

## What is the Purpose?

The purpose of this policy is to support staff to understand their obligations and responsibility to report any allegation, witnessing of/or suspicion of; any form of abuse or neglect of an adult customer accessing Northcott services.

## Who needs to know about this Policy?

- All staff
- Volunteers

## What is Northcott's policy?

- ✓ Customer's human rights are upheld for the prevention, identification and/or reporting of sexual, physical, emotional, financial, and all other forms of abuse and neglect. The allegation may be concerning abuse by employees, other customers or other adults.
- ✓ We have a zero tolerance for any form of abuse of customers or grooming of customers by staff, volunteers or anyone engaged with Northcott.
- ✓ All employees and volunteers have a Criminal Record Check and a Working With Children check completed before starting with Northcott.
- ✓ Employees and volunteers working with people with a disability:
  - Understand the behaviours or actions that indicate abuse and neglect.
  - Are able to recognise signs that may be indicators of abuse and neglect
  - Recognise that people, who require behaviour support, are non-verbal or experience communication difficulties, may be more vulnerable to abuse and neglect.
- ✓ We support any person who has witnessed or suspects, abuse or neglect of a customer, to be confident in reporting it without fear of retaliation.
- ✓ All employees and volunteers are made aware of their responsibility to report allegations of abuse or neglect by following our policies and procedures.
- ✓ We respond to allegations of abuse and neglect raised by customers, other adults, family members or carers and provide support to the person to access medical, psychological and legal assistance.
- ✓ We meet our legal requirement to report allegations of abuse and neglect against an NDIS participant and which occur in connection with NDIS supports and services; to the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (NDIS Commission).
- ✓ The victim must give their consent where they have capacity, before the family or person responsible for the victim, or other support person, is told about the allegation of abuse.

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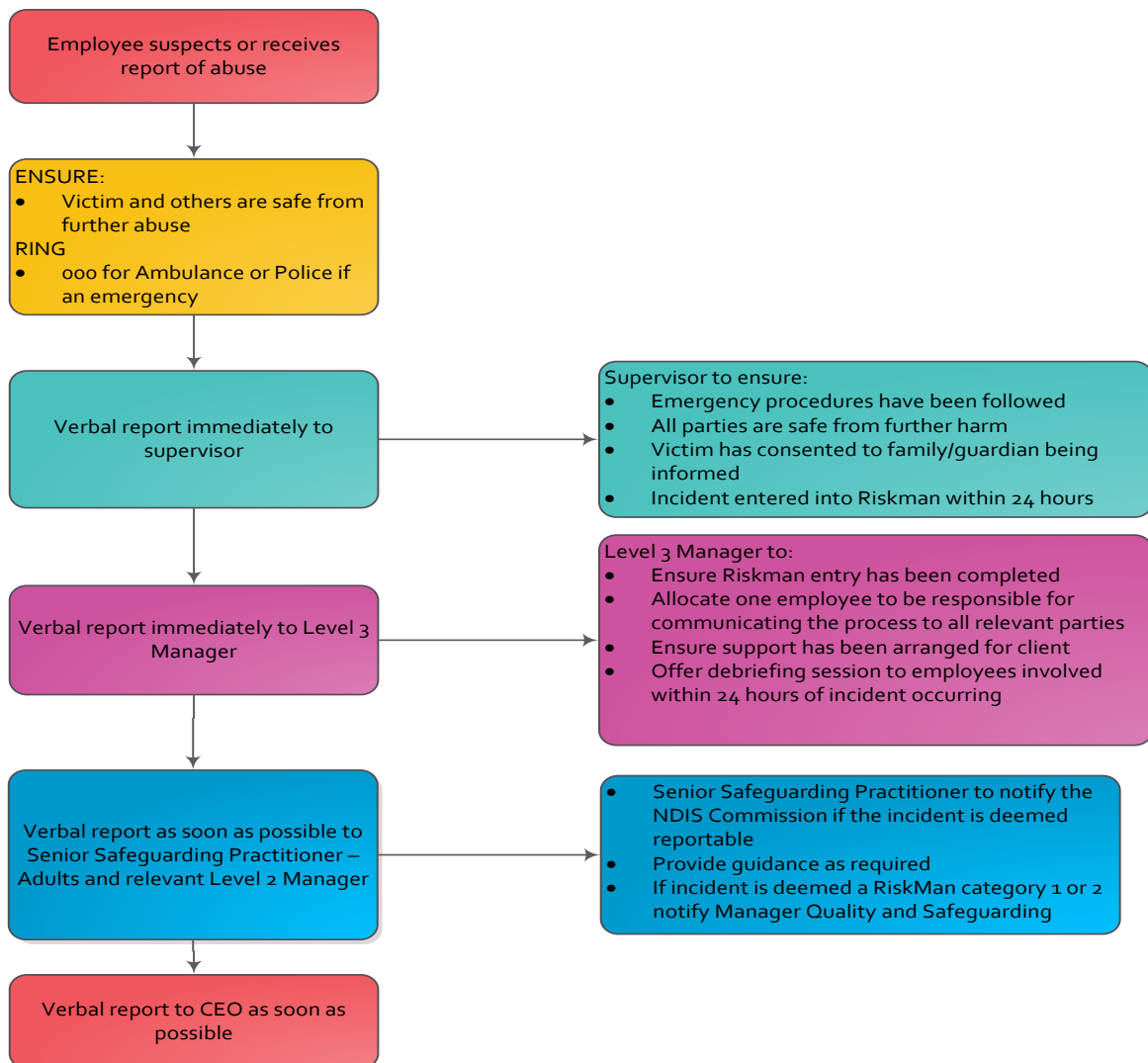
# Northcott Responding to Allegations of Adult Abuse and Neglect Policy and Procedure

