

PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO ABUSE, ASSAULT AND NEGLECT

OVERVIEW

The safety and well-being of all Advocacy for Disability Access and Inclusion Inc. staff, clients, Board Member and associates is paramount.

POLICY

The safety and best interests of the person subjected to abuse, assault or neglect must be a paramount consideration in any response to a report, allegation or suspicion of abuse, assault or neglect, without discrimination of any kind.

This will include seeking immediate medical assistance where appropriate and taking all reasonable steps to avoid contact between the person and alleged offender.

A response must be made promptly, appropriately and in accordance with clearly documented procedures when an allegation or report is made. All management, staff and volunteers have a duty of care to report all alleged or suspected instances of abuse, assault and neglect in accordance with the National Standards for Disability Services and mandatory reporting as required under the Disability Services Act and the Children's Protection Act 1993.

Any concerned person, including but not limited to, the person, another member, staff member, volunteer, relative, friend or person from the community is able to make a report or an allegation, without fear of retaliation or retribution.

The Board of Management, Chief Executive Officer, Business Manager and staff of Advocacy for Disability Access and Inclusion Inc. are responsible for ensuring that all reasonable steps are taken by the organisation, staff and volunteers to prevent the abuse, assault or neglect of any individual linked to the service.

PROCEDURE

Advocacy for Disability Access and Inclusion Inc. will prepare a documented response when an allegation of abuse assault or neglect is made, and must:

- Stipulate that any report, allegation or suspicion of abuse, assault or neglect will be immediately reported to the police or in the case of a minor, to the Department of Families SA Child Abuse Reporting Line (CARL) <https://my.families.sa.gov.au/IDMProv/landing.html> ,

or in the case of people with disability the Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline: <https://www.jobaccess.gov.au/people-with-disability/do-you-need-report-abuse-or-neglect-people-with-disability>

- Stipulate the responsibilities of management, staff and volunteers in assisting the person thought to have been subjected to abuse, assault or neglect to access all relevant information and appropriate bodies such as advocacy, legal support, police, medical and sexual assault counselling services and crimes compensation.
- If the person is under 18, the family or guardian must be notified of the allegation in a timely manner.
- If the person is over 18 and the person has a guardian, the guardian must be informed of the allegation in a timely manner. With the person's consent, other relevant people, including family, can be notified of the allegations.
- Outline all necessary tasks, roles and responsibilities to be undertaken by management, staff and volunteers, including designating a person to be responsible for receiving, responding to or coordinating the response to all reports of abuse, assault or neglect.
- Provide a reasonable and appropriate timeframe for response.
- Stipulate the requirement for detailed accurate documentation on all aspects of the incident, including the recording of any follow up or additional actions undertaken.
- State how and where all documentation is to be stored or kept secured and who will have access to these records.
- Ensure the person's right to privacy and confidentiality is respected.
- Ensure that a person making an allegation or reporting an incident does not experience any retaliatory action as a consequence of making the allegation or report and that any report or allegation that is made is treated with sensitivity.
- Ensure that the legal rights of the alleged offender are not infringed and that their right to natural justice is upheld.
- Ensure the management of the allegation does not compromise any investigation by the police or other authority (advice as per previous point).
- Be routinely provided to all new and existing management, staff and volunteers as well as to all members and their families, guardians, carers or advocates in accessible formats.

Where the allegation involves financial abuse, it is imperative that Advocacy for Disability Access and Inclusion notifies the member and where appropriate, the financial administrator.

In instances where the member is an adult and has an impaired capacity and there is no appointed financial administrator or no family, advocate, or authorised attorney to act on behalf of the consumer, the office of the Public Advocate should be notified.

Advocacy for Disability Access and Inclusion must provide strategies for procedures that:

- Support consumers to exercise choice over all stages of the process wherever possible.
- Provide information to consumers in a format that meets their individual communication needs.
- Where appropriate and lawful: provide members, their families, guardians, friends, carers and advocates with information about the progress of the investigation.

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