

Reporting abuse of vulnerable adults procedure

Purpose

This procedure supports Access4u's (our, we,us) commitment to keeping vulnerable adults safe from harm by reporting suspicion or knowledge that a vulnerable adult is at risk or has been harmed.

This procedure identifies the protocols for ensuring there is a record of reports with the identity of any reporting employee protected.

Scope

Compliance with this procedure is mandatory for all our staff, contractors, students, volunteers, visitors, board members, and any other person supporting our customers or that have a responsibility for the safe operation of our services, collectively referred to as 'employees' throughout this document.

Responsibilities and delegations

This policy applies to	Governing Body. Staff and Volunteers
Specific responsibilities	The Board – Responsible for ensuring effective governance mechanisms are in place. The CEO and Managers – Responsible for monitoring and ensuring adherence to Policy and related procedures. Ensure due diligence and take reasonable steps to ensure Access4u are meeting their obligations. Ensure objectives of the policy are achieved. Staff – Responsible for adherence to this and related policies, procedures and forms that support this policy.
Policy approval	CEO

Policy context – this policy relates to:

Standards	• Family and Community Services Act 1972 • National Disability Insurance Scheme Quality and Safeguarding Framework • National Standards for Out-of-Home care (NOOHCS) • The Office of the Guardian for Children and Young People - Charter of Rights
Legislation	• Ageing and Adult Safeguarding Act 1995 (SA) • Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1992 • National Disability Insurance Scheme (Provider Registration and Practice Standards) Rules 2018 • National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 • The Disability Act 2006 • The Disability Services Act SA 1993

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Contractual obligations	• Government of SA, DCP Contract Management Framework • NDIS Code of Conduct
Organisation policies and procedures	• Customer safeguarding policy • Adult safeguarding report form • Zero tolerance policy • Protection of Human Rights and Freedom from Abuse policy • Code of Conduct policy • Feedback and complaints management policy • Incident management policy • Incidents of a critical and/or distressing nature procedure • Employee assistance procedure
Forms, record keeping, other documents	Adult safeguarding report form DHS online contact form
Definitions for the purpose of this policy the following definitions apply:	
Word	Definition
<i>Vulnerable</i>	The Ageing and Adult Safeguarding Act 1995 (SA) defines that an individual who, by reason of age, disability, health, social isolation, disadvantage, or dependence on others is vulnerable to abuse.
<i>Abuse</i>	The Ageing and Adult Safeguarding Act 1995 (SA) defines abuse broadly as incorporating one or more of the following. • Physical, emotional, sexual or psychological abuse • Financial exploitation or abuse • Neglect • A failure to act, resulting in abuse, exploitation or neglect • Abuse of a trusting relationship • Denying rights • Physical or chemical restraint or improper use of pharmaceutical or illegal substances
<i>Adult Safeguarding Unit (ASU)</i>	The Adult Safeguarding Unit (ASU) assesses and investigates reports of abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults within South Australia. The ASU does not provide an emergency response. They may coordinate additional services or triage to appropriate supports. The ASU also works to promote and protect the rights of vulnerable adults in South Australia.
<i>Reasonable grounds (or reasonable suspicion)</i>	Reasonable grounds means you have some rational and unbiased information that causes you to believe a vulnerable adult is at risk because the information is based on facts, circumstances or observations that make it more likely than not that your belief is true.

Procedure Statement

Access4u encourages all employees to report instances where they suspect, on reasonable grounds, that a vulnerable adult is, or may be, at risk.

Details of reports are not stored in customer files, this maintains anonymity where this is the preference of the employee.

Implementation

Reporting to the ASU

Where an employee suspects on reasonable grounds that a vulnerable adult is experiencing harm or is at risk of harm, as a result of the act or omission of another member of the public (friend, family, acquaintance) they should report to the Adult Safeguarding Unit as soon as practical after their suspicion is formed.

The staff member must be aware that the Adult Safeguarding Unit is not a crisis response service, and all urgent concerns must be reported to SAPOL.

Reporting to SAPOL

Where an employee suspects on reasonable grounds that a vulnerable adult is experiencing harm or is at risk of harm, as a result of the act or omission of an individual providing support in a paid capacity, they should report to SAPOL as soon as practical after their suspicion is formed.

The staff member will be required to present at a police station to lodge a report.

If the vulnerable adult is at significant risk or has already sustained injury, emergency services should be contacted first.

If the alleged abuser is employed through a NDIS registered agency, a report should also be raised with the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (1800 035 544).

Reporting serious harm

Where an urgent response is required due to risk of serious harm, where there is a threat to the life of a vulnerable adult or where the adult has already sustained serious harm, police and/or ambulance services must be contacted (phone 000).

Support for reporting employee

If an employee requires support to make a report regarding their concerns for the safety of a vulnerable adult, or is distressed by the nature of the information they are reporting, they are encouraged to contact their line manager and our Safeguard Lead.

Employees are also encouraged to contact the Employee Assistance Program (Converge International, 1300 687 327) for support.

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Internal notification

Within 24 hours of the report submission, the employee must notify Access4u Quality with the following details.

- Name of the adult who the report concerns
- The adult's date of birth (if known)
- Date of the incident or concern (if known)
- Date reported
- What agency was this reported to (Adult Safeguarding Unit, SAPOL etc.)
- Summary of the incident or concern
- Other services in place supporting the adult

This can be documented in the Adult safeguarding report and emailed to quality@access4u.org.au.

The information contained in the email and form are kept highly confidential and will only be accessible by Access4u's Safeguard Lead, Senior Manager Specialist Services and the CEO.

Follow up

The Quality and Safeguard Lead will acknowledge receipt of the notification and contact the reporting employee to provide and support or request any further information.

Recording

All report forms and report emails will be saved and stored to a secure folder to ensure privacy and confidentiality of the customer and reporting employee.

Notification of reports must never be documented on the customer's file.

A safeguarding report register will be maintained by Access4u's Quality Safeguard Lead, Senior Manager Specialist Services and the CEO.