

SERVICE DELIVERY - NDIS INCIDENT MANAGEMENT AND REPORTABLE INCIDENTS SYSTEM POLICY AND PROCEDURES

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Made in response to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (Incident Management and Reportable Incidents) Rules 2018 (the **Rules**).

Plain English Summary

Occasionally, accidents occur, and people may be impacted by these. Accidents and other unfortunate incidents can happen despite us doing our best to ensure a safe work environment for our staff and customers.

If an accident, or some other unfortunate incident, happens when we are working with you, our senior staff will do all they can to remedy the situation. We will also try to learn from any such accident or incident by:

- Investigating what happened;
- Speaking with you, our staff, and anyone else affected;
- Making changes to our processes to ensure that this will not happen again.
- Keeping good records about the incident, your views thereon, and the resolution processes we followed to ensure better outcomes in the future.

We work hard to make sure you are safe with us. If a serious incident happens when we are working with you - like a major accident or if someone breaks the law and hurts you - our senior staff will investigate immediately and will also advise the NDIS, to enable them to conduct an investigation of their own and so they can assist you as necessary.

If an incident happens to you when you are working with us, please contact Vanessa Gannaway, our Incidents Officer, whose contact details are set out at the top of this page.

You can:

- Come in and meet with us;
- Send us an email or text;
- Call us on the phone;
- Communicate with your preferred augmentative and alternative communication device or method; or
- Have a friend or carer contact us for you

Contacting us about an accident, or any other adverse event, will **not** affect the way we treat you. We will always endeavour to provide you with the best possible service at all times.

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POLICY

Unless the context requires otherwise, capitalised terms that are not defined in this Policy have the meanings given to such terms in the Rules.

POLICY STATUS

This Policy documents our incident management system for the purposes of the Rules, and as required by the Rules.

INTENTION

As a registered NDIS provider, we must have an incident management system to help:

- Identify, record, and manage **incidents**; and
- Notify, investigate, and respond to **reportable incidents** (more serious incidents); and
- Identify systemic issues and drive improvements in the quality of the supports we deliver.

The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commissioner (**Commissioner**) oversees notifications of reportable incidents and our responses to these incidents. This oversight, combined with our compliance with this Policy, can reduce preventable deaths, serious injuries, and other serious incidents through early intervention and capacity-building.

What Is An “Incident”?

For the purpose of this policy, “incidents” include acts, omissions, events, or circumstances that:

- a) occur in connection with providing supports or services to a person with disability; and
- b) have, or could have, caused harm to the person with disability.

This policy also covers incidents that consist of acts by a person with disability that:

- a) occur in connection with providing our supports or services to the person with disability; and
- b) have caused serious harm, or a risk of serious harm, to another person.

The policy also covers incidents that are *alleged* by any person to have occurred in connection with us providing supports or services to a person with disability.

INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM PROCEDURES

Our entire staff (including, without limitation, directors, managers, employees, volunteers, and contractors) (collectively, **Staff**) must follow this Policy and the following procedures to identify, manage and resolve incidents.

All of our staff have completed the Worker Orientation Module ‘Quality Safety and You’ which is an NDIS designed learning module that includes training on incident and complaints management. Each staff member is required to provide a certificate of completion to our directors during the onboarding phase of their pre-employment.

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(A) To Whom Must Incidents Be Reported?

The **Incident Officer**. If the Incident Officer is not available for any reason, the incident should be reported directly to the Directors.

(B) Incident Reports: How Are Incidents Identified, Recorded And Reported?

- i. If, at any time, a Staff member becomes aware of an incident (including, for the avoidance of doubt, any alleged incident), they must:
 - Notify the Incidents Officer as soon as practicable, and in any event within one business day of becoming aware of the incident; and
 - Complete Part A of the “Incident Notification” in the form set out in Appendix 1.
- ii. The requirement of Staff to notify the Incident Officer about an incident is **mandatory** and does not depend on whether the people involved make a formal complaint or allegation. Failure to notify the Incident Officer about an incident within the expected timeframe will be treated seriously and may result in disciplinary action against the Staff member(s) involved.
- iii. Upon receipt of an Incident Notification, the Incident Officer will take action. The specific action taken by the Incident Officer will depend on all the facts and circumstances surrounding the incident, including the seriousness of the incident. In the normal course, the Incident Officer will:
 - Communicate promptly with the Staff member(s) who made the notification;
 - Use reasonable efforts to communicate with the people affected, including (if relevant) the person or people with disability who are affected or involved;
 - Investigate the incident, including the causes of the incident, its effect, and any operational issues that may have contributed to the incident occurring;
 - Assess each incident according to the incident Investigation principles set out below (the **Incident Investigation Principles**);
 - Take the appropriate action. This may include a range of responses depending on the facts and circumstances, including no further action, an apology, or attempts to remedy or mitigate the effects of the incident;
 - Report in writing on the key outcomes of the investigation to the Directors. The Incident Officer may also make recommendations to the Directors with a view to reducing the occurrence of similar incidents in the future; and
 - Complete the incident notification for the incident and file it in the incidents register (as defined below).

