

ORG-CPW-001 Commitment to Safeguarding Children, Young People and People with Disability

POLICY			
Approved by:	Board of Directors	Approval Date:	14/11/2016
Date Effective:	28/11/2016	Next Review Due:	14/11/2019
Custodian:	Chair, Board of Directors		
Employer:	<p>The CareSouth Group is comprised of the below entities, collectively known as the CareSouth Group. Other entities may be added in the future to the CareSouth Group. This policy applies to staff, volunteers and contractors employed in each of these entities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CareSouth ABN 97 065 193 035 • CareSouth Residential OOHC ABN 19 164 554 607 • CareSouth Foster Care ABN 32 164 554 223 • CareSouth Family Connections ABN 93 164 553 799 • CareSouth Disabilities ABN 32 164 553 413 		
System Location:	S:\Common\CareSouth_Policies\2. Organisational		
Related Material:	<p>CARESOUTH POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS</p> <p>This policy has been written with reference to and operates in conjunction with the following CareSouth policies and procedures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Child Protection & Wellbeing</i> • <i>Client Protection and Prevention Of Abuse Policy</i> • <i>Child Protection & Wellbeing - Documenting Concerns about Children, Young Persons and Families</i> • <i>Child Protection & Wellbeing - Exchange of Information</i> • <i>Child Protection & Wellbeing - Explaining Child Protection Responsibilities to Children, Young Persons and Families</i> • <i>Child Protection & Wellbeing - Reporting Risk of Significant Harm</i> • <i>Child Protection & Wellbeing - Responding to Allegations of Abuse</i> • <i>Child Protection & Wellbeing - Screening of Staff and Carers</i> • <i>Client Rights and Responsibilities</i> • <i>Privacy & Confidentiality Management</i> 		

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	<p>LEGISLATION AND EXTERNAL STANDARDS</p> <p>This policy has been written with reference to and operates in conjunction with the following legislation and external standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)</i> • <i>Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 (NSW)</i> • <i>The Ombudsman Act 1974 (NSW)</i> • <i>Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Amendment (Parental Responsibility Contracts) Act 2006 (NSW).</i> • <i>Child Protection (Offenders Registration) Act 2000 (NSW)</i> • <i>Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998 (NSW)</i> • <i>Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act (NSW)</i> • <i>Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)</i> • <i>Discrimination Act 1991 (ACT)</i> • <i>Family Law Act 1975 (CTH)</i> • <i>Children and Young People Act 2008 (ACT)</i> • <i>Crimes (Child Sex Offenders) Act 2005 (ACT)</i> • <i>Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (CTH)</i> • <i>Human Rights Act 2004 (ACT)</i> • <i>Human Rights Commission Act 2005 (ACT)</i> • <i>Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act 2011 (ACT)</i> • <i>Crimes Act 1900 (NSW)</i> • <i>Disability Services Act (National Standards for Disability Services) Determination 2014 (CTH)</i> • <i>National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 (CTH)</i> • <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (CTH)</i> • <i>Disability Inclusion Act 2014 (NSW)</i> • <i>United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)</i> • <i>United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (2006)</i> • <i>Child Wellbeing & Child Protection – NSW Interagency Guidelines, NSW Government, Keep Them Safe: A Shared Approach to Child Wellbeing 2009-2014.</i> • <i>Australian Government, Department of Social Services, National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children 2009-2020</i> • <i>NSW Government, Family and Community Services (FACS), The NSW Community Services: Mandatory Reporting Guide.</i> • <i>Australian Association of Social Workers, Practice Standards 2013</i> • <i>Australian Association of Social Workers, Code of Ethics 2010</i>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australian Government, Department of Social Services, <i>National Standards for Disability Services 2013</i>
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1. DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Child Young Person	<p>a person under the age of sixteen (16) years</p> <p>a person who is aged sixteen (16) years or above but who is under the age of eighteen (18) years.</p>
Code of Conduct	<p>an agreement with a set of rules of behaviour and proper conduct when engaging with children or young people for all Board of Directors, staff and volunteers. A Code of Conduct details an organisation's core values and explicitly communicates everyone's responsibility and obligation to adhere to the outlined expected behaviours and professional boundaries when working with children and young people.</p>
Disability	<p><i>s4 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (CTH)</i> provides that "disability", in relation to a person, means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions: or (b) total or partial loss of a part of the body; or (c) the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; or (d) the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness; or (e) the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body; or (f) a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or (g) a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgment or that results in disturbed behaviour; <p>To avoid doubt, a disability that is otherwise covered by this definition includes behaviour that is a symptom or manifestation of the disability.</p>

