

## Policy

### Purpose

This policy provides guidance to staff to meet their legal obligations to prevent harm to vulnerable persons they come into contact within the course of their duties.

### Scope

This policy applies to all ADAI permanent, casual, contract, and service staff, volunteers, visitors, Board members, and other persons whilst on the organisation's premises or other sites where work is being performed. For this document, the term "Vulnerable Persons" includes: a child or children; or an individual aged 18 years and above who is or may be unable to take care of themselves or is unable to protect themselves against harm or exploitation by reason of age, illness, trauma or disability, or any other reason.

### Principles

The following principles ensure that ADAI manages the prevention of harm against vulnerable persons.

- ADAI recognises the requirement to prevent harm for vulnerable persons and have procedures in place to guide action when suspecting harm has occurred.
- ADAI ensures all staff, contractors and volunteers are aware of ADAI's commitment to creating and maintaining a safe environment that meets the legislative requirements under the *Child Safe (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016*, the *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017*, the *Disability Services Act 1993* and the National Standards for Disability Services.
- ADAI complies with guidelines published by the Commonwealth Department of Social Services and the SA Department of Human Services (DHS) all ADAI staff and volunteers must present a valid DHS clearance to the Chief Executive prior to any form of engagement with ADAI.
- ADAI staff and volunteers are required to:
  - hold valid clearances during their engagement with ADAI.
  - undertake training appropriate to their roles in working with vulnerable persons.
  - understand their obligations to notify authorities of any harm observed during their engagement with ADAI.

## **Responsibilities**

### **Board**

- Develop and implement ADAI strategic priorities that support harm prevention and the protection of vulnerable people as part of high-quality service delivery to ADAI clients.
- Ensure appropriate resources are available to meet the legislative requirements and national standards to support the protection of vulnerable persons.

### **Chief Executive**

- Implement and ensure compliance with the harm prevention policy and procedures.
- Allocate resources to staff training and development to meet policy requirements.
- Maintain a record of current training and accreditation requirements for staff with dates of expiry.
- Ensure that staff and volunteers undertake appropriate training and have access to information about their obligations.
- Ensure staff and volunteers understand their obligations under this policy.

### **Staff**

- Comply with ADAI policies and procedures for harm prevention.
- Understand and acknowledge their obligations under the relevant acts.
- Undertake their role diligently to protect vulnerable persons.
- Report any concerns at the earliest opportunity.
- Refer to Governing Authorities to prevent harm.
- Cooperate with management to complete all requested training and worker screening processes.
- Notify management if/when training needs to be updated.

## **Storage and Record Keeping**

This document is stored on the ADAI Corporate Drive.

## **Related Policies & Procedures**

- Code of Ethical Conduct
- Consumer Policy
- Advocacy Policy

- Community Education Policy
- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

## Related Links

- Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) (13 14 78) [Department for Child Protection](#)
- [Commonwealth Department of Social Services](#)
- [Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline](#)
- [Office of the Public Advocate](#)
- [SA Department of Human Services Screening Unit](#)
- [SAPOL](#)

## Related Standards and Legislations

- *Child Safe (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016*,
- *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017*,
- *Disability Services Act 1993*
- National Standards for Disability Services

## Review

<b>Frequency</b>	Biennial	<b>Administrator</b>	CEO
<b>Next review date</b>	April 2026	<b>Custodian</b>	Board

## Version Control

<b>Version number</b>	1.0	<b>Policy No.</b>	10
<b>Nature of Revision</b>	<p>New template Amalgamated policies and procedures into this new <b><i>Harm Prevention Policy and Procedures</i></b> superseding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clearances [160418]</li> </ul>	<b>Author</b>	CEO

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clearances Policy &amp; Procedure [151018]</li> <li>• Mandatory Notification Policy [170320]</li> </ul> <p>Preventing and Responding to Abuse, Assault and Neglect Policy [151018]</p>		
<b>Approval date</b>	April 2024	<b>Approved by</b>	Board

## Procedure

These Harm Prevention Procedures relate to the screening of workers and the responsibility of all staff to notify relevant authorities when harm is suspected.

### Worker Screening & Clearances

ADAI clients are considered vulnerable persons. This means ADAI requires all staff and volunteers to pass worker screening processes for a *Working with Children Check* and provide the evidence to the Chief Executive prior to their engagement with ADAI. Staff and volunteers are responsible for the cost of obtaining and maintaining clearances throughout their engagement with ADAI.

Clearances are valid for a 5-year period and must be renewed prior to expiry. Any staff member or volunteer without a valid clearance will be stood down from duty until a current worker screening process is completed and evidence provided to the Chief Executive.

Visit the [DHS Screening Unit](#) for instructions on how to apply for, or renew a clearance. Processing times are stipulated on the Screening Unit website and can often exceed 4 weeks; therefore, staff and volunteers should initiate their renewal process 3 months before the expiry date of their current clearance.

### Mandatory Reporting of Harm

ADAI recognises and accepts the responsibility to notify authorities when required to uphold our commitment to the safety of our clients. Reports of harm to vulnerable persons may be made to the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL), the Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline, and/or SAPOL (police).

### Grounds for Reporting of Harm

It is the personal responsibility of Mandated Notifier to report suspected harm. Proof is not required to make a report. Reasonable grounds to report suspected harm may include circumstances where:

- a vulnerable person tells a staff member that they have been harmed, or that they know of someone who has been harmed (they may be referring to themselves).
- the staff member has observed a vulnerable person's behaviour or injuries or has knowledge of the vulnerable person's situation which leads them to suspect that harm is occurring or has occurred.
- the staff member has observed the behaviour of the vulnerable person's caregiver(s) which leads them to suspect that the vulnerable person is at risk of being harmed or has been harmed.
- someone in a position to provide reliable information tells a staff member of harm occurring to a vulnerable person.

### **Process of Reporting**

Permission from Management is not required before staff or volunteers can make a report. The reporter is required to provide the following information to ADAI management:

- To whom the report was made (ie the governing authority)
- The grounds for the report (ie confirmed or suspicion of harm)
- Instructions from the governing authority (ie actions to be taken by ADAI).

ADAI Management will then ensure support is provided to the vulnerable person and coordinate ADAI's response including:

- Keeping a detailed record of the report, including any follow up actions taken, documenting the report storage, access, and security.
- Treating the report with sensitivity and upholding people's rights to privacy, confidentiality, and natural justice.
- Taking any reasonable steps to limit the chance of retaliatory action against the reporter.
- Setting a timeframe for ADAI to provide a response, if required.

### **Providing Support to Vulnerable Persons**

Staff and volunteers can help vulnerable persons through the reporting process by:

- Encouraging clients to exercise choice in all stages of the process, wherever possible.
- Providing information in a format that meets individual client communication needs.

- Where appropriate and lawful, provide clients, their families, guardians, friends, carers, and advocates with information about the progress of any known report or investigation.

### **Governing Authorities for Reporting Harm**

- **CARL** (Child Abuse Report Line) call **13 14 78**  
More information is available from the [Department of Child Protection](#)
- **SAPOL** (South Australian Police) call **000**  
Emergency, or immediate risk of harm or danger to a vulnerable person.
- **Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline** call **1800 880 052** or email [hotline@workfocus.com](mailto:hotline@workfocus.com). To make a report about harm to a person with disability. More information is available from the [Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline](#). In instances where the report is about harm to an adult with impaired mental capacity, and where there is no appointed financial administrator or family, advocate, or authorised attorney to act on their behalf, the [Office of the Public Advocate](#) can also be notified and consulted for advice.

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