Let's see what you can do

- ✓ All reasonable steps are taken to make sure that the customer is protected from further harm by preventing contact with the alleged offender.
- ✓ When the victim and alleged offender are both customers, they receive equal support by an independent person during the response process.

Access to records is restricted to those who are directly involved in reporting and responding to the incident to ensure that individuals' rights to privacy are upheld.

## Flow Chart 1: Response to suspicion, witness or allegation of adult abuse or neglect



For further information refer to [Appendix 1 Indicators of Abuse](#).

If further guidance is required, contact the **Senior Safeguarding Practitioner – Adults** or a member of the **Safeguarding and Response Team** on **0409 030 349**. The Safeguarding and Response Team phone number is monitored 24/7.

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**Northcott** Responding to Allegations of Adult Abuse and Neglect Policy and Procedure  
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**What are the Procedures?**

Stage	What needs to be done?	Who does it?
<p><b>You are the person: -</b></p> <p><b>Observing and responding to current abuse and neglect incidents</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Keep yourself safe.</li> <li>2. Ensure that customers and any other people present are safe.</li> <li>3. If you think the customer or another person is in immediate danger call the Police.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not move or touch anything that may be considered to be evidence by the Police; which they may need in their investigation.</li> <li>• If possible, isolate the area where the incident occurred and do not allow anyone to enter the area until the Police arrive.</li> <li>• In cases of alleged sexual assault preserve the victim's clothing, bedding or other relevant material where possible. Try and delay bathing/showering the person until the Police arrive (if the victim is not distressed by the delay).</li> <li>• Do not ask the person questions about what happened, as this may influence their memory and contaminate responses (That is the role of the Police).</li> <li>• Do not re-interpret the person's words for them</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. If a customer or another person is injured, call an Ambulance</li> <li>5. If there has been a recent incident of sexual assault, encourage and support the victim to attend the nearest NSW Health Sexual Assault Centre (Open 24 hours)</li> <li>6. Immediately advise your Manager, this manager will then notify other relevant Management and staff</li> <li>7. Follow directions given by your manager.</li> <li>8. Complete an incident report and include any instructions you were given by your manager. Secure this incident report by both emailing it to your manager or placing it in a sealed envelop and handing it to your manager personally.</li> <li>9. Do not discuss the incident with any other staff person. Confidentiality must be maintained at all times. If you feel as though you need to discuss the issue with</li> </ol>	<p><b>Person observing the current abuse and neglect</b></p>

