

ADAPT

DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE (DFV) ACTION PLAN REPORT



Vocus

Submitted to Telco Together Foundation on 1 March 2024

VOCUS

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FOREWORD

Vocus recognises the important role we play in supporting our customers in vulnerable circumstances to stay connected.

We are mindful of the increasing number of Australians experiencing hardship due to recent economic trends, further reinforcing the importance of extending support to our customers navigating challenging situations. Our Family Violence and Hardship team provide dedicated support to customers in vulnerable circumstances and customers experiencing financial hardship have access to a range of support options in line with our financial hardship policies.

We are committed to supporting our team members experiencing domestic and family violence. Our D&FV Support Policy provides a framework for our people leaders to provide this support, for example through:

- Consideration of changes to work hours and location, and the introduction of flexible working arrangements where required and possible.
- Access to leave entitlements such as personal leave, annual leave, long service leave or domestic violence leave.
- Temporary changes to benefits arrangements, which may include secure car parking, or IT and telephone security.

We are committed to continuing to improve our support for our customers and/or employees who may be victims or survivors of domestic and family violence, through our ongoing work in this area.

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PROVIDE

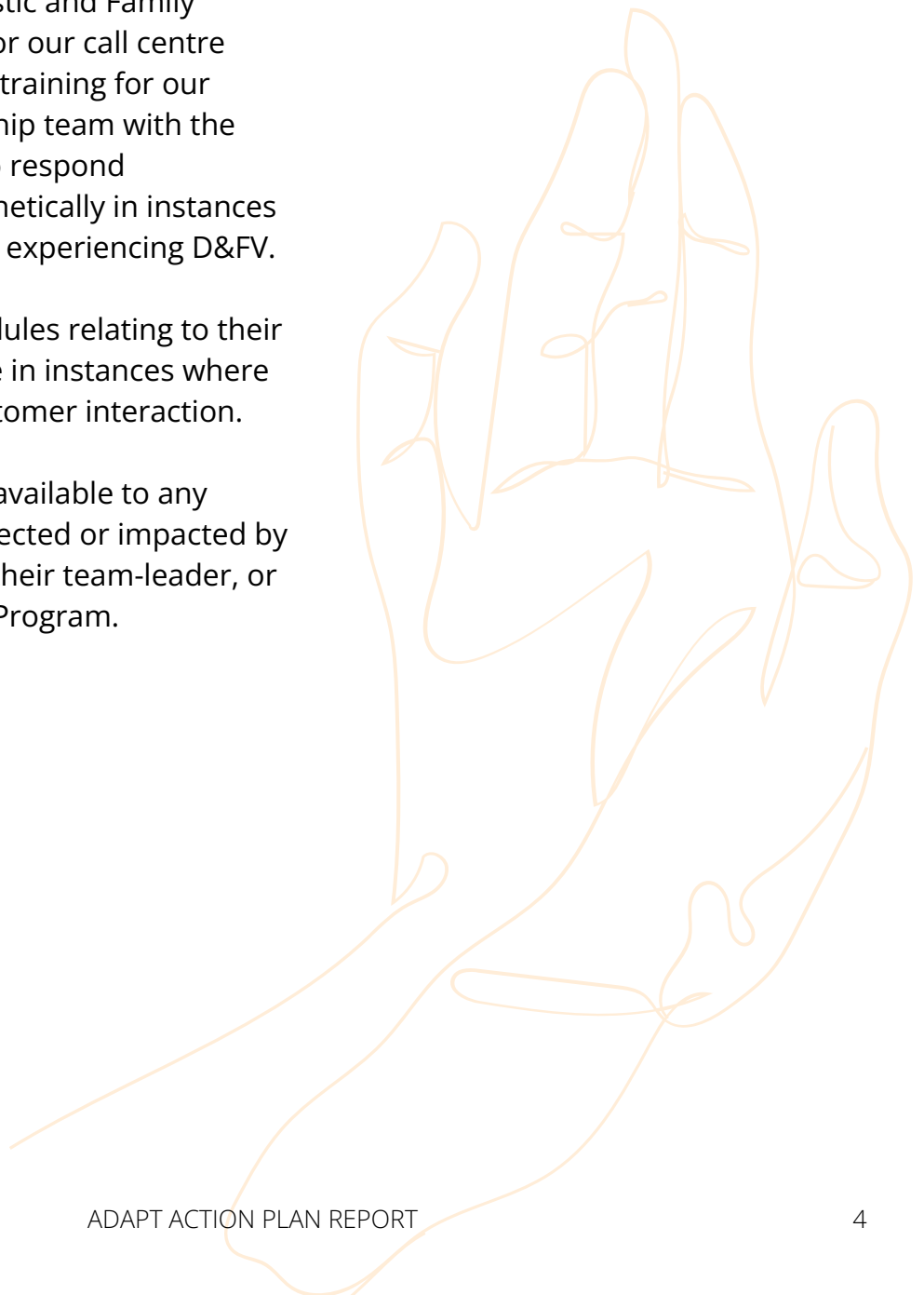
We provided support for our employees before undertaking any work regarding our DFV Action Plan.



We provide annual Domestic and Family Violence (D&FV) training for our call centre team, as well as quarterly training for our specialist customer hardship team with the aim of supporting them to respond appropriately, and empathetically in instances where a customer may be experiencing D&FV.

This training includes modules relating to their wellness, and how to cope in instances where they are affected by a customer interaction.

Individual support is also available to any employee who may be affected or impacted by this work, either through their team-leader, or our Employee Assistance Program.



EXPLORE

We have undertaken a discovery process of Government and Industry Expectations of Telcos regarding DFV and references in the Suggested Resource List.



CONSULT

We have formed a cross-business working group to plan our approach to responding to the issue of DFV, for our customers and employees.



A cross-business working group has been established comprising members of Vocus' People and Culture team; Legal team and Consumer Hardship team.

REVIEW

We have reviewed our pathways from our business areas to our team responding to DFV victim-survivors and ensured there is a clear process for internal referral.

We have reviewed our corporate culture and approach to Workplace Equality and Respect.

We have applied a DFV lens across our organisation and understand all DFV interaction points.

We have reviewed our training programs to ensure those that are related to DFV are flagged to incorporate information about the subject.

We have reviewed our policies and will include the subject of DFV in the following ones:

Financial Hardship
Date reviewed: Feb 2024
Next review date: As required

Flexible Work
Date reviewed: Feb 2024
Next review date: As required

Paid Leave
Date reviewed: July 2023
Next review date: As required

Vocus Domestic and Family
Violence Policy
Next review date: As required

DECIDE

The development of our Plan sits within this team:



Our D&FV cross-business working group.

We have decided how we will manage the development and implementation of the DFV Action Plan.



We have decided how we will support our customers and employees.



We have decided how we will measure success.



We have decided which DFV Training Organisation we will work with to develop our training.



REPORT

We will complete our DFV Annual Update and submit it to TTF on 30/09/2025



Our first DFV Annual Update, following the lodgement of this DFV Action Plan will be on 30/09/2025, to align with our annual reporting cycle. Subsequent Annual Updates will be submitted to Telco Together Foundation in September each following year.

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.



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