

Working with Vulnerable People

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure Avivo respects people's human rights, choices and decisions; protects vulnerable people from abuse and neglect and meets duty of care responsibilities.

2. Introduction

We affirm the right of the people we work for to live their lives free from neglect, abuse and exploitation and we work to prevent and respond to any abuse, assault or neglect of a person's human rights. We strive to ensure that people are not harmed either physically, financially, psychologically, or sexually, due to an action or interaction by our organisation.

3. Scope

The scope of this policy applies to all people engaged in work for Avivo and our customers.

4. Policy

Avivo is committed to the following principles:

- We respect each person's human rights and decisions.
- We aim to prevent abuse and neglect.
- We respect and promote each person's right to dignity of risk.
- We meet our duty of care responsibilities.
- We build respectful and trusting relationships with each person, their families and carers.
- We do not use practices or procedures that restrict people's freedom or rights unnecessarily.

To meet these principles:

- We inform people, helping them to understand their rights and the power and control they have in their lives and services and support them to make their own decisions.
- We assume people have capacity to make their own decisions. In circumstances where they have reduced capacity, we identify and support them to have an appointed decision maker, whilst continuing to explore ways to develop their capacity and involvement in decision making.
- We foster a culture that ensures that everyone feels safe to speak up and raise concerns without fear of retribution, proactively hearing concerns and complaints whilst working together to develop supports and services that keep people safe as they life live.
- We employ and develop people with the right values and skills to undertake the work of Avivo.
- We respect each person's right to dignity, confidentiality and privacy in accordance with our privacy and confidentiality policy. We recognise that our duty of care carries greater weight

than the duty to maintain confidentiality in matters of care and protection. This means that concerns or allegations may be discussed between those reporting or investigating, but not with any other person.

- We work collaboratively with others to uphold each person's human rights, prevent abuse and neglect and report incidents of vulnerability, assault, abuse and neglect ensuring:
 - The standards of service we provide are actively monitored.
 - We involve an organisation with the required legislative mandate to take action (e.g. the Department for Child Protection Protection & Family Support, the Office of the Public Advocate, WA Police.)
 - Relevant serious matters are reported to funding bodies in accordance with the Serious Incident Reporting Procedure.

The primary measure of the effectiveness of this policy is that there will be no substantiated incidents of infringement of a person's rights, abuse, or neglect by people engaged in work for Avivo.

5. Responsibilities

Avivo is responsible for ensuring everyone engaged in the work for our organisation is informed of this policy and uses the principles to guide their work. Avivo will take actual or alleged breaches by employees working with vulnerable people seriously.

All employees and contractors have a duty of care to respond professionally, compassionately, promptly, sensitively and in accordance with current legislation with regards to the identification of vulnerable people and reporting of any allegations made in relation to assault, abuse or neglect.

If any person suspects a person is at risk through being vulnerable, their rights are infringed, or they have reason to believe that they have been abused or neglected, the person with the concern or allegation must report their concern to Avivo within 24 hours of the concern arising, or immediately if it is believed that the person is at imminent risk of harm. Contact numbers are 1300 428 486 between 8am – 5pm or CRISIS (08) 9204 7801 outside office hours.

6. References

None.

7. Related Documents

- OP-OTH-613 Working with Vulnerable People Framework
- OP-POL-72 Charter of Rights and Responsibilities
- OP-POL-22 Complaints Policy
- OP-POL-74 Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
- OP-PRO-59 Procedure for Management of Serious Incidents
- OP-PRO-593 Elimination of Restrictive Practices Procedure

8. Definitions

Vulnerability - Situations where a person requires some or full support to advocate and communicate, has limited or no community connections, family and friends and can spend a reasonable amount of time on their own.

Assault –Is an unlawful attempt or offer with force or violence to do physical, emotional, or sexual hurt to another, whether from malice or wantonness.

Abuse - Is where behaviours towards another inflict injury in a physical, sexual, emotional, manipulative, intrusive and controlling way, which results in physical harm, pain, mental anguish, exploitation, deprivation of essential needs or death.

Neglect - Is where a lack of due care and attention has placed a person at risk of physical, emotional or mental anguish due to them being deprived of the essential needs and protection required to maintain their overall well-being and welfare.