Stage	What needs to be done?	Who does it?
	<p>another person, contact your direct line manager or the Safeguarding and Response Team for advice.</p>	
<p><b>You are the person: -</b></p> <p><b>Receiving an allegation of Abuse or Neglect – from the customer (direct disclosure) or their family or other person.</b></p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p><b>Suspecting abuse or neglect of a customer (2)</b></p>	<p>1. Record (write them down if possible) the words used by the customer / person making the allegation (quote the person exactly if possible).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Without probing for details, record accurately any information given about who was alleged to have been involved (alleged abuser and anyone else present), what was alleged to have taken place, where it happened and when</li> <li>○ Do not continue to ask them to repeat themselves as this may bring about some conflicting replies. The Police will clarify anything they need later</li> <li>○ Do not include anything that you did not directly hear or see in your documentation.</li> <li>○ Do not include opinions or your interpretations in your documentation.</li> <li>○ Refer to <b>Appendix 2</b> for further guidance</li> </ul> <p>2. Immediately inform your Manager</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● You need to report situations where it is suspected or reported that abuse and neglect is continuing despite any initial strategies to address the concerns. The Senior Safeguarding Practitioner – Adults and Practice Manager will arrange a case conference with relevant staff to further discuss the issue and develop a plan of action.</li> <li>● When reporting the allegation to the manager, it is best practice to move to quiet secluded area away from the person to have this conversation. If the person is within hearing range. It may also influence / contaminate the person's memory if they were to hear an altered version. (integrity of event)</li> <li>● If an incident occurs with a customer who is an NDIS participant and the incident occurred in connection with NDIS supports and services, please notify Senior Safeguarding Practitioner – Adults. who will determine if a notification is to be made to the NDIS Commission. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Abuse by an Employee – See <b>Page 8</b></li> <li>● Abuse by another Customer – See <b>Page 10</b></li> <li>● Financial Abuse – See <b>Page 11</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Person receiving or suspecting abuse or neglect</b></p>

Stage	What needs to be done?	Who does it?
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Your manager will then notify other relevant Northcott Management and if further guidance is required, contact the Senior Safeguarding Practitioner – Adults or a member of the Safeguarding and Response Team on 0409 030 349. The Safeguarding and Response Team phone number is monitored 24/7 (in a quiet private location away from the victim)</li> <li>4. Contact Employee Assistance Program (EAP) if you require counselling because of the disclosure. EAPs are trained in assisting staff in this position.</li> <li>5. Complete an incident report. If the incident effects more than one person, an incident report is required for each person.</li> </ol>	
<p><b>Recording the Report of an Incident</b></p> <p><b>and</b></p> <p><b>Managing the Incident</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Staff are to complete an Incident Report Form within 24 hours and forward to their manager. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Managers are to enter the incident in RiskMan within 48 hours of the incident.</li> <li>o The incident type is 'Adult Abuse and Neglect'.</li> <li>o The incident rating is 3 or above.</li> <li>o If the incident is rated a 2 or above, the incident is deemed a critical incident and the <b>Critical Incident Notification and Investigation Policy and Procedures</b> must be followed</li> <li>o If the incident relates to 2 or more customers, separate entries must be made for each customer.</li> </ul> </li> <li>7. Managers are to ensure support or assistance is provided to the customer or staff as required</li> <li>8. Decisions made in relation to managing the incident must be documented in RiskMan as a journal entry, including the reason for any decisions made and the name and contact details of the person making the decision.</li> <li>9. Consult with the Senior Safeguarding Practitioner – Adults to appoint a contact person to communicate with the victim and family, person responsible or other support person. You must have consent from the victim to inform their family or person responsible of</li> </ol>	<p><b>Manager</b></p>

