

# Interchange Policy & Procedure Manual

## Policy 2.9 Protecting Customer's Human Rights

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CURRENT VERSION	V1.3

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### **Reference Documents**

- National Standards for Disability Services (Standard 1)
  - The Disability Services Commission Serious Incident Reporting Policy
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### **Policy Statement**

Interchange is committed to protecting and supporting the human rights of all users of our services, and ensuring that they kept safe and free from abuse, neglect and exploitation while they are using our services. We will ensure that all of our services are delivered in a way that minimises risks to our customers, and that we act to protect them when their rights or safety are a cause for concern.

Interchange management, staff and volunteers promote ethical, respectful and safe service delivery which meets, if not exceeds, legislative requirements and achieves positive outcomes for our customers.

We recognise, support and respect all people's inherent right to freedom of expression and the right to make decisions about and exercise control over their own lives.

We recognise and support the vital role of families, friends, advocates and carers in assisting to safeguard and uphold the rights of our customers.

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### **Procedures (Protecting Human Rights and Prevention of Abuse and Neglect)**

- Our recruitment and selection procedures will make specific reference to our values and our expectation of staff to uphold the rights of our customers.
- All Board members, staff, students, contractors and volunteers will be required to produce a current Police Clearance before commencing any work for Interchange that involves contact with customers.
- Our orientation program for new Board members, staff, students and volunteers will contain information about National Standards for Disability Services Standard 1.
- National Standards for Disability Services Standard 1 related issues will be included in the Staff Training and Development Program for at least one session per year.
- Individual Program Plans/Care Plans will specifically include consideration of issues related to National Standards for Disability Services Standard 1.

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- Customers will receive information about National Standards for Disability Services Standard 1 when they commence receiving services.

## ***Procedures (Responding to a Concern)***

Where a staff member has a concern or makes an allegation about the infringement of the human rights of a customer, or of abuse, neglect, or exploitation, the following procedures must be followed:

1. The staff member must discuss their concern or allegation with the Service Delivery Manager at the earliest opportunity, in person or by telephone, and no later than 24 hours after the events that have caused their concern.
  2. Until that contact is made, the staff member is responsible for ensuring the immediate short term safety of the customer.
  3. In the event that the staff member is unsure how to do this, and the Service Delivery Manager is unavailable, the staff member should contact the Chief Executive Officer or the Corporate Services Manager. If the CEO and the CSM are both unavailable, the staff member should contact the Board Chairperson for guidance on what immediate action should be taken.
  4. The Service Delivery Manager should take immediate action to ensure the safety and well-being of the customer while the concern or allegation is investigated. In the absence of the SDM the CEO or CSM will take any necessary action.
  5. If necessary, the Chief Executive Officer or other executive manager will take action to ensure the safety and well-being of the staff member who raises the concern or makes the allegation.
  6. The Service Delivery Manager should complete the "Customer Incident Report" Form, using information from the concerned party and confirm to them that they have acted appropriately in making their concerns known.
- All actions taken will be documented by the person who takes the action. Documentation will be factual and free from personal comments or judgments.
  - Documentation and information will remain confidential to the immediate parties involved in reporting, receiving a report and investigating the matter, unless it is an issue that is sufficiently serious as to require external reporting (for example to the Disability Services Commission, the Department of Child Protection, the Police, or the Public Advocate).
  - If the matter involves the possible abuse of a child under the age of 18 years, or a possible criminal offence, the Chief Executive Officer must immediately notify the DSC and DCD.
  - If the concern or allegation involves the actions of a member of staff, the CEO of Interchange will advise the staff member of the allegation and their rights, and determine if they should be suspended from duty or moved to another position pending the investigation.
  - If the matter is serious (according to the DSC's Serious Incident Reporting Requirements) the Chief Executive Officer, will complete a Serious Incident Report to the Disability Services Commission as soon as possible, and no later than 7 days after the event has occurred.

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- The CEO will advise the Chairperson of the Board of any matters that are reported under the DSC's Serious Incident Reporting requirements, or that are referred to another external agency for investigation.
- The Chief Executive Officer will undertake a debriefing at the conclusion of the investigation, regardless of the outcome. This will include feedback to the staff member who made the allegation.
- Where concerns are brought up by a third party they should be referred to the Service Delivery Manager who will follow the above procedure from point #4.

## ***Equity and Access Considerations***

Interchange is committed to ensuring fair and equal access to physical environments, information, communication and services. For the communication and implementation of this policy, this may include:

- Considering the suitability of physical environments
- The use of augmentative and alternative communication methods to supplement or replace speech or writing for those with impairments in the production or comprehension of spoken or written language. These methods include the display of text, large print, tactile communication, easy English, accessible multimedia and accessible information and communications technology.

## ***Cultural Diversity***

Employees are to ensure that services are provided with sensitivity to and an awareness of the cultural beliefs and practices of clients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. This includes an awareness of the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, their families and communities.

Communication about this policy should be done in a way that suits each individual with regard to their cultural background e.g. if required, the use of an interpreter or easy English documents.

Interchange will develop connections with culturally appropriate organisations and groups to influence the meaningful participation of people with disability.

Where relevant, when attempting to strengthen relationships with people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds, Interchange will firstly utilise the advice and influence of key community members and organisations.