



Whistle Blower Policy

Policy statement

This policy supports Abilifly Support Services to apply the National Standards for Disability Services, in particular Standard 1 – Rights, Standard 4 – Feedback and Complaints and Standard 6 – Service Management. This policy guides organisations on how to support people to raise concerns about service delivery in the interests of service safety and quality.

This policy is used to support whistle-blowers, who in good faith and without malice, disclose information or raise concerns about alleged improper or illegal activity.

Abilifly Support Services and our staff are committed to providing services in a safe and honest way. We expect everyone to comply with all legal requirements. We will support and respect anyone who acts as a whistle-blower to draw attention to suspected inappropriate, corrupt or illegal conduct or behaviour.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff including permanent and casual, contract workers, temporary agency workers, and volunteers. This policy is owned by the management of Abilifly Support Services.

Principles

- Abilifly Support Services encourages people to speak up, to make complaints and raise concerns about service integrity, safety and quality.
- Abilifly Support Services has good governance and responds appropriately to concerns about illegal or inappropriate conduct, whether that's provided as feedback, a complaint or a person acts as a whistle-blower.
- People who 'blow the whistle' are not victimised and will be treated fairly and with respect at all times
- Abilifly Support Services will not retaliate against whistle-blower including employees, for raising an alert about suspected misconduct

Process

Where a staff member has acted as a whistle-blower, the person to whom the disclosure was made will secure any records or information related to the alleged issue.

Information can be provided in any format. Claims made in conversation should be documented by the person receiving the claim. The record of conversation should be signed

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by the whistle-blower to verify it is a true account.

Any information shared about the allegations raised by a whistle-blower will be de-identified to protect the whistle-blower's identity and stored securely while the matter is examined.

Should the organisation decide to an internal investigation is required, care must be taken to protect the integrity of any evidence and the usual internal investigation process should be followed.

Abilify Support Services will conduct an investigation using its Investigations Policy. Investigations will be confidential, fair and objective. The Code of Conduct applies at all times.

Abilify Support Services and our staff will comply with all legal requests for information in a timely manner. Requests by external parties for information will be responded to using the organisation's complaints, access to information and privacy policies.

The Manager overseeing the investigation or working on the issue raised by the whistleblower will keep the whistle-blower and all other parties informed about the process and the outcome of the investigation where permitted.

If the matter is investigated by an external organisation or referred to police or another investigating body, there may be limits on what information can be shared. In this case, involved parties will be advised of any limitations on the release of information.

Staff who are impacted will be offered support through the employee assistance program.

Definitions

- Whistle-blower

A person who raises concern regarding illegal and/or improper conduct that affects others. The person is not usually involved in the issue but is wanting to alert others to suspected misconduct. The alert may be raised outside of usual reporting lines or processes.

Related Policies

- Code of Conduct
- Complaints Policy
- Investigations Policy/procedure
- Privacy Policy
- Access to information policy
- Employee Grievance policy/procedure

Related legislation and standards

- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- United Nations Convention on The Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- National Standards for Disability Services
- National Disability Insurance Scheme 2013: Principles
- NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Practice Standards 2018

Other legislation may apply in some circumstances depending on contractual relationship and nature of work.

- Corporations Act 2001 (Commonwealth)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth)
- Public Interest Disclosure Act 2013 (Commonwealth)
- Australian Standard AS 8004-2003 Corporate Governance

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