Stage	What needs to be done?	Who does it?
	<p>the alleged abuse.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Information given to the victim must be in a format that is understandable to them.</li> <li>○ If the victim is unable to make decisions about any aspect of the incident, the Senior Safeguarding Practitioner – Adults will help assess the situation regarding whether a family member or person responsible should be present to make decisions on the victim's behalf. Consent for medical treatment or forensic examination must be provided by a person responsible in line with the Guardianship Act, 1987.</li> </ul> <p><b>10.</b> Make sure all employees who are in contact with the victim or the offender maintain confidentiality of information.</p>	
	<p><b>11.</b> Consult with the Senior Safeguarding Practitioner – Adults to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● If it is an allegation of current/recent abuse/neglect event or about past abuse/neglect event</li> <li>● If the customer has made a direct disclosure (i.e. speaking up to seek help) or not.</li> <li>● The type and severity of the abuse/neglect</li> <li>● Who is the source of harm to the customer (e.g. family member, staff, another customer, stranger)</li> <li>● When will that source of harm / person next be in contact with the customer</li> <li>● What additional support (if any) needs to be provided to stop this abuse from happening again.</li> </ul> <p><b>12.</b> Consult with a Level 3 Manager and the Senior Safeguarding Practitioner – Adults to decide the appropriate plan of action to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● meet the crisis needs of the victim</li> <li>● maintain safety of others</li> <li>● tell the victim's family/person responsible and/or chosen support person with the victim's consent.</li> <li>● determine who else needs to be involved e.g. advocate, Public Guardian, other support services</li> </ul>	<p><b>Level 4 Manager</b></p>
<p><b>Reporting Abuse to the Police</b></p>	<p><b>13.</b> Consult with the Senior Safeguarding Practitioner – Adults to assess if the allegation needs to be reported to the Police. There are circumstances where we do not need customer consent to inform the Police</p>	<p><b>Level 3/4 Manager</b></p>

Stage	What needs to be done?	Who does it?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An allegation of sexual assault, serious physical assault or other serious crime <b>must be</b> reported to the Police. Under the <i>Crimes Act 1900</i>, it is an offence to hide a serious crime that is punishable by imprisonment for 5 years or more, such as sexual assault, serious physical assault or criminal negligence causing grievous bodily harm or death.</li> </ul> <p>14. In the case of minor offences where no one is hurt, nominate a staff member to talk with the alleged victim to find out their wishes before making a decision not to report a crime to the Police.</p> <p>15. Consult relevant external organisations e.g. Police Assistance Line, NDIS Commission for further advice if it is unclear whether the Police should be informed.</p> <p>16. Tell the CEO <b>before</b> the Police are involved where possible.</p> <p>17. Call the police.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tell the Police if consent has not been given by the victim for the report.</li> <li>Clearly state the victim's wishes not participate in an interview with the Police if that is the victim's decision.</li> </ul> <p>18. If the victim does agree to an interview, ensure they have the option of an independent support person</p> <p>19. Information you need from the Police:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The event number and the names and contact details of the officers who responded</li> <li>When Police will be able to tell you if they will investigate or take other action</li> <li>What information (if any) about the involvement of the Police can be shared and with who</li> <li>Details of any Apprehended Violence Orders (and their conditions), charges, bail conditions and court dates where relevant</li> </ul>	<p><b>Senior Safeguarding Practitioner – Adults /Level 4 Manager</b></p>
<p><b>Follow up with Police</b></p>	<p>20. Cooperate with the Police during their investigation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If the Police or another investigating body is involved, they may provide guidance about how the investigation will take place and what we need to do. If the police are likely to investigate, you need to ask</li> </ul>	<p><b>Level 3 Manager</b></p>