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Incident Investigation Principles

All incidents must be assessed by the Incident Officer. In assessing an incident, the Incident Officer must consider the following factors:

- The views of persons with disability affected by the incident;
- Whether the incident was preventable;
- How well the incident was managed and resolved;
- What, if any, remedial action needs to be undertaken to prevent further similar incidents from occurring, or to minimise their impact; and
- Whether other persons or bodies need to be notified of the incident.

Support and Assistance.

As a provider, we will provide reasonable support and assistance to persons with disability affected by an incident. As part of this process, we will include information about access to advocates such as independent advocates, to ensure their health, safety, and wellbeing.

Involvement Of A Person With A Disability.

We are committed to ensuring that persons with disability affected by an incident are involved in the management and resolution of the incident.

This Policy Must Be Available To All Clients And Others

The Incident Officer (or his/her delegate) must provide copies of this Policy, in an accessible form, to the following persons:

- Persons with disability receiving supports or services from us at the point that the person is “onboarded” as a client;
- The family members, carers, independent advocates, and significant others of persons with disability receiving supports or services from us at the point that the person with disability is “onboarded” as a client; and
- Each person employed or otherwise engaged by us at the point the person joins us as a staff member.

The Incident Officer (and/or delegate) must assist each of the people referred to immediately above to understand how the documented system operates.

“Reportable Incident Reports” - For Serious Incidents

In this section “key personnel” means our directors.

The Rules define “reportable incident.” In simplified terms, “reportable incident” means serious incidents such as;

- a) the death of a person with disability; or
- b) serious injury to a person with disability; or
- c) abuse or neglect of a person with disability; or
- d) unlawful sexual or physical contact with, or assault of, a person with disability; or
- e) sexual misconduct committed against, or in the presence of, a person with disability, including grooming of the person for sexual activity; or

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- f) the use of a restrictive practice in relation to a person with disability, other than where the use is in accordance with an authorisation (however described) of a State or Territory in relation to the person.

Determining whether a serious, reportable incident has occurred can be challenging at times and the Incident Officer will use guides provided by the NDIS in order to help guide their decisions. In addition to incidents or allegations of incidents that are disclosed by an impacted person, or witnessed by someone, there are also additional signs that may indicate someone is an impacted person. These are indicators of potential incidents, especially where they involve abuse, neglect, sexual misconduct, or unauthorised use of restrictive practices.

If an incident (including an alleged incident) is a **reportable incident** (as defined in the Rules), the Incident Officer must notify the Commissioner as a high priority, within the timelines set out in the Rules.

If a reportable incident occurs (including the receipt of an allegation of a reportable incident), the Incident Officer and each of our key personnel must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the reportable incident is notified to the Commissioner:

- within the required timeframes; and
- in mode and forms required by the Rules.

If a member of Staff becomes aware that a reportable incident has occurred in connection with the provision of our supports or services, the Staff member **must** notify the following people as soon as possible:

1. the key personnel;
2. their immediate supervisor or manager; and
3. the Incident Officer.

The Incident Officer is primarily responsible for determining and reporting all reportable incidents to the Commissioner in accordance with the Rules but all Staff must do all reasonable things to assist the Incident Officer to comply with the Rules.

If a reportable incident occurs, the Incident Officer must notify the Commissioner of the following information within the periods set out in the Rules. The timelines are very tight, most are within **24 hours or 5 days** of the relevant event, depending on the circumstances. Here is a table identifying those timeframes:

Reportable incident	Required timeframe
death of a person with disability	24 hours
serious injury of a person with disability	24 hours
abuse or neglect of a person with disability	24 hours
unlawful sexual or physical contact with, or assault of, a person with disability	24 hours
sexual misconduct committed against, or in the presence of, a person with disability, including grooming of the person for sexual activity	24 hours

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Reportable incident	Required timeframe
the use of a restrictive practice in relation to a person with disability if the use is not in accordance with a required state or territory authorisation and/or not in accordance with a behaviour support plan.	Five business days

If a reportable incident occurs, the Incident Officer must notify the Commissioner in the form required by the Rules. Among other things, the notification must include:

- 1) our name and contact details;
- 2) a description of the reportable incident;
- 3) unless the person with disability has died - a description of the impact on, or harm caused to, the person with disability;
- 4) the immediate actions taken in response to the reportable incident, including actions taken to ensure the health, safety, and wellbeing of persons with disability affected by the incident and whether the incident was reported to police or any other body;
- 5) the name and contact details of the person making the notification;
- 6) if known - the time, date, and place at which the reportable incident occurred;
- 7) the names and contact details of the persons involved in the reportable incident; and
- 8) any other information required by the Commissioner.

The Incident Officer should give notice to the Commissioner in both written form and by telephone and, in any event, as required by the Rules.

There are some - very narrow - exceptions to these notification rules. For example, we may not be required to obtain, or notify the Commissioner of, certain information if obtaining the information would, or could reasonably be expected to:

- a) prejudice the conduct of a criminal investigation; or
- b) expose a person with disability to a risk of harm.

