

Zero Tolerance Policy and Procedure

1.0 Purpose

We are committed to meet the requirements of the Disability Abuse Prevention Strategy. We will endeavour always to understand, promote and enhance safeguards to prevent abuse from occurring.

2.0 Scope

This policy is relevant to all Staff, volunteers or stakeholders.

3.0 Definition

Terminology	Definition
Zero Tolerance	Aims to provide an evidence-based, nationally applicable and contemporary approach to preventing and responding to abuse of people with disabilities. The aim is to assist service providers in developing positive organisational cultures and practices and robust safeguarding mechanisms relevant to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

4.0 Policy

CareAbility is committed to all elements of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Code of Conduct. CareAbility will train Staff in all areas of the NDIS Code of Conduct to ensure a zero-tolerance approach is adhered to across all practices.

CareAbility will follow the code and the guidelines, as listed below, ensuring that CareAbility:

- Refuses to tolerate any form of abuse towards people with disabilities, by workers or other people with disabilities, and promotes zero tolerance for abuse
- Provides Staff with training and information to correctly apply the obligations of the NDIS code of conduct
- Assists Staff to undertake their role, e.g. Keep support plans up-to-date; provide training opportunities which will include formal training, mentoring and on-the-job supervision
- Acts on all reported cases of abuse or suspected abuse
- Agrees never to take adverse action against any Staff member or volunteer if they report abuse or neglect
- Bases all necessary disciplinary actions on the principle of procedural fairness if a Staff violates the obligations of the NDIS code of conduct
- Respects and values the diversity of people and cultures to create an inclusive environment where it's safe for people with disabilities to express their cultural identity
- Actively maintains a working environment which minimises the risks of abuse
- Creates and maintains a positive complaints culture where people aren't afraid to speak up
- Fosters a culture of zero tolerance to abuse of people with disabilities.

CareAbility informs their front-line Staff who imposes the obligations that they must:

- Provide services without engaging in abuse, exploitation, harassment or neglect
- Report any form of abuse or suspected abuse
- Not engage in sexual abuse or misconduct, and must report any such conduct by other workers, people with disabilities, family members, carers or community members
- Show respect for cultural differences when providing services
- Act ethically, with integrity, honesty and transparency.

5.0 Procedure

CareAbility will train Staff to be able to understand and act on a zero-tolerance approach and ensure that Staff appreciates people with disabilities are people first, who have needs, aspirations, preferences and feelings.

All Staff are required to listen to all participants and/or the participant's representative. So, they can determine their preferences, aspirations, needs and supports, where it is safe to do so.

CareAbility acknowledges that reporting abuse is critical to prevent abusive situations from escalating and future incidents from occurring. All Staff working with people with disabilities must report any form of abuse (zero tolerance).

CareAbility will ensure that Staff are informed that people with disabilities face significantly higher risks of sexual assault and exploitation than the general population; this is particularly true for women with a disability. Also, there can be barriers to disclosure that make it difficult for a person with a disability to report sexual abuse and misconduct.

5.1 Reporting abuse

CareAbility acknowledges that reporting abuse is critical to prevent abusive situations from escalating and recurring among participants.

CareAbility staff who work with participants will report any form of abuse (zero tolerance) following the reporting procedures outlined in the Violence, Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation and Discrimination Policy and Procedure. Staff will refer to the reporting procedures outlined in the Reportable Incident, Accident and Emergency Policy and Procedure when reporting a reportable incident.

6.0 Related documents

- Code of Conduct – Staff/Volunteer
- Incident Report Form
- Participant notes (recorded in ShiftCare)
- Risk Assessment Form
- Risk Management Plan
- Violence, Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation and Discrimination Policy and Procedure
- Working with Children Policy and Procedure

7.0 References

- Disability Amendment Act 2017
- Disability Discrimination Action 1992 (Commonwealth)
- NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators 2021
- Privacy Act (1988)