Term	Definition
<p>Domestic and family violence</p>	<p>a pattern of abusive behaviour in an intimate relationship that over time puts one person in a position of power over another, and causes fear. It is often referred to as a pattern of coercion and control.</p> <p>Domestic and family violence does not always stop when the relationship ends, so it can also occur between ex-partners.</p> <p>Abusers use many tactics to maintain power and control, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical assaults, choking, beatings • acts of sexual violence, forced sex or forcing someone to do sexual acts they don't wish to do • emotional abuse, name calling and put downs, disrespectful treatment, including abuse through social media • isolation from supports, family and community, or using family and community to intimidate • stalking or monitoring every move • psychological abuse. this can include denying that the abusive behaviour occurred; blaming the person being abused for the behaviour; telling the person being abused that they have mental health problems, manipulating or deliberately twisting reality • preventing someone from practicing their spirituality or faith, or forcing them to adopt a faith or spirituality that is not their own • harming or threatening to harm loved ones including children • harming or threatening to harm pets • legal abuse, such as exploiting the family law system to intimidate, exhaust, exploit or disempower someone • abuse unique to the relationship, such as threatening suicide when someone tries to leave a relationship, threatening to withdraw the assistance or care required by someone who has a disability, or undermining mothering by preventing settling or breastfeeding of infants can be forms of domestic and family violence.

Term	Definition
<p>Emotional or Psychological abuse</p>	<p>Emotional abuse is a pattern of behaviours that negatively impact on the emotional life of the child, young person or person with disability.</p> <p>Examples of emotional abuse include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • verbal abuse, such as yelling, insulting or swearing at someone • put downs, including public humiliation or embarrassment, scapegoating or blaming • rejection or pretending not to notice someone's presence or conversation • intimidation, causing the child to feel fear • social isolation • bullying • witnessing domestic violence or other forms of ill-treatment of another, or of a pet. <p>Psychological abuse is sometimes distinguished from emotional abuse. It refers to abuse that internalises negative or distorted views of one's self and reality. Psychological abuse changes the way individuals see themselves and the world, not just the way they feel. It impacts upon their cognitions and self-esteem. Psychological abuse conveys to a child, young person or person with disability that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. Psychological abuse is often deliberate and manipulative.</p> <p>Both emotional and psychological abuse impact on the mental health and neurobiological development of children, young people and people with disability.</p>
<p>Exposure to domestic and family violence</p>	<p>Exposure to domestic and family violence occurs when children or young people are forced to live with violent or threatening behaviour that coerces or controls a family member, including their primary carer, or causes that family member to be fearful.</p> <p>Exposure to domestic and family violence is a specific form of emotional abuse.</p>

Term	Definition
Harm	<p>any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child, young person or person with disability's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing or their development. Harm may be caused by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect; or • sexual abuse or exploitation; • a single act, omission or circumstance; or • a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances. <p>Signs of harm vary according to the age, developmental stage or individual qualities of the child young person or person with disability, and may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • challenging behaviours • eating disorders • depression and/or anxiety • impulse control • self-harm • addictions • inappropriate sexual conduct.
Involved Personnel	anyone engaged to work for any CareSouth entity, including paid employees, volunteers, carers, students and contractors.
Mandatory Reporter	those employees who deliver certain services to children as part of their paid or professional work. For the purposes of this policy, those CareSouth employees who are responsible for the provision of services to children and young people are captured by this definition.
Mandatory Reporter Guide (MRG)	a tool produced by the Department of Family and Community Services (NSW) to assist mandatory reporters with determining whether the concern meets the statutory threshold for reporting. The MRG includes an online decision tree tool and its written equivalent.