Stage	What needs to be done?	Who does it?
	advice from the police before giving details of the allegation to the alleged offender.	
<b>Support for Customers</b>	<p><b>21.</b> Assist the victim and family, person responsible or other support person to access <a href="#">Victims Services NSW</a> and any other debriefing, counselling, legal or other support services if that is their wish.</p> <p><b>22.</b> Make sure that all customers, both victim and offender, are supported by an independent person, who could be a relative, friend, advocacy service or legal practitioner.</p> <p><b>23.</b> Support the victim, family, person responsible or other support person to take the matter through the legal system and access the services and advice they want.</p> <p><b>24.</b> Give information to the customer, person responsible or other support person about legal rights, options and support services, in a format that suits their communication needs.</p>	<b>Employees/ Senior Safeguarding Practitioner – Adults</b>
<b>Support for Employees</b>	<p><b>25.</b> Consult with your Level 3 Manager to offer affected employees a debriefing session within 24 hours of the incident.</p> <p><b>26.</b> Give employees information on how to access the Employee Assistance Program (<a href="#">Actevate</a> ph.: 1300 663 155).</p>	<b>Supervisor</b>

### NDIS QUALITY AND SAFEGUARDS COMMISSION (NDIS COMMISSION)

- Northcott must report to the NDIS Commission serious incidents committed against or of an NDIS participant (including allegations) arising in the context of NDIS supports or services including:
  - Death or serious injury
  - Abuse or neglect
  - Unlawful sexual or physical contact with, or assault
  - Sexual misconduct committed against, or in the presence of, an NDIS participant including grooming for sexual activity.
  - The unauthorised use of a restrictive practice
- Notifications to the NDIS Commission are completed by Northcott's Senior Safeguarding Practitioners.



## ABUSE BY AN EMPLOYEE

- If it is observed or suspected that an employee has abused a customer or customers, the supervisor or designated 'on call' staff member and the Level 3 Manager must be informed immediately. The Level 3 Manager will inform their Level 2 Line Manager and General Manager – People and Culture, who will inform the CEO as soon as possible.
- The incident must be entered into Riskman, as an 'Adult Abuse & Neglect' incident type, with a minimum incident rating of 2.
- If it is suspected that the supervisor is involved in the abuse, the matter must be reported to the next level manager immediately.
- Where a Level 3 Manager reasonably believes that an employee is the source of physical or sexual assault of a customer the matter must be referred to the Police and the NDIS Commission. The Level 2 Manager, General Manager – People and Culture and CEO should be informed of this decision prior to any involvement of the police wherever this can be done without jeopardising immediate safety. The Senior Safeguarding Practitioner – Adults will notify the NDIS Commission within 24 hours of becoming aware of the incident.
- An allegation of neglect, unauthorised restricted practices, and emotional, financial and systems abuse by an employee, may be referred to the Police as decided by the Level 3 Manager, in consultation with the Level 2 Line Manager and CEO.
- **The Discipline Policy and Procedure** should be followed for any employee who is reasonably suspected of abusing a customer and they must not be permitted to have any unsupervised contact with the customer for the duration of the investigation or until the disciplinary matter has been resolved, whichever comes last. Where the alleged abuse/neglect constitutes a serious crime the Level 2 Manager, General Manager – People and Culture and CEO may direct the employee to have no contact with the alleged victim and if sexual assault, no contact with clients or other witnesses until investigations, including by Police, are concluded and the matter is resolved. Where the allegation involves serious potential risk to one or more customers, the Level 2 Manager, General Manager – People and Culture and CEO may make a decision to suspend the employee or place the employee on duties that do not involve contact with customers, whilst the investigation is conducted.
- The customer's views on whether or not they wish to have contact with the employee after these processes will be considered, however it is important to ensure a customer's expressed wish to continue contact is not based upon coercion.
- An allegation regarding the use of an unauthorised restricted practice must be reported within 24 hours as a reportable incident and entered in RiskMan.
- If the investigation into alleged abuse by an employee towards an adult client finds that a sexual offence or serious physical assault was also committed against, with or in the presence of a child (not necessarily a customer child), then General Manager People and

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Culture or other relevant HR staff will liaise with The Children's Guardian and the NSW Ombudsman to see if the incident meets reportable thresholds.

