



Safeguarding Policy and Procedure

Policy and Scope

Soul Services WA is committed to promoting and protecting individual rights and maximising the choice and control of people with disabilities in decisions about their lives. This policy outlines the role of safeguarding supports and mechanisms to ensure the safety of people with disability and the quality of services.

Soul Services WA is dedicated to providing an environment where people with a disability to whom it provides services are protected from abuse, neglect or harm and where staff work according to our organisational values.

This policy supports Soul Services WA to apply the National Standards for Disability Services. This policy guides staff to support people to exercise their rights and exercise choice and control over their services. This policy will support Soul Services WA to apply the NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Practice Standards for Rights and Responsibilities, Provider Governance and Operational Management and Provision of Supports.

All Soul Services WA staff are responsible for working within the policy and reporting when safeguarding is not adequate.

Principles

- Safeguarding improves safety and wellbeing, while imposing the least possible restriction on participants and their choices.
- Safeguards are responsive to the participants circumstances and are relevant to the risk within these circumstances. These factors may change over time.
- Every participant should be supported to develop their individual skills and capacity and be involved in determining their own safeguards.
- Participants who need and want support to make decisions will be supported to exercise choice.
- Safeguards can be informal or formal and work at an individual and/or organisational level.
- A participants' money or other property is only used with their consent and for the purposes they intended.
- Supports are provided based on the least intrusive options that meet the participant's needs and help achieve desired outcomes.

Key actions

A defined structure is implemented by the governing body to meet a governing body's financial, legislative, regulatory and contractual responsibilities, and to monitor and respond to quality and safeguarding matters associated with delivering supports to participants.

Where a participant has specific needs, which require monitoring and/or daily support, workers are appropriately trained and understand the participant's needs and preferences.

Reasonable adjustments to the support delivery environment are made and monitored to ensure it is fit for purpose and each participant's health, privacy, dignity, quality of life and independence is supported.

Risks to the organisation, including risks to a participant's financial and work, health and safety risks, and risks associated with provision of supports are identified, analysed, prioritised and treated.

Where supports are provided in the participant's home, work is undertaken with the participant to ensure a safe support delivery environment.

Where relevant, work is undertaken with other providers and services to identify and treat risks, ensure safe environments, and prevent and manage injuries.

Participants are not given financial advice or information other than that which would reasonably be required under the participant's plan.

Each participant is given information about the use of an advocate and access to an advocate is facilitated where allegations of violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation or discrimination have been made.

Allegations and incidents of violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation or discrimination are acted upon, each participant affected is supported and assisted, records are made of any details and outcomes of reviews and investigations (where applicable) and action is taken to prevent similar incidents occurring again.

Definitions:

Safeguarding - actions designed to protect the rights of people to be safe from the risk of harm, abuse and neglect, while maximising the choice and control they have over their lives.

Safeguarding Procedure

This procedure explains how Soul Services WA will implement its policy for safeguarding both generally and around the participants it supports. This procedure supports Soul Services WA to apply the National Standards for Disability Services

Planning and support

Soul Services WA uses a values-based approach to recruitment to ensure staff are able to contribute to the culture of and human rights, including the right to be free from harm, abuse and neglect. All prospective employees are required to undergo pre-employment screening before being offered a position at Soul Services WA.

Soul Services WA complete mandatory safeguarding training and to support the ongoing understanding of team members on issues relating to safeguarding by providing information, professional development and support on a case-by-case basis.

When developing individual safeguarding strategies, the participant with disability will be involved in the process, along with others the participant with disability identifies as essential.

A balance needs to be achieved between meeting duty of care responsibilities and the participant's freedom to make decisions. Soul Services WA supports participants to make informed decisions and choices including being aware of any risks or consequences recognising that all people learn and grow from trial and error.

If there is an occasion where the participant with disability is unable to assess and recognise risks in a particular circumstance, supported decision making should be considered. If this is the case, the nominated representatives should also be involved in the consideration and determination of an participant's safeguards. This is often family members, carers and/or advocates.

All staff are required to ensure detailed, accurate and up-to-date records and information are maintained for Soul Services WA to meet it's legal, contractual and mandatory reporting requirements. Soul Services WA relies on this information, and information from participants, families, advocates and other key stakeholders to regularly monitor service delivery and inform service review. Information collection and analysis is undertaken to identify early warning signs for overall service improvement and identifies trends in practice and service delivery that could be improved.

Soul Services WA staff must record any concerns in the participant progress notes. Refer to the incident reporting policy and procedure if an incident report is required. All Serious Incident Reports must be completed and lodged with the relevant funding body.

Where an incident occurs, Soul Services WA will make inquiries about the factual circumstances of a matter but will not undertake an investigation into where the nature of the incident requires police to be notified.

Soul Services WA will advise the **reporting body** immediately if there is a concern or allegation relating to abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Responsibilities

All Soul Services WA staff are responsible for safeguarding the wellbeing and safety of people with disability in receipt of services. Any staff member aware of any risk to a participant with disability, whether that is a concern, or a specific incident, must report it immediately to the Directors.

Soul Services WA must record any concern or allegation and follow the relevant procedure to minimise harm and prevent further occurrence or escalation.

Soul Services WA is responsible for the implementation and monitoring of this procedure.

Reporting

Soul Services WA will complete and lodge an Incident Report to NDIS Quality and Safeguarding and collate a report outlining any changes required in policy and/or practices to prevent similar incidents from occurring again.

Review and evaluation

Any time there are concerns or allegations about abuse, neglect or harm, once the risk or incident has been responded to, Soul Services WA will explore opportunities to reduce the risk of the same thing happening again. Soul Services WA Directors will engage with relevant stakeholders including the affected participant, families, advocates and staff to identify any strategies, systems, process or practice improvements that could be applied.

This procedure is reviewed every 12 months or sooner where improvements in practice are identified through internal or external monitoring of best practice. Soul Services WA routinely monitors any changes to the National Disability Insurance Scheme Quality and Safeguarding Framework and State Government policy and guidelines on safeguarding.

Any breach of this policy or procedure by Soul Services WA staff may result in disciplinary action.

Related Document:

Person Centred Approach Policy

Making Choices and Decisions Policy

Freedom from Abuse and Neglect Policy

Incident Management Policy and Procedure

Welcome Pack