

## Zero Tolerance for Abuse, Neglect and Harm Policy

### Policy Statement

Activ is committed to protecting the rights and wellbeing of customers. We recognise that people with disability are at increased risk of experiencing violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation, discrimination and other forms of harm. We also acknowledge that some people with disability may be vulnerable to being mistreated as a result of their personal experiences, communication needs, social isolation, and dependency on others to have basic needs met. Difficulty in identifying vulnerabilities and risks, and/or reporting harm can further increase a person with disability's risk of being mistreated.

This policy provides direction for Activ staff to safeguard customers from harm and respond to observations or allegations of violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation and discrimination.

### Principles

Activ will:

- Complete reference checks, Working With Children Checks and National Police Certificate checks prior to the recruitment of all staff, Board Directors and volunteers.
- Demonstrate their commitment to the integrity and independence of people living with disability through the provision of individualised quality services that respect the rights of individuals and personal dignity at all times.
- Promote a positive culture, safe environments and relationships based on mutual respect.
- Assess risks and areas of vulnerability for customers and develop plans for safeguarding strategies to address areas of risk/vulnerability.
- Ensure all staff are trained and supported to implement safeguarding strategies to reduce customer vulnerability.
- Make the health, safety and wellbeing of customers a critical consideration in providing supports that are based on the least restrictive and intrusive options informed by evidence-based best practice.
- Train staff to recognise the signs of abuse, neglect and harm and collaboratively develop safeguards to reduce the occurrence of abuse, neglect and harm to customers.
- Promote a safety awareness culture to ensure staff and customers feel comfortable to report concerns about their vulnerability, and/or experiences of abuse, neglect, or harm without fear of retribution or reprisal.

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- Immediately report all alleged or suspected instances of violence, physical sexual, psychological or emotional abuse, neglect, exploitation, discrimination or other forms of harm.
- Facilitate access to an advocate for customers involved in an allegation of any form of abuse, neglect, or harm.
- Cooperate with the investigation of any concern or complaint of potential or actual abuse, neglect, or harm to customers.
- Consider the failure by staff to report customer injuries, incidents, or signs of abuse, neglect, or harm, as a breach of duty of care.
- Ensure all complaints and/or allegations of abuse, neglect, or harm are reported and acted upon in an appropriate, timely and fair manner.
- Maintain a system (the Quality Safety and Risk system or QSR) to record all allegations of abuse, neglect and harm and document the outcomes from investigations, including actions taken to prevent similar incidents.

## Responsibilities and delegations

**Scope:** This policy applies to all Activ staff, including permanent full-time, part-time and casual employees, Board Directors of Activ, contract workers, temporary agency workers and volunteers.

**Responsibilities:** Each line manager is responsible, and will be held accountable for ensuring staff, supported employees and customers are familiar with this policy, and have sufficient skills, knowledge and ability to meet the requirements.

All employees will be held accountable for complying with the requirements of this and other relevant Activ policies and procedures.

**Consultation:** Head of QSHE, Senior Complaints Officer, Clinical Governance Manager, Project Manager NDIS Preparedness, Customer Operations Managers, HR Delegate

## Policy Context

### Relevant standards:

- National Standards for Disability Services
- NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators: Core Module

### Legislation:

- *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986*
- *Disability Services Act 1986*
- *NDIS Act 2013*
- *Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984*
- *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2008*

### Related policies and procedures:

- Code of Conduct and Ethics (AQuA 1867)
- Customer Advocacy Policy (1627) and Procedure (2554)

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- Customer Rights Policy (2861) and Procedure (2899)
- Duty of Care and Dignity of Risk Policy (2902)
- Elimination of Restrictive Practices Policy (2807)
- Incident Management Procedures (2549)
- Investigation Procedure for Serious Customer/ Supported Employee Incidents and Allegations (2862)
- Person Centred Approach Policy (1969) and Procedure (2900)
- Police and Working with Children Screening Policy (906)
- Privacy, Dignity and Confidentiality Policy (2903)
- Recruitment and Selection Procedure (1471)
- Serious Incident Report Submission and Approval Procedure (2754)
- Support Planning, Collaboration and Referral Policy (2904)
- Zero Tolerance for Harm – Procedure for responding to an observation or allegation of abuse (686)

**Relevant work instructions, forms, other documents:**

- Incident Classification Guidelines (2612)
- Misconduct Report Form (2532)
- New Starter Advice Form (1931)
- Our Customer Promise
- See Something, Say Something Poster 2019
- Zero Tolerance for Harm – Indicators of abuse, neglect and harm (685)

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