



## 1.5 VIOLENCE, ABUSE, NEGLECT, EXPLOITATION AND DISCRIMINATION POLICY AND PROCEDURE

### 1.0 Purpose

To ensure that each participant accesses supports free from violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation, or discrimination.

### 2.0 Scope

The policy applies to:

- ESG Inclusive Homes employees, whether permanent or casual, contractors, volunteers, and stakeholders
- All participants, their families, carers and/or advocates.

### 3.0 Definitions

Terminology	Description
<b>Abuse And Neglect</b>	Any behaviour that is outside the norms of conduct and entails a substantial risk of causing physical or emotional harm to a person.
<b>Discrimination</b>	Treating, or proposing to treat someone unfavourably because of a personal characteristics protected by the law. Discrimination includes bullying someone because of a protected characteristic.
<b>Exploitation</b>	The action or fact of mistreating someone to benefit from their work. The action of making use of and benefiting from resources.
<b>Violence</b>	Violent behaviour by a person towards another can include abusive behaviour that is physical, sexual, intimidating, and forceful. People with a disability are more likely to experience violence from a carer or family members.

### 4.0 Policy

ESG Inclusive Homes, as a mandatory reporting body, is required to report any indicators or suspicion of assault, neglect, exploitation, or any other form of abuse. ESG Inclusive Homes will encourage and support a participant who has been the victim of any form of abuse and any person who has witnessed the abuse of a participant or who suspects that abuse has occurred to make a report and be confident of doing so without fear of retribution. To assist in the prevent of violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation, and discrimination ESG Inclusive Homes will:

- Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to participant safety
- Enforce this *Violence, Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation and Discrimination Policy and Procedure* and related practices to safeguard participants
- Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to disclose the risks of harm to participant safety
- Ensure each participant is provided with information about the use of an advocate (including an independent advocate) and access to an advocate is facilitated where allegations of violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation, or discrimination have been made

- Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of the participant is at risk
- Ensure that allegations and incidents of violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation, or discrimination are acted upon and reported immediately to the appropriate authorities
- Ensure that each participant affected is supported and assisted
- Ensure that records are made of any details and outcomes of reviews and investigations (where applicable) and action is taken to prevent similar incidents occurring again
- Provide in mandatory induction and annual refresher training to all ESG Inclusive Homes employees on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards participants; and
- Engage only the most suitable people to work with participants and have high-quality employees, volunteer supervision and professional development

## 5.0 Procedure

ESG Inclusive Homes is committed to the safety and wellbeing of each participant and recognises the importance of and responsibility for ensuring each work environment is safe and supportive which respects and fosters the dignity and self-esteem of all participants and enables them to thrive.

ESG Inclusive Homes supports implementation and monitoring of this *Violence, Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation and Discrimination Policy and Procedure* and will plan, implement, and monitor current and future arrangements to continually provide inclusive and safe environments.

## 5.1 Acceptable Behaviours

Employees or any other stakeholders involved with participant-related work are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of participants by:

- Taking all reasonable steps to prevent and respond to all forms of violence, exploitation, neglect, and abuse of people with disability
- Taking all reasonable steps to prevent and respond to sexual misconduct
- Treating the participant, their families, and advocates with respect
- Listening and responding to the views and concerns of the participant,
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation, and empowerment of people with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds through engagement with the community accessing the service
- Promoting the safety, participation, and empowerment of people with disabilities
- Reporting any allegations of abuse or any personal safety concerns to management
- Understanding and complying with all reporting or disclosure obligations (including state mandatory reporting) as they relate to protecting the participant from harm or abuse; and
- Reporting suspected or confirmed abuse to appropriate authorities in a timely manner.

## 5.2 Unacceptable Behaviours

All ESG Inclusive Homes employees must not:

- Ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions, or disclosures of abuse
- Develop a relationship with any participant that could be viewed as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour (e.g., offering gifts)
- Exhibit behaviours or engage in activities with participants that may be interpreted as abusive and not justified by the educational, therapeutic, or service delivery context
- Ignore behaviours by other adults towards young participants when they are overly familiar or inappropriate
- Treat a participant unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, or ethnicity; and
- Communicate directly with an underage participant through personal or private contact channels including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting.

### 5.3 Reporting Violence, Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation and Discrimination

ESG Inclusive Homes employees are to complete an *Incident Form* which is to be promptly sent to the Director and/or appointed delegate. Some indications of possible signs of abuse may include but are not limited to:

- A participant showing changes in behaviour or mood
- Observing someone behaving towards a participant in a sinister manner
- A participant reports abuse
- A person tells you that they are abusing a participant; and
- A participant or visitor reports witnessing abusive acts.

#### 5.3.1 Investigation

The Director and/or appointed delegate will undertake a review of the allegation or incident by:

1. Gathering data from relevant ESG Inclusive Homes employees including but not limited to:
  - Participant's name, age, date of birth, address
  - Description of injury, abuse and/or neglect (current and previous)
  - The participant's current situation
  - The location of the participant and alleged perpetrator (if known); and
  - Explanation of when and how the abuse was identified.
2. Analyse the data by determining what occurred, how it occurred, and who was involved
3. Determine the effect on the participant
4. Consult with relevant stakeholders such as the police– do not seek information from children (this is a specialist role within the authorities to whom the incident is reported)
5. Inform the participant that they can access an advocate for support
6. Ensure care is made of any details however being mindful of notes written in ESG Inclusive Homes progress notes due to the sensitivity of the information
7. Review the outcome against practices and make a record of the reported incident in the *Incident Register* and *Quality and Continuous Improvement Register*; and
8. Undertake action to prevent the incident from occurring.

