

## Elder Abuse Prevention and Reporting Policy

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all E4 Workers understand their responsibility to prevent, identify, and report elder abuse, and to promote the safety, dignity, and human rights of older people in all healthcare and community settings where E4 Workers are placed.

This policy also ensures that all E4 Workers are provided with clear expectations for recognising signs of elder abuse and responding promptly, safely, and respectfully in accordance with relevant laws, professional standards, E4 People policies and Host Employer policies.

### SCOPE

This policy applies to all E4 Workers, at all times and without exception.

### POLICY

#### Definitions

- **Elder / Older Person:**  
An individual generally considered to be an older adult, as defined by relevant legislation, E4 People and Host Employer policies, or service guidelines in the jurisdiction where services are delivered.
- **Elder Abuse:**  
Any act or omission that causes harm or distress to an older person within a relationship where there is an expectation of trust. This may be intentional or unintentional and can occur in any setting, including but not limited to, residential facilities, hospitals, community services, or the person's home.  
Types of elder abuse can include (but are not limited to):
  - **Physical abuse**  
Use of force resulting in pain, injury, or impairment (e.g. hitting, pushing, rough handling, inappropriate restraint).
  - **Emotional or psychological abuse**  
Behaviours that cause fear, distress, humiliation, or isolation (e.g. threats, yelling, intimidation, coercion, bullying).
  - **Financial or material abuse**  
Misuse, theft, or exploitation of an older person's money, assets, or property.
  - **Sexual abuse**  
Any sexual activity or behaviour without the older person's consent, or where they are unable to give informed consent.
  - **Neglect**  
Failure to meet an older person's basic needs, including food, hygiene, medical care, supervision, or safe living conditions.
  - **Social abuse**  
Preventing or restricting contact with family, friends, or community, or controlling an older person's social interactions.
- **Mandatory Reporting:**  
Any legal requirement to report suspected abuse, neglect, or harm to a designated authority, as defined by the laws and regulations in the jurisdiction where the E4 Worker is placed.

E4 People is committed to maintaining environments where older people are safe from abuse, treated with respect and dignity, and supported to exercise their rights, independence, and choices while E4 Workers are on Host Employer's sites.

## **Responsibilities**

E4 People will:

- Provide elder abuse prevention and reporting training and resources to E4 Workers prior to, or as soon as practicable after, any placement in aged care or relevant healthcare settings.
- Promote a culture of zero tolerance for elder abuse and ensure that allegations and disclosures are taken seriously.
- Respond promptly to any concerns, reports, or complaints regarding suspected elder abuse involving E4 Workers, in collaboration with Host Employers and relevant authorities where appropriate.
- Support E4 Workers who raise concerns or make reports of suspected elder abuse, including protecting them from victimisation for reporting in good faith.
- Work with Host Employers to ensure that service environments where E4 Workers are placed are as safe as reasonably practicable for older people.

E4 Workers will:

- Treat all older people with dignity, respect, and compassion at all times.
- Familiarise themselves with and follow Host Employer policies on elder abuse prevention, reporting, and documentation.
- Be vigilant for signs or indicators of elder abuse, including physical, behavioural, emotional, financial, or environmental concerns.
- Immediately report any suspicions, disclosures, or allegations of elder abuse, even if uncertain, in line with:
  - The Host Employer's procedures (e.g. notifying the supervisor/manager on duty, clinical lead, or designated safeguarding officer); and
  - E4 People's reporting requirements (e.g. contacting their E4 People Consultant as soon as practicable).
- Document relevant observations and information factually, accurately, and promptly, as directed by E4 People or Host Employer policies and professional standards.
- Maintain confidentiality and privacy, sharing information only with those authorised and required to know, in line with relevant legislation and policy requirements.
- Cooperate with any internal or external investigation or review related to alleged elder abuse.

Host Employers will:

- Foster safe, respectful, and person-centred environments for older people.
- Provide E4 Workers with site-specific orientation and information on local elder abuse prevention and reporting procedures, including after-hours escalation processes.
- Ensure clear lines of authority and contact points for E4 Workers to report concerns, incidents, or suspected abuse.
- Collaborate with E4 People to respond to, investigate, and resolve concerns about suspected elder abuse in a timely and transparent manner.
- Notify E4 People promptly of any allegations or incidents of elder abuse involving an E4 Worker and share relevant information in line with privacy and legal requirements.

## **Training and Awareness**

All E4 Workers may be required to complete elder abuse prevention and reporting training as a condition of placement, particularly in aged care, community care, and other healthcare settings where older people receive services.

Training may include:

- Understanding what elder abuse is and the different forms it can take.
- Recognising signs, indicators, and risk factors of elder abuse.
- Legal and ethical obligations, including mandatory reporting where applicable.
- How to respond safely and supportively to disclosures or suspected abuse.
- How and when to report concerns to Host Employers, E4 People, and/or relevant authorities.
- Documentation standards and the importance of factual, objective recording.

E4 People will provide or facilitate access to training and may require E4 Workers to periodically update or refresh their knowledge.

## **Responding to Suspected Elder Abuse**

When an E4 Worker suspects or becomes aware of possible elder abuse, they must:

1. Ensure immediate safety
  - Take reasonable steps within their role and Host Employer policies to reduce immediate risk to the older person (e.g. seeking urgent assistance from a senior staff member or emergency services where necessary).
2. Do not agree to secrecy
  - Listen respectfully and reassure the person, but do not agree to keep information secret if abuse is disclosed.
3. Report without delay
  - Notify the Host Employer's nominated person (e.g. supervisor, manager in charge, clinical lead) as soon as possible.
  - Inform E4 People (e.g. your E4 People Consultant) at the earliest opportunity after making a report to the Host Employer.
4. Record accurately
  - Document observations and conversations using the Host Employer's required systems and formats, using clear, factual, and objective language.
5. Follow legal and policy requirements
  - Comply with any mandatory reporting obligations and local procedures as directed by the Host Employer and relevant legislation.

E4 Workers must not conduct their own investigations, confront alleged perpetrators directly (unless required for immediate safety and in accordance with Host Employer policy), or ignore signs of possible abuse.

## **Feedback, Complaints and Resolution**

E4 People encourages E4 Workers to raise any concerns, feedback, or complaints related to elder abuse prevention, reporting processes, or responses by E4 People or Host Employers.

E4 Workers should report concerns or complaints to:

- Their E4 People Consultant; and/or
- The relevant manager or designated person at the Host Employer's site.

All concerns will be treated seriously, managed promptly, and addressed fairly and confidentially as far as is reasonably practicable. E4 People is committed to ensuring that workers who report concerns in good faith are not victimised or disadvantaged for doing so.

### **POLICY BREACH**

Where a breach of this policy is identified, E4 People may take appropriate action, which may include:

- Additional training or supervision
- Removal from a placement
- Reporting to regulatory bodies or authorities (where required)
- Disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or assignment.

### **POLICY REVIEW**

This policy will be regularly reviewed by E4 People and may be revised from time to time. Any necessary changes will be implemented by the Directors.