Term	Definition
Mandatory Reporting	a legal obligation to report instances of a risk of significant harm to a child or young person by an organisation or individual identified as a “mandatory reporter” in accordance with s27 of the <i>Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998</i> (NSW) if the employee is working in NSW, or Section 356 of the <i>Children and Young People Act 2008</i> (ACT), if the employee is working in the ACT.
Neglect	<p>the persistent failure to meet a child, young person or person with disability’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of their health or development.</p> <p>Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing; shelter, including exclusion from home or abandonment; failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-takers; the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment; or the failure to ensure school attendance. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, the individual’s basic emotional needs.</p>
Parent	a person having parental responsibility for the child, young person, or caring responsibility for the person with disability
Parental Responsibility	in relation to a child or young person, means all the duties, powers, responsibilities and authority which, by law, parents have in relation to their children.
Physical abuse	any conduct or omission that causes children, young people or people with disability physical harm or places them at risk of harm. It includes inadvertent inflicting of injury that results from physical punishment or aggressive treatment.

Term	Definition
Risk of Significant Harm (ROSH)	refers to a threshold established by the NSW Department of Family and Community Services. This threshold is set out in the Mandatory Reporter Guide. According to this threshold, what is 'significant' is not minor or trivial and may reasonably be expected to produce a substantial and demonstrably adverse impact on the child's or young person's safety, welfare or wellbeing.
Sexual abuse	<p>Sexual abuse occurs when an adult involves a child, young person or person with disability in any sexual activity. Sexual abuse also occurs when a child or young person involves another child or young person in any sexual activity. Perpetrators of sexual abuse take advantage of their power, authority or position over the child, young person or person with disability for their own benefit. It can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exposure of the sexual organs, or to any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a child or young person • intentional touching or molesting of the body of a child or young person, whether by a person or object, for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification, or to coerce or control that child or young person • masturbation in the presence of a child or young person, or involvement of the child or young person in the act of masturbation • sexual intercourse with the child or young person, whether oral, vaginal or anal • grooming behaviours such as encouraging children to look at pornography or watch sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
Sexual exploitation	Sexual exploitation occurs when children, young people or people with disability are required to engage in sexual activities that are then recorded in some way and/or used to produce pornography. Exploitation also includes coercing, manipulating, or enticing children, young people or people with disability into prostitution.

Term	Definition
Supervisor	refers to the CareSouth employee’s first line manager; for example, the Team Leader or Manager. Where the Regional Manager is the only Supervisor for the program, they assume the responsibilities of the Supervisor.

2. CARESOUTH

CareSouth is a not-for-profit organisation which provides child protection, family and disability services in southern and south western NSW.

Our services for children and young people are:

- Foster Care
- Residential Out of Home Care (OOHC)
- Supported Independent Living (OOHC)
- Brighter Futures (including playgroups, holiday classes and camps)
- Aunties and Uncles
- Mentoring for children in OOHC
- Leaving Care program
- Family Contact supervision (Family Connections)
- Respite Care for children with disabilities (Family Choices)
- Homework Hub (volunteer tutoring and homework supervision).

3. OUR COMMITMENT TO SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY

The safety, welfare and wellbeing of children, young people and people with disability is of paramount importance to CareSouth. Safeguarding children, young people and people with disability is a core commitment of our organisation.

We recognise that all children, young people and people with disability have a unique potential to grow and achieve in adulthood, however not all of these individuals are afforded this essential opportunity. We aim to provide those individuals with a nurturing environment, one which is comprised of quality, trusting relationships and unconditional support and care

CareSouth’s commitment to safeguarding children, young people and people with disability relies upon its dedicated and compassionate team of professional employees, volunteers and carers. CareSouth promotes a culture in which the safeguarding of children, young people and people with disability is an individual and shared responsibility and one which we uphold on a daily basis, at all levels of the organisation.

Our commitment is further embedded in our policies, procedures, practices and Codes of Conduct, endorsed by our CEO and Board of Directors. These seek to safeguard children, young people and people with disability from:

- emotional and psychological abuse
- sexual abuse and exploitation
- physical abuse
- exposure to family violence
- neglect.