It is essential for the Incident Officer, in consultation with the key personnel, to seek urgent legal advice if unsure whether he or she is under an obligation to provide the Commissioner with particular information about a reportable incident.

Keeping The Commissioner Updated On Significant New Information About Reportable Incidents

If, after a reportable incident occurs, any member of Staff becomes aware of significant new information in relation to the reportable incident after we have made an initial report, and the significant new information:

- i. is or relates to a change in the kind of reportable incident; or
- ii. is a further reportable incident,

the Staff member must immediately notify his/her supervisor, the Incident Officer, and the key personnel. We must notify the Commissioner of the significant new information as soon as reasonably practicable after becoming aware of the information and must give such notification in writing as set out in the Rules.

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Final Report Requests

The Commissioner may require written reports from us about reportable incidents. If the Commissioner requires such a report, we must abide by the direction in compliance with the Rules. The Incident Officer will oversee this process, but all staff must do everything reasonable to support us to comply with the rules.

Commissioner Action

The Commissioner may take a number of actions pursuant to the Rules in respect of a reportable incident. The Incident Officer and the key personnel are responsible for ensuring that we satisfy our obligations under the Rules. Again, we may need to seek legal advice in respect of our rights and obligations under the Rules in this situation.

Incident Records Must Be Kept For Statistical Purposes

All incident reports, reportable incident reports and other documents relating to incidents or reportable incidents must be kept for at least 7 years from the day the record is made and may be retained for longer than 7 years if required by law. **No information relating to an incident or reportable incident should be destroyed or disposed of without the prior written approval of the Incident Officer.**

The Incident Officer must collect statistical and other information relating to incidents to enable us to:

- a) review issues raised by the occurrence of incidents; and
- b) identify and address systemic issues; and
- c) report information relating to complaints to the Commissioner, if requested to do so by the Commissioner.

Procedural Fairness

This Incident Management System requires that people be afforded procedural fairness when an incident or reportable incident is dealt with by the provider in accordance with the Rules.

All Staff Responsible For Compliance And For Completing Mandatory Training

The Incident Officer has the primary role and responsibility to oversee this Policy and to identify, manage and resolve incidents and to work with staff to prevent incidents from occurring. All staff must abide by this policy. The Incident Officer reports to the key personnel, who retain ultimate responsibility for overseeing compliance with this Policy.

Each person employed or otherwise engaged by us must comply with this Policy. Each person employed or otherwise engaged by us must complete training in the use of, and compliance with, this Policy and the rules.

Review Of This Policy

Periodically, and at least annually, the key personnel and the Incident Officer must review the incident management system to ensure its effectiveness.

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Appendix 1: Form of Incident Report to be filed, when completed in the Incident Register, and forming part of the incident management System

PART A - To Be Completed By The Staff Members With Actual Knowledge Of The Incident:

1. If known, the time, date, and place at which the incident occurred:
2. If the time, date and/or place of the incident is not known, the time and date on which the incident was first identified by us:
3. Description of the incident, including the impact on, or harm caused to, any person with disability affected by the incident:
4. The names and contact details of the persons involved in the incident:
5. The names and contact details of any witnesses to the incident:

PART B - To Be Completed By The Incident Officer After Communicating With The Staff, And Any Person With Disability And Other Person Affected

1. Is the incident a reportable incident?
2. Details of the assessment undertaken in accordance with the Incident Investigation Principles:
3. Actions taken in response to the incident, including actions taken to support or assist persons with disability affected by the incident:
4. Any consultations undertaken with the persons with disability affected by the incident:
5. Whether persons with disability affected by the incident have been provided with any reports or findings regarding the incident:
6. If an investigation was undertaken by the provider in relation to the incident - the details and outcomes of the investigation:
7. Incident Officer: the name and contact details of the person making the record of the incident.

Appendix 2:

Link to quick reference guide about the NDIS form that must be filled out by the Incident Officer, with support from Staff with actual knowledge of the reportable incident:

<https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2019-07/quick-reference-guide-immediate-notificationfinal-july-2019.pdf>

NO.	INFORMATION REQUIRED	RESPONSE
1	A description of the alleged incident	
2	If known - the time, date, and place at which the incident is alleged to have occurred	
3	The names and contact details of the persons involved in the alleged incident	

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NO.	INFORMATION REQUIRED	RESPONSE
4	The names and contact details of any witnesses to the alleged incident	
5	Details of the assessment undertaken in accordance with the requirements of subsection 10(3) of the Rules	
6	The actions taken in response to the alleged incident, including actions taken to support or assist persons with disability affected by the incident	
7	Any consultations undertaken with the persons with disability affected by the alleged incident	
8	Whether persons with disability affected by the incident have been provided with any reports or findings regarding the alleged incident	
9	If an investigation is undertaken by the provider in relation to the alleged incident - the details and outcomes of the investigation	
10	Incident Officer: The name and contact details of the person making the record of the alleged incident	

MINIMUM CONTENTS OF REPORTABLE INCIDENT REPORT

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