



## **ICAS processes for responding to allegations and incidents of violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation and discrimination**

### **Step 1: PROTECT**

The person who has been subject to abuse must be immediately made safe. Medical assistance must be provided if required. Any sources of harm (including potential sources) – for example, a perpetrator, a weapon, or any harmful object – must be removed from the person.

Provide reassurance to the person. Ask the person would they like a chosen supporter or advocate to attend (chosen supporter must not be the perpetrator).

Once the person has been made safe, contact the Director, who will contact the chosen supporter or advocate in accordance with the wishes of the person with disability. Should allegations be made against the support worker, the Director must be contacted immediately.

### **Step 2: PRESERVE AND DOCUMENT EVIDENCE**

If a criminal act has taken place, the scene of the incident must be maintained. This means not moving any items within the space, and ensuring others (apart from the police in the case of a criminal act or death, and the service manager in the case of a non-criminal act) are prevented from accessing the space. Ensuring the scene is maintained will ensure protection of evidence and any personal articles. Take photographs of the scene. Take detailed notes of what the participant and/or perpetrator and/or witnesses may have said, who was involved, the time and place of the incident, how the person was made safe, and who was notified.

### **Step 3: REPORT THE INCIDENT IMMEDIATELY**

The Director must report all allegations of criminal acts or deaths must be reported to the relevant State Police Service.

Both the support worker and the Director must complete a critical incident form. Your notes, and the incident form, must be managed, maintained, and stored in accordance with ICAS's Privacy and Dignity and Confidentiality policies. The incident must be progressed through ICAS's Complaints policies and processes.



The support worker must advise the Director immediately after a critical incident involving a crime or a death, and detail steps taken to date. Should allegations be made against the Director, the police must be contacted. Deaths must be reported to the Coroner.

If a 'reportable incident' occurs, which includes death, serious injury, abuse or neglect of a person with a disability, the NDIS Commission must be notified using the respective NDIS Commission notification form available at:

<https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/providers/reportable-incidents>

#### **STEP 4: SUPPORT THE VICTIM/COMPLAINANT AND STAFF**

The support worker must take steps to protect the person who has been subject to violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation and discrimination. This means the individual must be protected from any additional attempts at violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation and discrimination, as well as any attempts at retribution. Additionally, these steps will assist in supporting the police and internal investigation.

The support worker must then discuss with the Director actions to be taken to ensure this occurs. These may include:

- The involvement of victim support services.
- Debriefing and counselling for participants, staff, and/or other affected parties (e.g. witnesses).
- Relocating on a temporary basis the person subject to the abuse, and any witnesses, if appropriate.
- Suspending any staff accused of violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation and discrimination in accordance with ICAS's zero tolerance policy.
- Advise, as appropriate, other participants/parents/guardians of the incident, steps taken to date, and next steps.

Take steps to support and protect the person who has experienced abuse and the whistle-blower, if applicable. Ensure that they are not subject to retribution and stop any attempts at further abuse or retribution. Disability services are required to have policies and procedures in place to ensure support and protection both for people who have experienced abuse and for whistle-blowers, and to prevent retribution.

Actions may include:

- involving victim support services.
- counselling for staff, clients or other whistle-blowers.
- temporarily moving persons who have experienced abuse and informants.
- suspending staff suspected of perpetrating abuse.



## STEP 5: TAKE THE MATTER FURTHER

Should any person be of the view the matter has not been managed satisfactorily by ICAS, the individual is able to take up the matter with the NDIS Commission.

## STEP 6: REVIEW

The support worker and appropriate staff will work with the Director to review the incident and steps that can be taken to ensure the prevention of similar incidents in the future.

Where appropriate, the Director may consider the contracting of an external investigator to review the incident, including responses by ICAS, to provide an assessment of the response and recommendations for the prevention of similar incidents in the future.

The Director and Quality Assurance Officer will work to review relevant policies and procedures following any critical incident review, whether internal or external.

