints

For any escalated complaints relating to a Vulnerable Customer's experience, Specialist Care will provide independent oversight and facilitate resolution of the customer's concerns, and address opportunities to avoid future issues.

DEVELOP CONT.

We have developed our DFV Action Plan for our employees. This includes our ability to provide a customised tailored DFV response if and when necessary, within our Employee Support Policy.



We have developed our External Communications Plan.



We have developed our Internal Communications Plan.



We have developed our employee training.



We developed our training in line with our own Training Framework



TRAIN

These role/teams have been trained in DFV support.



All Optus employees who interact with Optus customers have been trained and are empowered to identify and direct the customer to Specialist Care for support.

Extensive training was provided to various roles across the organisation to ensure that our teams have the essential skills and capabilities to support customers effectively in vulnerable situations, this includes but is not limited to: Domestic Violence & Family Abuse, Mental Health & Disability.

The training focuses on empathy, a strength based conversational framework, the impacts of domestic family violence and applying a trauma-informed approach, in accordance with ACMA recommendations.

Roles specifically trained to provide DFV support and equipped to handle Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) customers:

- Specialist Care Expert,
- Senior Specialist Care Expert,
- Specialist Care Coach,
- Vulnerable Customer HyperSupport Leads,
- Associate Director Vulnerable Customer,
- Associate Director Complex and Specialist Care,
- Vulnerable Customer Governance and Standards Manager
- Associate Director Capability Programs

IMPLEMENT

We completed the implementation of our DFV Strategy on 1 March 2024.



COMMUNICATE

We have published our Organisational Position Statement.



Our organisational position statement can be found on the Optus Domestic and Family Abuse assistance page.

Position statement: " Optus is committed to assisting our customers who may be affected by domestic or family abuse. This can include physical, sexual, emotional, financial and/or psychological abuse. Our customer's safety and keeping them connected to their support network is our priority."

You can access it here:

<https://www.optus.com.au/about/specialist-care/dfa>

COMMUNICATE CONT.

We have communicated our DFV information to our customers including our ability to provide a customised tailored DFV response if and when required, within our Customer Support Policy. It can be found here:



We have communicated information regarding domestic family abuse (DFA) to our customers through a dedicated Domestic Family Abuse page (<https://www.optus.com.au/about/specialist-care/dfa>).

This page links to our Specialist Care and Financial Hardship information, and includes a helpline that customers experiencing Domestic Family Abuse can call. It also includes other useful resources, including agencies Optus partners with.

Our customers can access our Domestic Family Abuse Policy which outlines how Optus can support customers experiencing Domestic Family Abuse on our website.

We have communicated our DFV information to our employees including our ability to provide a customised tailored DFV response if and when required, within our Employee Support Policy.



MONITOR & EVALUATE

We monitor our DFV achievements through the following metrics:



Our objective for customers and employees impacted by domestic or family abuse is to prioritise their safety and maintain their connection to their support network.

The metrics provided serve as a tool for accountability, allowing us to celebrate the accomplishment of our objective.

- The number of DFV customers we helped stay connected and protected
- The number of days it's taking us to provide the support needed
- The number of DFV customer cases resolved on the same day
- CSAT Customer satisfaction score for the Specialist Care expert relating to the case
- Follow up every 48 hours until the case is resolved
- Awareness: DFA website traffic
- Volume of unique customers visiting the website
- Quick Exit Button utilisation
- DFV impacted customers who have connectivity through Donate Your Data
- Employee culture results
- Leader awareness regarding DVF support
- DFV employee leave

We monitor and evaluate whether we need to make adjustments to our approach, annually, and include these in our annual DFV Action Plan Update.



DEIDENTIFIED CASE STUDIES

We have developed relevant case studies demonstrating the DFV support that we provide.



REPORT

We will submit our DFV Annual Update to Telco Together Foundation on 31 March 2025, and subsequently in March each year, to align with the month in which we completed our DFV Action Plan.



