



PROCEDURE Client Incident Response, Reporting and Investigation

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that incidents involving Total Angles' clients are responded to, reported, investigated and finalised in an effective and timely manner, and in accordance with legislative and contractual requirements.

In addition, the procedure outlines how Total Angles will:

- address the physical and psychological needs of a client following an incident in order to reduce the impact of the incident and to maximise their wellbeing and
- seek to prevent incidents occurring through systematic review and analysis of incident trends and implementing improvement initiatives.

2. SCOPE

This procedure applies to all Total Angles clients, employees, volunteers, contractors, students.

In the event that the incident relates to either suspected, observed or alleged abuse or neglect of a client, the requirements contained in the Responding to Abuse and Neglect of a Client Procedure must also be complied with.

Should the client incident also fit the criteria for an employee incident, then the Staff Accident/Incident Reporting Procedure must also be followed.

3. DEFINITIONS

Employee

For the purposes of this procedure, employee refers to paid employees, volunteers, contractors and students.

Incident

An event that has the potential to or actually causes injury, harm or other adverse impacts to clients and/or an event where a client contributes to the potential or actual injury, harm or other adverse impacts to others.

Serious incident

Any incident that has the potential to, or results in, a serious outcome for clients or where a client contributes to potential or actual serious outcomes to others.

These include but are not limited to:

- Death.

- Abuse and neglect including concern for a person's welfare and suspected abuse.
- Serious physical injury.
- Serious illness.
- Attempted suicide of a client.
- Dysphagia incidents – including choking and aspiration.
- Near miss incident that could have resulted in a serious outcome.
- Any incident where emergency services are called.
- Client as a missing person.
- Client behaviours of concern that had the potential to, or resulted in, a serious outcome for another person.
- Medication errors such as the wrong/missed dose or incorrect medication being taken by clients.

Minor incident

Any incident that threatens the health, safety and/or wellbeing of clients or where a client contributes to a situation that threatens the health, safety and/or wellbeing of others.

These include but are not limited to:

- Client behaviours of concern resulting in minimal impact on themselves or others.
- Medication signing errors when the correct medication was taken by a client but not signed as given in the administration record.
- Minor injury.

Service supervisor

The line manager to whom an employee reports, which in relation to this procedure usually is a regional area supervisor, a coordinator of a client service or an out of hours supervisor.

4. PROCEDURAL DETAILS

All client incidents must be reported by employees in accordance with this procedure.

4.1 Incident response and reporting

At the time an employee becomes aware of a client incident, either at the time it occurs or subsequent to the event, they must immediately:

- Protect the client from further harm
Employees who fail to respond immediately and protect the client from further harm following an incident are in breach of duty of care and this procedure, and may be subject to disciplinary action.

- Apply and seek first aid and contact emergency services
Apply or seek first aid if required and contact the Ambulance service on 000 in the event that a client sustains a serious injury requiring medical treatment or is in urgent need of medical help.

The NSW Police Service must be called immediately on 000 in any situation where life or serious injury is threatened; or where there is a threat of danger to people or property; when a serious crime is in progress, being witnessed or just committed (for example physical or sexual assault); or any other situation where urgent NSW Police Service assistance is needed.

In all other cases the service supervisor must be contacted to authorise any contact with the NSW Police Service.

- Implement immediate response requirements for suspected, observed or alleged abuse and neglect of clients incidents

Follow the additional steps required for the immediate response to suspected, observed or alleged abuse and neglect of clients as contained in the Responding to Abuse and Neglect Procedure.

- Protect evidence

Secure the scene of the incident if appropriate, for investigation purposes.

- Contact the service supervisor

Contact the service supervisor within 30 minutes if the incident is serious. See “Additional steps for serious incidents” below.

- Complete a Client Incident Report Form

The employee who identified the incident must, within two hours of the incident taking place or being identified, either:

- complete the Client Incident Report Form and scan and email it to leeanne@totalangles.com or fax to (02) 6978 0371; or
- Hand a hard copy to the service supervisor.

The following additional steps for serious incidents must be followed

The employee who identified the incident must:

- Contact the service supervisor

After protecting the client from further harm, attending to the client’s medical needs and contacting the emergency services (if required), the employee who became aware of the serious incident must immediately make a verbal report to the service supervisor either in person or by telephone (or by telephone to the out of hours supervisor) within 30 minutes of becoming aware of the incident.