4. Who does this commitment policy statement apply to?

This policy applies to all people engaged to work with CareSouth, including paid employees, volunteers, carers, students, contractors, and carers. For the purposes of this policy, these individuals are referred to collectively as “involved personnel”.

This policy also applies to executive and non-executive director members of the CareSouth Board of Directors.

5. Our responsibility to children, young people and people with disability

We recognise the importance of the work that we are providing to children, young people and people with disability in the community and our responsibility as a service provider. Our work is governed by the following principles:

- We support the fundamental right of children, young people and people with disability to be safe from harm.
- We commit to the safety and wellbeing of all members of the community who access any of our programs, services or facilities.
- We promote a safe environment, and are responsible for taking action to protect children, young people, and people with disability from exploitation, abuse or harm.
- We are responsible for listening to children, young people and people with disability, and empowering them to feel comfortable to raise their concerns with our employees.
- We are responsible for addressing any concerns children, young people or people with disability raise with CareSouth.
- We are responsible for providing children, young people and people with disability with experiences which are both positive and nurturing.
- We recognise that child protection is a whole of government and whole of community responsibility.
- We commit to supporting families and our greater community to promote children’s healthy development and wellbeing.
- We respect the values, culture and heritage of Aboriginal people.
- We recognise and uphold the rights of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- We are responsible for the exchange of information concerning the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children, young people and people with disability as required by law.

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6. Our responsibility to parents, carers and volunteers

We acknowledge that our responsibility for safeguarding children, young people and people with disability is a shared one that also extends to the support that we provide to those with responsibility for children and young people. This includes parents, carers and volunteers. In this respect CareSouth will:

- be responsible for supporting primary care givers, and those with parental responsibility, to protect their children
- assist families to identify and build upon their strengths and enable them to meet the changing needs of their children
- commit to open, honest and transparent communication with parents, carers and volunteers concerning the wellbeing and safety of their children, provided that such transparency does not compromise the safety of children, young people and people with disability
- support families and communities to be informed and involved in our programs
- require our involved personnel to comply with all of the probity checks concerning child protection and be familiar with child protection policy and legislative requirements including mandatory reporting requirements.

7. Our responsibility to CareSouth employees

Our employees are intrinsic to the success of our programs at CareSouth. The importance of maintaining the safety, wellbeing and welfare of children, young people and people with disability forms the foundation for employment at CareSouth, and we are responsible for ensuring that:

- our management structure supports and develops staff in their roles
- we commit to providing all CareSouth employees with the necessary support to enable them to fulfil their roles including regular and appropriate development opportunities and supervision
- we implement training relating to safeguarding children and young people for all paid employees, and for unpaid employees working with children and young people
- we provide access to all organisational policies and procedures that promote or relate to the safety, wellbeing and welfare of children and young people to all paid and unpaid employees working with children and young people.

8. Our dedication to maintaining a child safe culture at CareSouth

Child safety and wellbeing is at the forefront of all activities and operations at CareSouth, and also extends to our workplace, facilities and the conduct of our other asset, our employees.

8.1. Recruitment, screening and employment of applicants

- It is our responsibility to undertake recruitment and selection practices, including rigorous probity checks in the recruitment, screening and employment of applicants for positions at CareSouth. These practices ensure that all CareSouth employees are appropriately experienced and that they will not harm, abuse or exploit children, young people and people with disability involved in our programs, services or facilities. They are outlined in CareSouth's policies and procedures.
- Our probity checks and other recruitment and screening practices make use of best practice standards, legislative and regulatory requirements in the recruitment process, so that our clients can be assured that CareSouth employees are of the highest professional calibre and that they are in safe hands.

8.2. Supporting employees in their safeguarding role

- Our commitment to providing an environment where children, young people and people with a disability feel safe and secure is directly related to our employees. Our employees are not only responsible for the delivery of our services and maintenance of our facilities; they are also the representatives for our child safe culture. Empowering our employees to meet their professional goals and aspirations is central to our human resources function at CareSouth.
- We support our employees through training and development opportunities and provide our employees with the most appropriate technology to fulfil their role.
- We are committed to providing regular opportunities to clarify and confirm policy and procedures in relation to the protection and welfare of children, young people and people with disability. This will include annual training with regards to understanding the principles and intent of CareSouth's *Safeguarding Children Young People and People with Disability Commitment Policy Statement*.

