

Helping members facing family violence and financial hardship

Men's violence against women is a widespread problem in Australia, with enormous individual, community and economic impacts.

In Australia, men's violence against women is called many different things, including domestic violence, family violence, intimate partner violence, sexual harassment and sexual assault. It includes psychological, economic, emotional abuse and a wide range of controlling, coercive and intimidating behaviours.

The facts

- **1 in 3*** women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a man known to them
- At least **1 woman is killed every week*** as a result of intimate partner violence
- Family violence is the **#1 driver of homelessness*** for women in Australia and closely tied to financial hardship
- Women impacted by family violence are **our members and customers**

Improving our services

Mercer identified family violence and financial hardship as interconnected issues for customers of the Mercer Super Trust after receiving over 6000 calls in two years, in relation to both issues.

Mercer undertook a review of the fund to identify where we could make improvements to processes and the overall customer experience.

Customer communications

We have made improvements to our customer communications, including: streamlining application forms, providing specific financial hardship guidelines, detailing information about community resources and providing Frequently Asked Questions - all available at mercersuper.com/earlyaccess.

Helpline training

Training our helpline team has been a priority area and one of the most critical steps to helping consultants manage difficult conversation with customers each day. We have begun a pilot rollout of training with Kildonan Uniting Care, equipping our customer service teams with the skills to manage difficult conversations and help identify customers facing hardship.

For more information about training opportunities for your member servicing teams, visit kildonan.org.au.

We're here to help

Based on our learnings, we have developed a range of resources to help you and your teams when talking to members, including:

- National and state-based support services
- Best practice application forms and fact sheets for members
- Example communications for members with relevant support services and tips for the application process
- A video highlighting the widespread issue and how you can get involved

You can access these resources and other information at mercersuper.com/firststep.

*Stats sourced from www.ourwatch.org.au