

# Safeguarding and escalation

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Most vulnerability situations can be handled well at agent level with care, good judgement, and the right support options. But some situations go beyond what a standard customer service interaction can or should manage alone. This guide covers when to escalate, who to involve, and how to make sure vulnerable customers don't fall through the cracks.

## When to escalate

Escalation isn't an admission that you've handled something badly – it's good judgement in action. Consider escalating when:

- A customer expresses that they are in immediate danger, or you have serious concerns for their safety or welfare
- A customer discloses domestic abuse or mentions they are in an unsafe living situation
- A customer appears to be in a mental health crisis – for example, expressing hopelessness, confusion about reality, or thoughts of self-harm
- A vulnerable customer is at risk of disconnection and standard support options haven't resolved the situation
- A customer with a medical dependency on energy supply is reporting or at risk of a loss of supply
- You've offered all available support but the customer's situation remains unresolved and you're concerned about their wellbeing

If you're ever unsure whether to escalate, err on the side of escalating. It is always better to involve someone with more experience or authority than to leave a vulnerable person without adequate support.

## Immediate safety concerns

If a customer indicates they are in immediate danger – from domestic abuse, a medical emergency, or any other safety risk – your first priority is their safety, not the account.

- Stay calm and keep your voice steady. Your tone matters.
- If the customer needs emergency services, encourage them to call 999 (or their local emergency number) and stay on the line with you if they can.
- Do not put the customer on hold during a safety concern.
- Alert your team leader or supervisor immediately – use your internal escalation signal if your team has one.

After the call, document what happened as fully and accurately as you can, while it's fresh. Your notes may be important.

## Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse can intersect with energy accounts in ways that aren't always obvious – a controlling partner may manage all finances and utilities, leaving the victim without account access or in debt they didn't create.

Signs to be aware of include:

- A customer who seems unable to speak freely, or who hesitates before answering questions
- Someone else on the line speaking for or over the customer
- A customer asking to remove a named account holder or change account access urgently
- Requests to change correspondence address with a sense of urgency or fear

If you suspect domestic abuse, don't ask direct questions that could put the customer at risk if they're overheard. Instead, offer information gently: *"If you ever need support with your account that you'd like to keep private, we do have options available – I can send information to an email address if that's easier."*

Refer to Good Egg Energy's domestic abuse policy for full guidance, and escalate to your team leader if you have concerns.

## Mental health crises

If a customer says something that suggests they may be experiencing a mental health crisis – including any mention of self-harm or not wanting to be here – stop the account conversation entirely and focus on the person.

- Acknowledge what they've said, calmly and without alarm: *"I'm really glad you told me that. I want to make sure you're okay."*
- Ask directly if they are safe – it is okay to ask this question clearly.
- Provide the Samaritans number (116 123 – free, 24 hours) and encourage them to call.
- Do not rush to end the call, but do alert your team leader as soon as you can.

## How to escalate internally

For non-emergency escalations – situations that need more support than you can provide but aren't immediately dangerous:

1. Let the customer know you'd like to involve a colleague who can help further: *"I want to make sure you get the best possible support – would you mind if I brought in one of my team leaders?"*
2. Brief your team leader before transferring, so the customer doesn't have to repeat everything.
3. Log the escalation in Kraken with a clear note of the reason, what's been discussed, and what support has already been offered.
4. If the customer can't stay on the line, agree a callback time and make sure it's booked in.

## Documentation

Good documentation protects the customer and protects you. After any call involving vulnerability escalation, your Kraken notes should include:

- A factual summary of what the customer disclosed or what you observed
- What support was offered and whether it was accepted
- Any referrals made – internal or external
- Who else was involved in the call or the escalation
- Any agreed next steps or callbacks

**Good to know:** Handling a difficult safeguarding call can be emotionally draining, even for experienced agents. If you've taken a call that's affected you, please talk to your team leader. Looking after yourself isn't separate from doing your job well – it's part of it.