8.3. Ensuring our employees are familiar with reporting requirements

- All employees of CareSouth must be familiar with our policy and procedural requirements for reporting risk and/or significant harm for children and young people, including any mandatory reporting requirements.
- CareSouth ensures that employees are supported to meet their legislative duties as mandatory reporters by providing them with training; with opportunities to voice their concerns with senior members of CareSouth; and allowing unhindered access to the Mandatory Reporting Guide.
- We regularly conduct client file audits to ensure that our employees are reporting appropriately, and provide training opportunities with internal and external providers regarding child safety.
- We take seriously any concerns or issues raised by children, young people, people with disability and/or their parents and carers. Our policies and procedures allow for complaints to be raised and reviewed.

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- We are committed to investigating all complaints or allegations made against any of our employees and will ensure that we report any abuse against children, young people or people with disability to the relevant authorities in accordance with our legislative requirements.
- We expect employees to adopt the policies, practices and standards that we have implemented for child protection, regardless of who perpetrated the abuse.

9. Our commitment to protecting the privacy of children, young people, people with disability and families

CareSouth recognises the sensitivity of the information employees obtain from the children, young people and families they service. We are committed to maintaining the privacy of this information. Policies and procedures at CareSouth provide unequivocal support for the privacy of information, the manner in which information is to be documented and the management of this documentation. We require all employees to:

- protect the privacy of children, young people, people with disability and families, subject to our mandatory reporting requirements.
- obtain consent from children, young people, people with disability, families and carers for the release of information, where a request has been made that is non-statutory, outside of our mandatory reporting requirements.
- understand the difference between a statutory and non-statutory request for information. A statutory request such as a subpoena (whether issued by a court or the police), a request under Chapter 16A of the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998*, or a request from a regulatory authority or statutory child protection agency overrides privacy concerns.

10. Our responsibility for ensuring our employees do not cause harm

CareSouth employees must not engage in any activity within the workplace or the community, whether in the physical or online environment, which would attract any criminal repercussions to the employee or bring CareSouth into disrepute.

We take measures at CareSouth to ensure that employees' physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur. This is achieved through policies for the operation of information technology within the workplace, together with appropriate workplace surveillance measures. It is a pre-condition of employment at CareSouth that all employees gain a familiarity with what actions adversely affect children.

Our employees must not infringe upon the rights and safety of children, young people or people with a disability in any way, but particularly by:

- avoiding any actions, including emotional or psychological abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse or exploitation, neglect, or discrimination, which may result in harm to our clients
- obtaining the prior approval of a supervisor before they reproduce, distribute or otherwise publish any material containing images of children, young people or people with a disability who are involved in any of our services, without the written consent of a parent, guardian or a person assuming parental responsibility for the child or young person.

11. Our responsibility for understanding and incorporating children's rights in our work practice

The importance of children's rights is encapsulated in legislation both at state, federal and international level within the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). Familiarity with children's rights provides an important foundation for all of the services offered to children, young people and their families. We are committed, through our policies and procedures, to ensuring that CareSouth employees:

- share a thorough understanding of children's rights and the regulatory framework underpinning children's rights at both the state federal and international level
- are able to identify when children's needs and entitlements are compromised and in need of support.

We expect CareSouth employees to incorporate their knowledge of children and young people's rights into their work practices.

12. Our dedication to respecting the individual autonomy of children, young people and people with disability

CareSouth services are designed to empower children, young people and people with disability to understand their individual strengths and to recognise their own self-worth. Our programs and services respect the individual autonomy of children, young people and people with disability. We require our employees to:

- treat children, young people and people with disability as individuals, and respect their unique abilities and vulnerabilities
- provide children, young people and people with disabilities with a safe environment and accessible processes through which to provide their views, feedback or complaints about the services CareSouth are providing to them
- acknowledge that children, young people and people with disability have a right to be heard and taken seriously. Taking account of their age, understanding and capabilities, they should be consulted and involved in matters and decisions that may affect their lives. Where there are concerns about a child's safety, welfare and wellbeing, CareSouth employees will provide opportunities for their views to be heard independently of their parents/carers.

