



# Abuse, Neglect & Exploitation Policy

## Overview

Every person is entitled to feel safe and live free from violence, abuse, harm, neglect, and exploitation, regardless of their gender, age, disability, background, or any other characteristic. Every Human Disability Services is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all participants we provide services to. It is our responsibility to respond to reportable incidents immediately, ensuring a notification process is undertaken with the NDIS Commission and relevant stakeholders.

Any alleged, suspected, or actual act of abuse, neglect, or exploitation is a reportable incident and must be reported to the NDIS Commission, police, and any other relevant authority. **Abuse, neglect, and exploitation are reportable offences, and all staff are mandatory reporters, legally required to report any suspicions or knowledge of such incidents.**

### **What is Abuse, Neglect & Exploitation?**

Abuse can take many forms and is not limited to a single method. It includes sexual assault, physical, emotional, financial, and systemic abuse, domestic violence, constraints, restrictive practices, neglect, and actions intended to cause harm to a person.

Neglect occurs when a responsible person (such as a caregiver or support worker) fails to provide them with the necessities of life. These include adequate food, shelter, clothing, and medical or dental care. Neglect can also involve preventing others from providing appropriate care to that person.

Exploitation involves one person taking advantage of another for personal gain through maltreatment, manipulation, or the use of power and control for personal gain.

### **The following is not considered abuse or neglect:**

- Restraining a participant according to an approved Behaviour Support Plan.
- Taking reasonable steps to disarm a participant who poses a threat to themselves or others.
- Separating participants engaged in a physical altercation.
- Moving a participant to a safer location to prevent harm.
- Restraining a participant from causing intentional damage to property or in self-defence.



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Every Human Disability Services Pty Ltd

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## Our Commitment

Every Human Disability Services operates in full compliance with legislation to safeguard the human and legal rights of our clients, particularly in preventing, identifying, and reporting instances of abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

### Policy Objectives:

- To advocate for the human rights of all participants receiving support.
- To provide an environment where individuals feel safe and are protected.
- To ensure timely, professional, and compassionate responses to abuse, neglect, or exploitation, in line with NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission requirements.
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If abuse or neglect is identified or disclosed, immediate action will be taken to safeguard the individual and others from further harm. Failure to address knowledge of abuse, neglect, or identified risks constitutes a breach of duty of care and may result in disciplinary action.

## Procedures for Reporting & Prevention

Our procedures ensure a comprehensive, proactive, and supportive response to incidents of abuse, neglect, or exploitation:

- Ensure that individuals with high support needs and/or communication difficulties receive adequate support to detect and prevent abuse and neglect.
- Train staff to recognise, prevent, and minimise occurrences or recurrences of abuse and neglect of participants.
- Foster a culture where reporting suspected abuse or neglect is encouraged and without retribution.
- Escalate all suspected incidents to key management personnel immediately.
- Ensure that victims receive independent support such as a relative, friend, advocate, or legal practitioner.
- Respond to alleged cases of abuse or neglect in accordance with duty of care obligations to prevent further harm.
- Preserve and document evidence, including photographs and safeguarding personal items in cases involving criminal acts.
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- Provide accessible physical, emotional, and psychological support following reports or allegations of abuse or neglect.
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- Support victims, families, guardians, or advocates in pursuing legal action, if desired, and in accessing necessary resources.



## Staff Responsibilities

Every Human Disability Services ensures a unified approach to preventing and addressing abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Staff responsibilities include:

- Delivering services in compliance with the Code of Conduct, treating participants with dignity and respect.
- Responding promptly and compassionately to safeguard victims from further harm.
- Ensuring all staff and volunteers are informed, trained, and compliant with policies aimed at preventing abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
- Management personnel must promptly notify authorities (e.g. police, NDIS Commission) and inform the victim's guardian or decision-maker, unless implicated.
- Cooperating fully with investigations by external agencies, such as law enforcement.
- Recognising their role as mandatory reporters and ensuring all suspicions or knowledge of abuse, neglect, or exploitation are immediately reported to management who will report to the appropriate authorities

### Breach of Policy

Employees found to condone or participate in any form of abuse, neglect, or exploitation will face disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Concealing or failing to report suspected incidents will result in similar disciplinary action.

## Ensuring Compliance with Key Indicators

To maintain best practices, Every Human Disability Services ensures:

- **Policies, procedures, and practices** are in place to prevent violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation, or discrimination.
- **Participants are informed** about their right to be an independent advocate and are supported in accessing advocacy services when allegations of abuse, neglect, or discrimination arise.
- **Incidents of abuse, neglect, or exploitation** are acted upon, with victims supported and records maintained for review and investigation to prevent recurrence.

## Relevant Items

Regulations relevant to this policy include:

- *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013*
- *NDIS Quality and Safeguards commission*
- *NDIS (Quality Indicators) Guidelines 2021*