PRN-184: Abuse of Power, Position, Authority and Privilege Policy

CAREHOPES™

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1. Policy Statement

CAREHOPES™ is committed to fostering a culture of integrity, fairness, accountability, transparency, dignity, and respect.

CAREHOPES™ recognises that employees, supervisors, managers, contractors, volunteers, and third-party providers may occupy positions of trust, authority, influence, responsibility, or privilege.

Such positions must never be used for personal gain, intimidation, coercion, exploitation, manipulation, discrimination, retaliation, or the unfair treatment of others.

CAREHOPES™ adopts a zero-tolerance approach to the abuse of power, position, authority, influence, privilege, or trust.

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2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Protect service users.
- Protect employees.
- Prevent abuses of authority.
- Promote ethical leadership.
- Promote transparency and accountability.
- Support safeguarding.
- Promote a positive workplace culture.
- Protect organisational integrity.

- Maintain public confidence.

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3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Employees
- Managers
- Supervisors
- Directors
- Volunteers
- Contractors
- Agency workers
- Consultants
- Third-party providers

This policy applies in:

- Service delivery settings
- Offices
- Community environments
- Training environments
- Travel assignments
- Online environments
- Social media
- Messaging platforms
- Organisational decision-making processes

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4. Core Principles

All individuals in positions of responsibility must:

- Act honestly.
- Act fairly.

- Act professionally.
- Exercise authority responsibly.
- Treat others with dignity and respect.
- Avoid conflicts of interest.
- Maintain professional boundaries.
- Make objective decisions.
- Promote equality and inclusion.

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5. Definition of Abuse of Power

Abuse of power occurs when an individual misuses their position, status, knowledge, influence, authority, trust, access, or privilege for personal benefit or to disadvantage another individual.

Abuse of power may occur formally or informally.

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6. Examples of Abuse of Power

Examples include:

- Bullying through authority.
- Intimidation.
- Coercion.
- Harassment.
- Victimisation.
- Retaliation.
- Abuse of a position of trust.
- Favouritism.
- Nepotism.
- Unfair treatment.
- Misuse of confidential information.
- Exploiting vulnerable individuals.
- Manipulating decision-making processes.

- Using authority to silence concerns.
- Threatening adverse consequences.
- Unreasonable pressure or influence.
- Misuse of organisational resources.

This list is not exhaustive.

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7. Abuse of Power Towards Service Users

Employees must never:

- Exploit dependency.
- Use authority to influence personal decisions.
- Coerce service users.
- Manipulate service users.
- Abuse trust.
- Use information for personal gain.
- Pressure service users.
- Create dependency for personal benefit.
- Use professional status to obtain favours.

Particular care must be exercised when supporting vulnerable adults, children, and individuals with reduced capacity.

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8. Abuse of Power Within the Workplace

Employees in positions of authority must never:

- Bully subordinates.
- Humiliate employees.
- Victimise whistleblowers.
- Retaliate against complaints.
- Abuse disciplinary processes.
- Abuse performance management systems.

- Exploit staff vulnerabilities.
- Use influence to secure unfair advantages.
- Manipulate recruitment processes.
- Favour certain individuals improperly.

All workplace decisions must be fair, objective, and evidence-based.

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9. Abuse of Authority in Professional Relationships

Employees must never use their position to obtain:

- Financial benefits.
- Gifts.
- Personal favours.
- Sexual favours.
- Preferential treatment.
- Unauthorised access to information.
- Undue influence over service users or colleagues.

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10. Abuse of Privilege

Individuals granted access to information, authority, resources, decision-making powers, or organisational influence must never use such access:

- For personal gain.
- For family gain.
- For commercial gain.
- To disadvantage others.
- To bypass organisational controls.

Privilege must always be exercised responsibly.

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11. Professional Boundaries

All employees must maintain clear professional boundaries.

Employees must never:

- Exploit vulnerable situations.
- Blur professional and personal relationships.
- Create inappropriate dependency.
- Use authority inappropriately.
- Abuse trust.

Professional boundaries are a key safeguard against abuse of power.

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12. Safeguarding Considerations

Abuse of power may constitute:

- Emotional abuse
- Financial abuse
- Organisational abuse
- Psychological abuse
- Sexual exploitation
- Coercive control
- Discriminatory abuse

Any safeguarding concern must be escalated immediately.

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13. Employee Responsibilities

Employees must:

- Behave professionally.
- Challenge inappropriate behaviour.
- Maintain accountability.
- Report concerns.
- Promote inclusion.
- Respect others.
- Follow organisational values.

- Use authority appropriately.

Employees must not ignore suspected abuse of power.

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14. Supervisor and Manager Responsibilities

Supervisors and managers have an enhanced duty to:

- Lead by example.
- Exercise authority fairly.
- Promote openness.
- Support whistleblowing.
- Encourage reporting.
- Protect employees from victimisation.
- Manage concerns objectively.
- Ensure fair investigations.

Managers must never use their position to suppress concerns or avoid accountability.

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15. Third-Party Provider Responsibilities

Third-party providers must:

- Follow this policy.
- Maintain professional conduct.
- Respect service users and employees.
- Avoid exploiting influence or authority.
- Report concerns appropriately.

Contractual arrangements may be terminated where abuse of power is identified.

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16. Reporting Concerns

Concerns regarding abuse of power may be reported through:

- Line management
- Senior management

- Safeguarding leads
- Whistleblowing procedures
- Formal complaints processes

Concerns will be handled fairly, confidentially, and proportionately.

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17. Protection from Retaliation

CAREHOPES™ will not tolerate retaliation against individuals who:

- Raise concerns.
- Submit complaints.
- Participate in investigations.
- Provide evidence.
- Act as witnesses.

Victimisation may itself constitute misconduct.

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18. Investigation Process

Allegations may result in:

- Fact-finding reviews
- Formal investigations
- Safeguarding referrals
- Disciplinary proceedings
- Regulatory referrals
- Contract reviews

Investigations will be conducted fairly and objectively.

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19. Monitoring and Compliance

CAREHOPES™ will monitor compliance through:

- Supervision
- Appraisals

- Quality assurance reviews
- Audits
- Complaints reviews
- Safeguarding reviews
- Employee feedback

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20. Breach of Policy

Breaches may result in:

- Additional training
- Corrective action plans
- Formal warnings
- Suspension
- Dismissal
- Contract termination
- Safeguarding referrals
- Regulatory referrals
- Legal action where appropriate

Serious abuses of authority may constitute gross misconduct.

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21. Related Policies

- Duty of Care Policy
- Sexual Misconduct Policy
- Conflict Resolution Policy
- Professional Boundaries Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Safeguarding Adults Policy
- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

- Dignity and Respect Policy
- Conflict of Interest Policy

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22. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed:

- Annually
- Following significant incidents
- Following safeguarding investigations
- Following legislative changes
- Following regulatory updates