13. Our responsibility for understanding and responding to the special needs of children and young people

CareSouth acknowledges that all children and young people are vulnerable at various stages of their development. Children and young people with developmental delays, communication barriers or disabilities may experience increased and additional vulnerabilities. CareSouth employees must be proactive in recognising these vulnerabilities that increase the risk of harm or exploitation, and must take any additional measures necessary to address the increased risk of harm or exploitation due to the special needs identified.

14. Our responsibility for extending a protective role to children, young people and people with disability

Children, young people and people with disability who experience abuse, exposure to domestic and family violence, neglect, or sexual exploitation are at risk of developing a range of emotional, psychological and behavioural impairments. CareSouth employees are instrumental in safeguarding the wellbeing of children, young people and people with disability, by identifying risk factors for harm and taking measures to prevent the risk from occurring. In this respect, CareSouth employees have a protective role which encompasses:

- ensuring that the children, young people and people with disability they work with are in a safe and secure environment, to the best of their ability
- monitoring the provision of basic necessities of life, so that they are of a sufficient level to allow for the wellbeing and safety of children, young people and people with disability
- addressing the educational needs of children and young people by monitoring school attendance, and providing additional support as required
- maintaining the health needs of children and young people by monitoring attendance with health practitioners when required
- acting as an advocate for children and young people within their families and the community by providing them with a voice where they are otherwise unable to be heard
- ensuring that the processes involved in responding to complaints of abuse to children, young people and people with disability are dealt with in a manner which is child-focused, safe and non-intimidating.

15. Our commitment to respecting and upholding the cultural and religious practices of the families who access our services

CareSouth recognises the importance of culture and religion in the lives of children, young people and families. We are committed to respecting and upholding the cultural and religious practices of the families involved in our services. We expect CareSouth employees to:

- interact with children, young people and families in a way that is inclusive and respectful of the diversity of their individual cultural and religious practices
- recognise that whilst it is important to be respectful of cultural and religious practices, no cultural or religious belief will take precedence over the right of children or young people to be protected from harm
- act as an advocate for those clients from Aboriginal, Torres Straight Island or diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, to provide equity both in terms of access to services, and opportunities within the community.

16. Our responsibility to our future generations

CareSouth believes that it is our privilege to be involved in safeguarding the wellbeing of children and young people in our community. We are aware that our role has a bearing on shaping our future adult generations, and as such, we carry a responsibility to ensure that they feel safe, secure and supported during the crucial development phase of childhood. This responsibility is a shared one; it is protected in legislation, enforced through regulatory authorities and implemented at an organisational level at CareSouth. We take this responsibility seriously, and it is reflected in CareSouth's policies, procedures and workplace culture across all levels of the organisation.

17. Our commitment to policy improvement

Our commitment to safeguarding children, young people and people living with disability drives the continual review and improvement of our policies and procedures to ensure our work practices are of the highest standards and encapsulate all child safe standards operating in NSW and the ACT.

Our dedicated Policy and Research team incorporate legislative and regulatory changes, appropriate standards and best practice requirements into our policies so that they are stringent, compliant and current. Evidence-based research and consultation with stakeholders further drives policy development and implementation at CareSouth.

18. AUTHORITY

The CEO and Board of Directors at CareSouth are committed to the ongoing development, improvement and endorsement of policy that allows the organisation to meet its duty of care to its clients, employees and the greater community. It is this supportive leadership and safeguarding culture that drives the success of policy within CareSouth.

This Safeguarding Children, Young People and People with Disability Commitment Policy Statement is authorised by the Board of Directors at CareSouth.

CareSouth retains the right to amend or vary this policy, in its absolute discretion, from time to time as deemed fit.

Employees and external parties who are affected will be apprised of such changes at the time of revised publication.

19. VERSION CONTROL AND CHANGE HISTORY

Version Number	Approval Date	Approved by	Amendment
1.0	14/11/2016	Board of Directors	Initial release

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