- Employees who are the subject of allegations should be offered the opportunity to have an independent support person (e.g. relevant union representative) present during investigative and disciplinary interviews. Information about counselling and other support services should also be provided to the employee.
- If it is found that an employee has abused a customer, the matter may warrant dismissal of the employee, as well as any action taken by the Police. Where sexual assault or serious physical assault was found and was also against, with or in the presence of a child this may result in the employee becoming a "prohibited person" from working with children.

## ABUSE BY ANOTHER CUSTOMER

- When one customer is the suspected or known source of abuse towards another customer, employees must ensure that the rights of both customers are observed during the response and reporting processes.
- Any incident of abuse between customers must be entered into Riskman, as an 'Adult Abuse & Neglect' incident type, with a minimum incident rating of 3.
- The supervisor must ensure that the wishes of the victim and the offender are followed in relation to advising family, person responsible or other support person about the incident, where they are capable of making this known. When the victim and/or the offender are not capable then the supervisor will notify the appropriate person of the incident as soon as possible and within 12 hours of the report being made. Northcott does not require the victim's permission to notify the NDIS Commission.
- The supervisor will facilitate access to appropriate support, where practical, for both customers, their families and employees, and ensure they have information about available services. If free services aren't available then the Level 3 Manager will investigate paid professional services.
- If the assault is of a serious nature it must be reported to the Police, this decision must be made by a Level 2 Manager or above. An assault of a minor nature may also be reported to the Police if one of the customers involved wishes to report the incident. In this case, the Supervisor and Level 2 Manager are to support the customer to contact a family member, responsible person or advocate, to assist the customer to report the incident to the police.
- If a customer requests an employee to accompany them to the police station to provide support, the employee must first gain approval from their Manager. While supporting the customer at the police station the employee must not:
  - give an opinion about the customer, whether they are the victim or the alleged offender,
  - give the alleged offender legal advice,

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# Northcott **Responding to Allegations of Adult Abuse and Neglect Policy and Procedure**

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- question the alleged offender on behalf of the police
- interpret the alleged offender's answers.
- Where relevant the employee will on arrival at the police station, inform the Police Officer handling the matter that the customer is a 'vulnerable person', needs an independent support person and request that questioning of the customer not commence until a support person or legal representative is present. The employee should be replaced by an independent support person, or a legal adviser as soon as possible and, if necessary, a support person to assist with communication and/or language skills.

## **FINANCIAL ABUSE**

- When supporting customers with their personal finances who live in Supported Independent Living, and have concerns of financial abuse, staff must follow procedures described in the [Customer Finances in Housing and Supported Independent Living Policy](#).

## **Where can I get help?**

- Your Manager
- The Safeguarding and Response Team on 0409 030 349.
- Senior Safeguarding Practitioner - Adults

## **What other Northcott documents are related?**

**You may need to refer to these documents for more information:**

[Code of Conduct](#)

[Rights Policy](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Critical Incident Notification Requirements Policy and Procedure](#)

[Incident Management Policy and Procedure](#)

[Restrictive Practices Policy and Procedure](#)

[Discipline Policy and Procedure](#)

[Northcott Enterprise Agreement](#)

[Customer Death in Care Policy](#)

[Customer Death in Care Procedure](#)

[Customer Finances in Housing and Supported Independent Living Policy](#)

## **Related Forms**

[NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission – Reportable Incident Form – Immediate notification](#)

[NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission – Reportable Incident Form – 5 day notification](#)

