

Complaint and Incident Management Policy & Procedure

Social Support and Counselling

Owner Operator: Charmayne Payne

Purpose

This policy outlines the process for managing complaints, feedback, incidents, concerns, and reportable events in a fair, transparent, person-centred, trauma-informed, and culturally safe manner.

This policy aims to ensure:

- Clients, participants, families, carers, advocates, staff, contractors and visitors feel safe to raise concerns.
 - Complaints and incidents are responded to promptly and respectfully.
 - Risks are reduced and continuous improvement occurs.
 - Compliance with:
 - the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission
 - the Australian Counselling Association Code of Ethics and Practice
 - the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission Standards
 - Australian Child Safe Standards
 - Open Disclosure and Human Rights principles
 - Occupational Health and Safety requirements
 - Duty of Care obligations
 - Relevant privacy and mandatory reporting legislation
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Scope

This policy applies to:

- Sole trader / owner operator
 - Employees
 - Contractors
 - Volunteers
 - Students
 - Clients and participants
 - Families, carers, guardians and advocates
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Rights and Principles

All people have the right to:

- Be treated with dignity and respect
- Raise concerns without fear of punishment or discrimination
- Access support persons or advocates
- Receive trauma-informed and culturally safe responses
- Have complaints handled confidentially where possible
- Receive timely updates and outcomes
- Be protected from abuse, neglect, exploitation, discrimination or harm

Social Support and Counselling is committed to:

- Child safe practices
 - Person-centred supports
 - Continuous improvement
 - Open disclosure
 - Natural justice and procedural fairness
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Definitions

Complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction regarding:

- Supports or services
- Staff behaviour
- Counselling practice
- Communication
- Safety concerns
- Privacy breaches
- Discrimination
- Service quality
- Boundaries or ethical conduct

Complaints may be made verbally, in writing, online, by email, through an advocate or anonymously.

Incident

An incident is any event that:

- Causes harm or risk of harm
- Impacts safety or wellbeing

- Involves abuse, neglect, exploitation, injury, misconduct, medication issues, restrictive practices or environmental hazards
 - Requires emergency response or external reporting
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Complaint Management Procedure

Step 1 – Informal Complaint

Clients are encouraged, where comfortable and safe to discuss concerns directly with:

- Sole trader / owner operator Charmayne Payne or
- The relevant support worker or contractor.

Actions:

- Listen respectfully and without judgement
- Attempt early resolution
- Document discussion if appropriate
- Aim to resolve within 5 working days

Support persons, advocates, interpreters and family members may be involved with consent.

Step 2 – Formal Complaint

If the complaint is unresolved or serious, a formal complaint may be made verbally or in writing.

Complaints may be submitted:

- By email
- In person
- By phone
- Through an advocate or family member
- Through an external agency

Complaint Handling Timeframes

- Acknowledge receipt within 2 working days
- Investigate fairly and confidentially
- Provide outcome within 10 working days where possible
- Advise if additional time is required

Complaint Records

Step 3 – External Review or Escalation

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome, they may contact the relevant external body.

NDIS Complaints

[NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission](#)

Phone: 1800 035 544

Email: contactcentre@ndiscommission.gov.au

Aged Care Complaints

[Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission](#)

Phone: 1800 951 822

Email: info@agedcarequality.gov.au

Australian Counselling Association

[Australian Counselling Association](#)

Phone: 1300 784 333

Email: aca@theaca.net.au

Child Safety Concerns

[National Office for Child Safety](#)

Fair Work Ombudsman

[Fair Work Ombudsman](#)

Phone: 13 13 94

NSW Ombudsman

[NSW Ombudsman](#)

Phone: (02) 9286 1000

Incident Management Procedure

Immediate Response

All incidents must be responded to immediately to ensure safety.

Actions may include:

- Providing first aid
 - Contacting emergency services
 - Removing hazards
 - Ensuring emotional and psychological safety
 - Contacting family, guardian, nominee, or advocate where appropriate
 - Seeking medical support
 - Protecting evidence if required
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Incident Reporting

All incidents must:

- Be documented as soon as possible using the Incident Report Form
- Include factual and objective information only
- Be reported to Charmayne Payne immediately

Where services are provided under another organisation or agency, the incident must also be reported to the:

- Main provider
 - Brokerage organisation
 - Agency coordinator
 - Relevant supervisor or case manager
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Reportable Incidents

The following may require mandatory reporting:

- Abuse or neglect
 - Assault
 - Sexual misconduct
 - Serious injury
 - Unauthorised restrictive practices
 - Missing persons
 - Psychological harm
 - Child protection concerns
 - Death
 - Serious medication incidents
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NDIS Reportable Incidents

Where applicable, reportable incidents will be notified to the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission within legislated timeframes.

This includes:

- Immediate risk management
 - Notification requirements
 - Internal investigation
 - Corrective actions
 - Prevention strategies
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Child Safety and Mandatory Reporting

All workers must:

- Prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and young people
- Respond appropriately to disclosures
- Follow mandatory reporting obligations under NSW legislation
- Report concerns regarding abuse, neglect, exploitation, grooming, or unsafe conduct

Child safety concerns may also be reported to:

- NSW Police
- Department of Communities and Justice
- Child Protection Helpline

Emergency: 000

Open Disclosure

Where harm has occurred, Social Support and Counselling will:

- Communicate honestly and respectfully
 - Acknowledge the incident
 - Offer support
 - Explain actions being taken
 - Involve the client in decisions where appropriate
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Privacy and Confidentiality

All complaints and incident records will:

- Be handled confidentially
 - Be securely stored
 - Only be shared where required by law, duty of care, or consent
 - Comply with Australian Privacy Principles
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Continuous Improvement

Complaint and incident data will be reviewed regularly to:

- Identify patterns or risks
 - Improve service delivery
 - Reduce future incidents
 - Strengthen safety and quality systems
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Responsibilities

Owner Operator – Charmayne Payne

Responsible for:

- Managing complaints and incidents
- Maintaining records
- Ensuring compliance
- Reporting where required
- Implementing corrective actions
- Supporting clients and workers

Workers and Contractors

Responsible for:

- Reporting incidents immediately
 - Cooperating with investigations
 - Maintaining confidentiality
 - Acting professionally and ethically
 - Following child safe and duty of care requirements
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Related Documents

- Code of Conduct
 - Child Safe Policy
 - Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
 - WHS Policy
 - Risk Management Policy
 - Client Rights and Responsibilities
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Review

This policy will be reviewed:

- Every 12 months
- Following a serious incident
- Following legislative or regulatory changes
- As part of continuous improvement practices

Version: 1.0

Review Date: May 2027

Approved By: Charmayne Payne

C. Payne

Business: Social Support and Counselling