



## Vulnerable Persons Policy



"I am listened to and supported to keep myself safe."

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### Intent

Article 16 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) recognises the "dis-abling" nature of our society. It states the right of disabled people to be safe from violence, abuse and exploitation.

We recognise that people with disabilities such as learning and communication disabilities, kaumātua and people living in circumstances where they have reduced choice and control, may be particularly at risk of abuse. For example:

- a person who has memory or learning problems may not be believed
- a person who is in detention
- there may be power and control dynamics in a care arrangement
- abuse and neglect may be excused or trivialised as "behavioural"
- a person doesn't disclose because they feel stigmatised
- the abuse is trivialised as a caregiver "coping".



## Requirements

Particular care will be taken when working with people who, because of a sensory or cognitive disability or other circumstances, are vulnerable to abuse and not being believed. The abuse and protection policies will be applied. We will:

- take what they say seriously
- access relevant support for the person (e.g communicative assistance for a person with a communication disability)
- support them to have control and exercise choice
- provide them with the least restrictive options for dealing with risks
- recognise their right to take risks and make “bad” decisions like everyone else, whilst maintaining the responsibility to respond and report abuse as a service provider
- engage with their chosen supports including family, whānau and any court-appointed guardian
- take things slowly - at their pace
- encourage and support them to access disability supports and other advocates (eg Aged Concern)
- create opportunities for private kōrero with the vulnerable person
- where possible, use routines to optimise trust and safety in relationships with kaimahi and volunteers.

Kaimahi/staff must, in accordance with our policies, report suspected abuse to management for action to be taken.

Where appropriate, local iwi/kaumātua/kuia, elder abuse and neglect prevention services of Age Concern ([www.age\\_concern.org.nz](http://www.age_concern.org.nz)) and the Health and Disability Commissioners Advocacy service will be involved.



## Compliance

Social Sector Accreditation Standards - Levels 2 & 3, Community wellbeing & Client-centred services.

NZS 8134:2021 Our Rights, I am protected from abuse 1.5.1-1.5.6

## Helpful links

[People First New Zealand Ngā Tāngata Tuatahi](#)

[Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#)

[Protection of older people against abuse and neglect](#)

## Review

Date: March 2021

Next review: by February 2023