



# 01.01 Client Safety and Wellbeing Policy

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## Scope

The most fundamental aspect of Wallara's duty of care to clients is to ensure that they feel safe and that they are free from any form of Violence, Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation (VANE) while in Wallara's care or in receipt of Wallara's services. Wallara takes deliberate steps to protect clients from physical, sexual, emotional and psychological abuse and neglect.

## Responsibility

The Senior Leadership Team is responsible for this policy.

## Policy

Wallara's approach in this area is underpinned by the following principles:

- A zero tolerance for VANE of all clients, and the promotion of a person-centred culture;
- The importance of client-to-client friendships is recognised and support from peers is encouraged, to help vulnerable adults feel safe and be less isolated;
- Upholding the rights of vulnerable people;
- Promoting participation of clients in decisions that affect them;
- Fostering an inclusive environment that respects diversity; while this policy focuses on VANE, broader matters relating to diversity and inclusion are addressed in Wallara's Inclusion, Diversity and Choice Policy
- Providing appropriate support for clients which can include external advocacy;
- Staff being alert to unusual behaviour such as unnecessary supervision particularly in personal care, gift giving, and/or favouritism of a client by a Staff member;
- Mandatory reporting of all incidents, allegations or reasonable suspicions of abuse and neglect or unexplained injuries, wherever they may have occurred;
- Implementing rigorous investigative practices in response to any allegations;
- Recognising the importance of both services and clients being connected to the community to prevent isolation and reduce the risk of abuse and neglect occurring;
- Providing accessible information about people's rights, how to recognise violence, abuse, neglect, and unlawful discrimination and what to do about it;
- Offering all necessary supports to a client who has experienced abuse and neglect, whilst respecting the right of clients to accept or refuse such supports;
- Providing training and education for clients on their rights and protection in relation to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation;
- Focussing on the values and attitudes of Staff in recruitment processes;
- Analysing data from incident reporting and notifications of abuse.

Wallara will:

- Identify potential safety risks to vulnerable persons in our operations, programs and activities and implement strategies to mitigate these including supervision, training and regular review of practices;
- Respect and value all clients
- Provide regular training and resources for Staff on VANE, signs of grooming and reporting and responding to concerns;
- Embrace a positive complaints culture where people are supported and encouraged to speak up and Staff and management recognise complaints as an integral part of providing a quality service;
- Engage with families and guardians of clients and encourage open communication and feedback.

It is expected that all allegations of abuse and neglect will be treated with appropriate confidentiality by Wallara Staff. Reporting any form of VANE is **mandatory** at Wallara. Organizations are required to prevent and respond to abuse or harm caused by other adults.



## Who to contact

Any allegations of VANE should be reported to Sonia Went, Senior Manager, Quality and Safeguarding.

In addition, Staff may also choose to report general abuse and neglect allegations to NDIS [www.ndis.gov.au](http://www.ndis.gov.au).

## Definitions

|                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Client</b>             | Any person supported by Wallara                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Operations Manager</b> | The person in charge of a particular team or location.                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Support Lead</b>       | The manager of a Learning & Lifestyle Site, or a Live House.                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Staff</b>              | Refers to Wallara's directors and all persons engaged by or on behalf of Wallara, including but not limited to employees, contractors, sub-contractors and volunteers.                                                                                                          |
| <b>Abuse and neglect</b>  | Refers to violence, abuse, assault (including sexual assault), neglect, exploitation and mistreatment. For an expanded definition of these terms, see the Abuse and Neglect Guidance.                                                                                           |
| <b>Harm</b>               | Damage to the health, safety, or wellbeing of a client. It includes physical, sexual, emotional and psychological harm. Harm can arise from a single act or event. It can also be cumulative, that is, arising as a result of a series of acts or events over a period of time. |

## Relevant Legislation and Standards

- Disability Act 2006 (Vic)
- NDIS Act 2013 (Cth)
- NDIS Zero Tolerance Framework
- NDIS Core Practice Standards:
  - Standard 1. Rights and Responsibilities
    - Violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation and discrimination
- NDIS Incident Management and Reportable Incidents Rules 2018 (Cth)

## Related Documents

- 01.05 Inclusion, Diversity and Choice Policy
- 01.08 Incident Management and Reporting Procedure

| Date Created | Date Approved | Date Revised | Version control | Approved By                                | Amendment details               |
|--------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
|              | 31.03.2025    |              | 1               | The Board. New Delegated Authority is SLT. | New policy to replace existing. |



## Client Safety and Wellbeing Policy – Easy Read

This policy is to ensure Clients are free from any type of abuse and neglect while in the care of Wallara or when receiving Wallara Services.

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|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| All Wallara Staff are to follow this Policy.                                                                                                                                             |  |
| Wallara's main job is to make sure clients feel safe and are free from any form of violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation, or discrimination while receiving Wallara's care or services. |  |
| <b>Zero Tolerance:</b> Wallara has a strict "no tolerance" policy for violence, abuse, neglect, or exploitation (VANE) of any client.                                                    |  |

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| <p><b>Key Principles of Wallara's Policy:</b></p> <p><b>Encouraging Friendships:</b> Wallara encourages friendships between clients and supports them to feel less isolated.</p> <p><b>Respecting Rights:</b> Wallara makes sure that the rights of vulnerable people are protected.</p> <p><b>Client Involvement:</b> Clients are encouraged to make decisions about things that affect them.</p> <p><b>Inclusive Environment:</b> Wallara creates an environment that respects all people, no matter their background or differences.</p> | <br><br> |
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**Support for Clients:** Wallara provides the right support for clients, including offering help from outside groups if needed.

**Watch for Unusual Behaviour:** Staff are trained to spot unusual behaviour, like extra supervision, giving gifts, or favouritism.

**Reporting Abuse:** All Staff must report any suspicion of abuse or neglect, or any injuries that cannot be explained.

**Investigating Allegations:** Wallara takes all reports seriously and investigates carefully.

**Community Connection:** Wallara encourages clients and services to stay connected to the community to reduce the risk of abuse or neglect.

**Access to Information:** Wallara provides information to clients about their rights and how to recognize and report abuse.

**Offering Support:** Clients who have experienced abuse are offered support, but it's their choice whether to accept it or not.

**Training for Clients:** Wallara educates clients on their rights and how to protect themselves from abuse.

**Staff Values:** Wallara ensures Staff are chosen based on their values and attitude towards clients.

### Actions Wallara will take

**Identify Risks:** Wallara looks for safety risks and creates plans to reduce these risks through supervision, training, and regular reviews.

**Respect Clients:** Wallara values and respects all clients.



- ✓ Think client first
- ✓ Being creative and push the boundaries
- ✓ Do the right thing
- ✓ Believe together we make a difference
- ✓ Have fun and celebrate awesomeness





**Training for Staff:** Wallara regularly trains Staff on how to spot and respond to abuse, and how to report concerns.

**Encourage Complaints:** Wallara promotes a culture where people feel safe to speak up and make complaints, which are taken seriously to improve services.

**Family Engagement:** Wallara encourages open communication with clients' families and guardians and values their feedback.



Reporting abuse at Wallara is Mandatory.



All reports of abuse or neglect are treated with complete **confidentiality** by Wallara.



**Who to contact**

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In addition, Staff may also choose to report general abuse and neglect allegations to NDIS [www.ndis.gov.au](http://www.ndis.gov.au)