### 5.4 Signs, Symptoms and Causes of Some Forms of Abuse

<b>Physical Abuse</b>	
<b>Signs And Symptoms</b>	Bruising, lacerations, welts, rashes, broken or healing bones, burns, weight loss, facial swelling, missing teeth, pain or restricted movements, crying, acting fearful, agitation, drowsiness, hair loss and/ or poor physical well-being.
<b>Causes</b>	That which entails an incident that is non-accidental resulting in pain or injury including but not limited to hitting, slapping, kicking, pushing, punching and/ or burning, restraining, choking, tying, giving medicines to make you feel unwell, stopping you from taking medicine.
<b>Psychological / Emotional Abuse</b>	
<b>Signs And Symptoms</b>	Loss of interest in self-care, helplessness, withdrawn, apathy, insomnia, fearfulness, reluctant to communicate openly, chooses not to maintain eye contact, paranoia, and confusion.
<b>Causes</b>	Intimidation, humiliation, harassment, threatening, sleep deprivation, withholding affection, and/ or not allowing the person to maintain their own decision-making powers.

<b>Financial Abuse</b>	
<b>Signs And Symptoms</b>	Unpaid accounts, withholding funds, loss of jewellery and/or personal belongings, removal of cash from wallet or purse, agitated when discussing money, not providing money for outings and personal items, and/ or a person who takes over the care of someone's money without permission.
<b>Causes</b>	<p>Misuse of a person's money, valuables, or property forced changes to legal documents (such as a will) denying access to or control of personal funds, stealing, fraud, forgery, embezzlement, misuse of power of attorney &amp; taking away decision-making powers of a person.</p> <p>Illegal use or mismanagement of a person's money or property including, stealing, unusual transfer of money or property to another person.</p>
<b>Sexual Abuse</b>	
<b>Signs And Symptoms</b>	Unexplained sexual transmitted disease, vaginal/anal bleeding, fearful of certain people or places, bruising to genital areas inner thigh or around breasts, anxiety, torn or bloody underclothes, difficulty in walking or sitting, change in sleep pattern and repeating nightmares.
<b>Causes</b>	<p>Rape (penetration and/or oral-genital contact), interest in older person's bodies, inappropriate comments, and sexual references, inappropriate (possibly painful) administration of enemas or genital cleansing, indecent assault, sexual harassment which is mainly about violence and power over another person rather than sexual pleasure.</p> <p>Sexual abuse is any sexual contact with someone who is not capable of understanding, is younger than 16 years of age, has not given consent, is threatened, or forced to engage in sexual activities.</p>
<b>Neglect</b>	
<b>Signs And Symptoms</b>	Poor hygiene or personal care, unkempt appearance, lack of personal items, absence of health aids, weight loss, agitation, inappropriate clothing and/ or lack of food.
<b>Causes</b>	<p>The intentional failure to provide basic life necessities Neglect refers to the situation that the initial needs of someone is not met. There are different types of neglect as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Physical neglect: failure in provision of proper food, house, clothing, and protection</li> <li>- Emotional neglect: lack of support and protection for the emotional growth and wellbeing</li> <li>- Passive neglect: lack of provision for initial requirements of a person including food, clothing, or medical care</li> </ul> <p>Supervisory neglect is the failure in provision of support in a way that</p>

	involves a breach of standard and have the risk of death or major harm to a person.
<b>Social Abuse</b>	
<b>Signs And Symptoms</b>	Sadness & grief because people are not visiting, anxiety after a certain person's visit, withdrawal, low self-esteem, appearing ashamed.
<b>Causes</b>	Prevention of people having contact with friends or family and preventing access to social activities.

### 5.5 Training and Ongoing Development

ESG Inclusive Homes requires all employees to undertake mandatory training relevant to recognising and minimising violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation, and discrimination.

ESG Inclusive Homes requires all employees to provide current documentation of the following mandatory checks prior to an offering of employment which must be always kept in the employees' file:

- A current and valid Working with Children Check with nil undertakings
- A current and valid NDIS worker Screening Check with nil undertakings
- A national criminal history check with nil current undertakings; and
- Completion of the mandatory NDIS Worker Orientation Module.

### 6.0 Related Documents, Legislation, Regulations and Standards

- *Incident Form*
- *Incident Register*
- *Feedback, Compliments and Complaints Form*
- *Feedback, Compliments and Complaints Register*
- *Quality and Continuous Improvement Register*
- [National Disability Insurance Scheme Quality Indicators 2021](#)
- [National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013](#)
- [National Disability Strategy 2010-2020](#)

### 7.0 Policy Review

This *Violence, Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation and Discrimination Policy and Procedure* will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that ESG Inclusive Homes operates in accordance with legal, regulatory and company standards. This process will include a review and evaluation of current practices and service delivery types and locations, relevant policies and procedures, forms and registers and will incorporate all ESG Inclusive Homes employee, participant, and other stakeholder feedback.

ESG Inclusive Homes *Quality and Continuous Improvement Register* will be used to record and monitor progress of any improvements identified and where relevant feed into service planning and delivery processes.

ESG Inclusive Homes may make changes to this *Violence, Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation and Discrimination Policy and Procedure* at any time to allow for continual improvement, evaluation, and implementation of best practices to improve the effectiveness of its operation.