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Who is Responsible?	What are they Responsible for
<b>Chief Executive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Final review and approval of this policy and procedure.</li> </ul>
<b>Level 2 Manager</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manage allegations involving employees</li> </ul>
<b>Senior Safeguarding Practitioner – Adults</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make sure any changes or developments in best practice regarding Adult abuse or neglect are forwarded to staff as required and liaise with Human Resources to identify new and emerging training needs.</li> <li>Provide support to Northcott staff regarding Adult abuse and neglect legislation and promote best practice.</li> <li>Provide advice and support on how to respond to allegations and disclosures of abuse including reporting requirements</li> <li>Submit reportable incidents to the NDIS Commission within required timeframes.</li> <li>Coordinate the investigation into an allegation.</li> <li>Maintain this policy, its procedures and associated documents.</li> <li>Notify reportable incidents to the NDIS Commission</li> <li>Monitor RiskMan entries to identify trends.</li> </ul>
<b>Level 3/4 Manager</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make sure the policy is effectively implemented in their services.</li> <li>Make sure staff follow the policy and procedure.</li> </ul>
<b>Supervisor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make sure staff have read and understand the policy and procedure, and have sufficient skills, knowledge and ability to meet the requirements.</li> </ul>
<b>All Employees</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow these procedures</li> </ul>

## Definitions, Legislation & Standards Compliance

**Definition:**

- For Definitions, please refer to Northcott's Policy Dictionary..

**Legislation:**

- This policy was developed in accordance with the National Disability Insurance Scheme (Provider Registration and Practice Standards) Rules 2018.
- For other Legislation and Standards Compliance, refer to the Service Management Policy.



**Authorised by:** .....

**Kerry Stubbs, Chief Executive Officer**

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## APPENDIX 1: INDICATORS OF ABUSE

- Employees and management play an important role in protecting customers from further harm by recognising the indicators of abuse and responding to them.
- The presence of one or more indicators does not mean that abuse has occurred but does require the Employee to be vigilant on the customer's behalf.
- Indicators of abuse are not always obvious and while customers or others may suspect that abuse has occurred, there might not be any evidence to confirm the suspicion.
- Indicators are variable people who are familiar with customers, and have a strong positive relationship with them, are often best placed to recognise behavioural changes, which may suggest a customer is being abused.

	Physical Indicators	Behavioural Signs
Physical Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facial, head and neck bruising or injuries.</li> <li>• Drowsiness, vomiting, fits (associated with head injuries)</li> <li>• Unexplained or poorly explained injury</li> <li>• Other bruising and marks may suggest the shape of the object that caused it</li> <li>• Bite marks or scratches</li> <li>• Unexplained burns or scalds</li> <li>• Unexplained fractures, dislocations, sprains</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explanation inconsistent with the injury; explanation varies</li> <li>• Avoidance or fearfulness of a particular person or Employee member</li> <li>• Sleep disturbances (e.g. nightmares; bed wetting)</li> <li>• Changes in behaviour: out of character aggression, withdrawal, excessive compliance</li> </ul>
Neglect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hunger and weight loss</li> <li>• Poor hygiene</li> <li>• Poor hair texture</li> <li>• Inappropriate or inadequate clothing for climatic conditions</li> <li>• Inappropriate or inadequate shelter or accommodation</li> <li>• Unattended physical problems or medical needs</li> <li>• Health or dietary practices that endanger health or development</li> <li>• Social isolation.</li> <li>• Pressure marks that indicate being left in one position for too long</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requesting, begging, scavenging or stealing food</li> <li>• Constant fatigue, listlessness or falling asleep</li> <li>• Direct or indirect disclosure</li> <li>• Extreme longing for company</li> <li>• Anxiety about being alone or abandoned</li> <li>• Displaying inappropriate or excessive self-comforting behaviours</li> </ul>