We have decided how and where we will report our work.



Sustainability Report

Australian telecommunications companies that develop a Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) Action Plan have pledged to continually improve support for their customers and employees who are or may be DFV victims and survivors.

The pledge is signed by the company CEO and includes the commitment to develop a DFV Action Plan, and publish a public report, within two years of the date of signing the pledge.

Background

In 2022, The DFV Action Framework was introduced to the Australian Telco industry. Its core focus is to help telcos better understand how to provide appropriate support and provide an effective response to DFV victims and survivors.

The Framework was created by Telco Together Foundation's Industry Impact Hub, in collaboration with Foundation members Telstra, Optus, TPG Telecom, Vocus Group and Aussie Broadband.

Structured consultation was held with Government, Industry Organisations, frontline DFV service providers and smaller telcos to ensure the Framework content was able to deliver benefit to DFV victims and survivors. This guidance was assimilated into an easy to follow model, through the provision of DFV Action Plan templates, for adoption organisation-wide. Consultation included discussions with DSS Family Safety Branch, Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN), eSafety Commissioner, Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman (TIO), and 1800RESPECT, amongst other key stakeholders.

The Industry Impact Hub is an initiative of the Telco Together Foundation, where complex social issues of relevance to the industry and our communities are collaboratively discussed, addressed and actioned.

Framework Overview

This practical Framework consists of four Action Plan options relevant to any telco regardless of size or resources.

Telcos employ the Action Plan that best relates to their current knowledge or DFV strategy, choosing from the:

- Adapt DFV Action Plan
- Embed DFV Action Plan
- Tailor DFV Action Plan, or
- Influence DFV Action Plan

These Action Plans are not hierarchical and do not signify a telco 'league table' or ranking. Instead, they are progressive, providing a structured roadmap for continued reflection, improvement and adaptation over time.

Telcos must complete required minimum criteria, stipulated in the DFV Action Framework in order to complete their Action Plan, and their report.

A comprehensive response to the complex and critical subject of DFV takes time, requiring comprehensive planning across the organisation before execution.

Action Plan Reports

In addition to the DFV Action Plan Report, the telco commitment includes submitting an Annual Update to Telco Together Foundation, documenting progress since their last Plan.

The DFV Pledge, Action Plan, Report and Annual Update are signed by the telco Chief Executive Officer.

The four DFV Action Plan Options

The Adapt Action Plan

When planning, at an early stage, or reviewing your DFV Action Plan

Even the most socially responsible telcos have to continuously adapt and evolve to ever-changing environments. The purpose of the Adapt Action Plan is to plan, review or revise your approach to domestic and family violence within the context of your employees, customers, products, services and business strategy.

The Embed Action Plan

When implementing your DFV Action Plan – within your mainstream processes

Telco products and services are sometimes the only opportunity for customers to interact with employees. The Embed Action Plan places DFV victim-survivors at the centre of your products and services. With a DFV lens applied across your business you have a pathway to respond to customers and employees within your standard mainstream processes.

The Tailor Action Plan

When Implementing your DFV Action Plan – tailored to individual circumstances

In some circumstances, a response that is appropriate to one DFV victim-survivor may be harmful to another. The Tailor Action Plan enables a telco to deviate away from its mainstream processes, with support team(s) authorised to provide customers and employees with a customised individualised response.

The Influence Action Plan

When extending your DFV Action Plan, wider than your customers and employees.

As an industry we are unique in that we have direct access to nearly every Australian organisation and consumer. That provides an opportunity for a level of responsibility that goes beyond a telco's own business. The Influence Action Plan extends your sphere of influence beyond your employees and customer support, to the wider community.



The Industry Impact Hub is an initiative of Telco Together Foundation. We are the industry's foundation for collectively addressing some of the most complex social challenges within our increasingly connected world.



www.industryimpacthub.org
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