

Client Care and Protection Policy

In Balance Physiotherapy and Fitness (IBPF) employees are required to respond promptly and sensitively to concerns and allegations of child abuse, neglect and/or exploitation. It is the responsibility of all employees to have an understanding of the IBPF care and protection policy and of the steps for implementation.

IBPF employees undertake training to ensure they understand their care and protection responsibilities for all clients of the company and follow the business' prescribed client welfare procedural flowchart.

IBPF will respond within 7 (working) days to any allegations of abuse and/or neglect of a child or person with a disability.

If an employee is exposed to a care/ protection issue:

Employee Response:

- All concerns/allegations must be immediately reported to your Team Coordinator or the Director if your Coordinator is not available;
- Ensure safeguards are immediately put in place as determined in consultation with the above;
- Develop and implement an action plan in conjunction with your Coordinator; and
- Ensure ongoing monitoring of the situation and that all information is documented clearly, promptly and kept on record.

Coordinator Response:

- Support the employee and ensure all care and protection processes are followed;
- Provide information and direction to all employees involved in the situation;
- Ensure Director is aware of the situation;
- Ensure appropriate documentation, recording and communication with all parties;
- Ensure employees follow safeguards and monitor appropriately;
- Arrange for employee training to mitigate risks as required;
- Ensure that concerns/allegations are discussed with relevant key stakeholders;
- Involve external agencies as appropriate; and
- If the family is registered with DSC, a 'Serious Incident Report' (SIR) form is to be completed and submitted to the Commission. A copy of the DSC SIR guidelines can be found on the Commission website <http://www.disability.wa.gov.au/disability-service-providers-/for-disability-service-providers/contracts2/serious-incident-reporting-/>.

A serious incident requiring a DSC SIR form is defined as one or more of the following:

- Death of a person with a disability who is a current service user;
- Serious physical injury of a person with disability who is a current service user;



- Serious avoidable illness (for example food poisoning or instances where medication has been wrongly administered) of a person with disability who is a current service user;
- Abuse or neglect of a person with disability who is a current service user;
- Exploitation or unauthorised restrictive practices used with a person with disability who is a current service user;
- The person is judged as posing a serious risk to the health, safety or welfare of themselves or others; and/ or
- An assault on staff or a visitor to the service by a person with disability who is a current service user.

If none of the above has occurred, a SIR form should still be completed if:

- The service provider receives serious verbal or written complaints in relation to a service user with a disability;
- The service provider is required to inform their insurer about a matter;
- A matter or complaint about the service is referred to any statutory or investigative body; and/or
- The service provider has concerns over the welfare of a person with a disability.

Non-direct/ indirect exposure of situation

There may be situations when a concern or allegation has been identified by an agency or person other than an IBPF employee, who in turn brings the concern/allegation to the attention of a IBPF employee. In this situation the other agency/person should be encouraged to follow their own care and protection guidelines or relevant protocols.

An IBPF employee receiving this information from a third party should encourage that party to fulfil their duty of care to the child and discuss the concern/allegation with the Department of Community Development (DCD) and/or Disability Services Commission (DSC) for Commission funded clients.

Responding to requests for support/involvement

During the course of their work, IBPF employees may become involved in legal situations. These could eventuate in the form of subpoenas, police questioning or through contact from a lawyer of individuals associated with the client.

All requests for involvement in a legal matter must be agreed to by the Director of IBPF. Employees are to forward all requests to the Director and information or involvement should be undertaken unless approval is granted. If IBPF therapists are asked to support clients in legal proceedings this must also be discussed fully with the General Manager and approved by the Director of the business.