	Physical Indicators	Behavioural Signs
<b>Sexual Abuse</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct or indirect disclosure</li> <li>• Sexual act described by customer</li> <li>• Trauma to the breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen or thighs</li> <li>• Difficulty in walking or sitting</li> <li>• Injuries (e.g. tears or bruising), pain or itching to genitalia, anus or perineal region</li> <li>• Torn, stained or blood stained underwear or bedclothes</li> <li>• Sexually transmitted infections</li> <li>• Unexplained accumulation of money or gifts</li> <li>• Pregnancy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repeat use of words e.g. “bad”, “dirty”</li> <li>• Self-destructive behaviour, self-mutilation</li> <li>• Sudden changes in behaviour or temperament, e.g. depression, anxiety attacks, withdrawal, agitation, anger, violence, absconding, seeking comfort and security</li> <li>• Inappropriate advances to others</li> <li>• Sleep disturbances, refusing to go to bed, going to bed fully clothed</li> <li>• Eating disorders</li> <li>• Refusing to shower or constant showering</li> <li>• Changes in social patterns, refusing to attend usual places (work, respite)</li> <li>• Excessive compliance</li> </ul>
<b>Psychological or Emotional Abuse</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speech Disorders</li> <li>• Weight loss or gain</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feelings of worthlessness about life and self; extreme low self-esteem, self-abuse or self-destructive behaviour.</li> <li>• Extreme attention seeking behaviour and other behavioural disorders (e.g. disruptiveness, aggressiveness, bullying)</li> <li>• Excessive compliance</li> <li>• Depression, withdrawal, crying</li> </ul>
<b>Financial Abuse</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restricted access to or no control over personal funds or bank accounts</li> <li>• No records or incomplete records kept of expenditure and purchases</li> <li>• Missing money, valuables or property</li> <li>• Appearance, clothing / other items are of poor condition</li> <li>• Forced changes to wills or other legal documents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stealing from others</li> <li>• Borrowing money</li> <li>• Begging</li> <li>• Missing out on outings / events that they used to be able afford to go to</li> </ul>

## Appendix 2: How to respond to a person at the time they make a disclosure.

Do	Messages to person	Don't
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Find a private place where the person feels comfortable to talk</li> <li>If they use a communication board/form of augmentative communication, consider whether another trusted person needs to be present who is able to accurately record the communication</li> <li>Use a calm, reassuring tone</li> <li>Talk to the person in language that is appropriate to their understanding</li> <li>Let them to tell their story in their own way, using their own words, in their own time without re-telling it in your words</li> <li>Be open and non-judgmental</li> <li>Support the person in telling their experience without probing or pressing for details</li> <li>Take into account any cultural sensitivity that may be involved and whether there is another staff member, who might have the cultural knowledge to handle the matter better, (particularly when involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people). Ask them what they prefer first. Sometimes speaking about abuse with someone of their cultural community can be perceived as shaming for the person</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>It is not their fault</b></li> <li><b>It was right to tell</b></li> <li><b>Abuse is not OK – no matter what</b></li> <li>Assess whether you or they will be at risk by informing them or their parents/carer that you will be following up on the matter</li> <li>If appropriate, explain that it is part of your job to inform people who may be able to assist when someone has been harmed or is potentially at risk of harm</li> <li>If appropriate, explain what will happen now being careful not to commit on actions beyond your control</li> <li>Acknowledge any concerns they have about 'what will happen next' and 'what may happen to the alleged perpetrator'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Express disbelief, shock or disapproval</li> <li>Probe for additional information they are unwilling to provide</li> <li>Ask leading questions (i.e. questions that suggest answers, or multiple choice questions)</li> <li>Investigate the allegation</li> <li>Make the person tell others</li> <li>Make promises not to tell anyone or other promises you can't keep</li> <li>Try to 'close down' the conversation – this conveys the message that they have done something wrong and that it is not alright to tell</li> <li>Make negative comments or pass judgment about the alleged perpetrator – the person may have complex feelings about the alleged perpetrator, including love, and may feel loyal to them</li> </ul>



### **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customers**

- The effects of previous government policies involving forced child removal are still evident in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities today.
- A culturally sensitive approach should be taken when speaking with an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander customer about allegations of abuse.
- When possible, an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander staff member should be consulted and asked to speak with the customer (if the customer agrees) to ensure that the nature of the abuse or risk is fully understood and that community relationships are not jeopardised.

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