

5.3 Zero Tolerance Policy and Procedure

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Drafted by:	ML, BV	Endorsed by Board on:	10/6/2020
Responsible person:	EO	Scheduled review date:	June 2021

PURPOSE

We are committed to the prevention and effective response to incidences of abuse of people with disabilities and aims to increase awareness of, promote and enhance safeguards to ensure such abuse does not occur.

SCOPE

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

DEFINITION

Terminology	Definition
Zero tolerance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

POLICY

Interchange IE is committed to all elements of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Code of Conduct. Interchange IE will train staff and volunteers in all areas of the NDIS Code of Conduct to ensure a zero tolerance approach is adhered to across all streams of service.

Interchange IE will follow the Code and the guidelines, as listed below, ensuring that:

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- That abuse of any type towards people with disabilities, by workers, volunteers or other people with disabilities is not tolerated, promoting a culture of zero tolerance for abuse
- provides staff and volunteers with training and information to fully comply with the obligations of the NDIS Code of Conduct, Interchange IE Code of Conduct and DHHS Code of Conduct as applies
- 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 member violates the obligations of the NDIS Code of Conduct, Interchange IE Code of Conduct and DHHS Code of Conduct as relevant, in line with Fairwork guidelines
- respects and values the diversity of people to create an inclusive environment where it is safe for people with disabilities to express their unique identity
- actively maintains policies and procedures which minimise the risk of abuse
- creates and maintains a positive complaints and feedback culture where people are not afraid to speak up
- fosters a culture of zero tolerance for abuse of people with disabilities

Interchange IE requires their support staff and volunteers to:

- provide services free from any form of abuse, exploitation, harassment or neglect
- report any form of abuse or suspected abuse
- refrain from engaging in sexual abuse or misconduct, and must report any such conduct by other workers (including workers from other agencies), people with disabilities, family members, carers or community members
- show respect for unique individual differences (cultural, religious, sexual etc) when providing services, act ethically, with integrity, honesty and transparency

PROCEDURE

Interchange IE will train staff and volunteers to understand and implement a zero tolerance approach and ensure that staff and volunteers acknowledge people with disabilities as having needs, aspirations, preferences and feelings.

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All staff and volunteers are expected to use effective communication and active listening skills when engaging with participants.

Interchange IE acknowledges that reporting abuse is critical to preserve the safety of people with a disability, to prevent abusive situations from escalating and future incidents from occurring. All staff and volunteers working with people with disabilities must report any form of abuse (zero tolerance).

Interchange IE will ensure that staff and volunteers 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.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Codes of Conduct
- Incident Report Form
- Support Assessment
- Risk Management Plan
- Violence, Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation and Discrimination Policy and Procedure
- Working with Children Policy and Procedure

REFERENCES

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