



Checklist – Preventing Abuse

Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability

If you want to take action now to reduce the risk of abuse occurring within your organisation consider the following as a minimum:

Develop a sound organisational wide understanding of abuse and risk factors for specific groups and settings:

- Define abuse clearly and ensure it is understood by the workforce, clients and their families.
- Implement a risk management strategy that targets known risks, groups and settings for the organisation.
- Develop policies, training and development around identifying indicators of abuse.
- Introduce a code of conduct that prohibits unacceptable, abusive and neglectful behaviours and sets clear boundaries for expected professional behaviours.
- Implement environmental risk assessments.

Implement practices and safeguards to prevent abuse:

- Promulgate a zero tolerance approach to abuse and a culture of safety and respect for people with disability.
- Develop a workforce sustainability, development and oversight strategy to reduce risks associated with agency/contract staff and reliance on volunteers.
- Ensure policies and procedures clearly explain process for identifying, escalating, reporting and responding to abuse, service user complaints and staff grievances.
- Create appropriate workforce policies and procedures such as recruitment checks and screening requirements, staff training and development, behavioural competency and capability frameworks, supervision requirements.
- Empower clients and their support networks to make complaints and access advocates.
- Ensure individual planning for clients includes an assessment of the person's vulnerabilities and behaviours.

Responding to Abuse:

- Ensure oversight and management in accordance with documented processes.
- Involve the executive team in supporting/oversighting responses to abuse.
- Ensure protection from recrimination for reporting incidents/making complaints and facilitate confidential whistleblowing.
- Ensure service users and their support networks are informed of how to make complaints/disclose abuse and are at the centre of any resolution or investigation.

Monitoring and continuous improvement:

- Conduct regular reviews of policies to ensure that they are up to date with compliance obligations and incorporate best-practice.
- Monitor relevant data sources for trends in targeted risks and development of new risks.
- Ensure adequate financial allocation to develop and maintain safeguarding strategies within the organisation.
- Document unacceptable behaviours and ensure they are acted upon.
- Report on and collate complaint, incident, investigation and external review outcomes and ensure these are reported to the board.

Disclaimer

The information contained in this guidance is intended as general commentary only and should not be regarded as legal advice. Should you require specific advice on the topics discussed, please contact the firm directly.