Written or verbal messages for the service supervisor or service manager must not be left. Only employees who are deaf or have a hearing impairment, which means that they do not communicate verbally may send a text message. Deaf or hearing impaired employees must provide sufficient information in their message so that the nature of the incident can be understood. The service supervisor must arrange face to face meetings as soon as practicable with the employee to implement the requirements of this procedure.

In the event that the employee who identified the incident cannot contact and speak with the service supervisor, they must telephone the service manager. Should the employee who identified the incident be unable to speak directly with the service manager, they must contact the Client Services General Manager.

- Implement any follow up actions as directed by the service supervisor.

Implement any actions as directed by the service supervisor including communicating with the client’s emergency contact regarding the incident.

The service supervisor/out of hours supervisor must:

- Confirm with the employee reporting the incident that the incident is a “serious incident” in accordance with the definition contained in this procedure.
- Authorise any further contact with the NSW Police Service on 000 if an emergency situation still exists and where the NSW Police Service have not already been called, or contact the NSW Police Service on 131 444 for attendance in non-emergency situations where it is believed that a crime may have been committed.
- Agree further immediate action to be taken by the employee reporting the incident.
- Immediately following the conversation with the employee reporting the incident, telephone the service manager to advise them of the incident, the actions taken to date and the planned immediate actions to be taken, by when and by whom.
- Contact the NSW Police Service if they believe a crime has been committed where contact with the NSW Police Service has not previously been made, and documenting any immediate action taken and any planned follow up actions.

Provision of support to clients

Depending on the nature of the incident, clients, their families, their friends or carers must be provided with support where appropriate including referral to specialist organisations, counselling services or by providing information on advocacy services during the course of an investigation. A Total Angles support person may be allocated to the client, their families, their friends or carers depending on the severity of the incident.

4.2 Incident investigation

4.2.1 For suspected abuse and neglect incidents:

Specific requirements for the investigation of abuse and neglect of clients must be followed.

4.2.2 For serious incidents:

The service manager must:

- Ensure that no internal investigations be conducted which may compromise or prejudice any NSW Police Service or external agency involvement or investigations in progress.
- Liaise with the NSW Police Service if required to assist them in their investigations.
- If no conflict with external investigations exists (e.g. following the conclusion of investigations conducted by the NSW Police Service) work with the service supervisor and any relevant employees involved in the incident to complete the investigation and provide a written report on the outcome of the investigation to the Client Services General Manager for their approval within five working days of the initial notification being made. The report must include the details of the initial incident report, what immediate response took place, the actions taken to date, the outcome of the investigation and recommended actions required to resolve the incident. The report must also include an action plan to support clients and their families if appropriate. Internal investigations must result in recommendations to prevent the likelihood of the incident occurring in the future and to improve the response and management of incidents in the event that they reoccur.
- Provide a copy of the investigation report to the CEO for the purposes of reporting all serious client incidents to the Board.
- Liaise with relevant government agencies with regards to the incident if required.

- In the event that, as a result of the internal investigation an employee was found to have breached relevant Total Angles' policies and procedures or was found to be criminally responsible, liaise with the Manager to take any necessary disciplinary action as per the
- recommendations contained in the investigation report approved by the Manager.

4.2.3 For minor incidents:

The service supervisor must review all minor incidents, identify any actions required to finalise the incident and to minimise the chance of incidents reoccurring, within seven days of the incident being reported.

The service supervisor must provide a brief written report to the service manager that includes information on the nature of the incident, results of any investigations, actions taken to finalise the incident and actions implemented to reduce the risk of the incident reoccurring.

4.2.4 Whole of service review of incidents

In addition to implementing strategies to prevent client incidents reoccurring at the individual client level, client services managers must collectively conduct a review of all reported client incidents in their division every quarter to identify themes, trends and factors contributing to client incidents. Following these reviews, appropriate improvements aiming to prevent client incidents, reduce their impact and improve services must be implemented. This may involve liaising with other Total Angles divisions.

4.3 Incidents reportable to the National Disability Insurance Scheme

It is a contractual and legal requirement that Total Angles report all incidents to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). The NDIS Commissioner must be let know within 24 hours if:

- (a) an employee becomes aware that a reportable incident has occurred in connection with the provision of supports or services by Total Angles; and
- (b) the reportable incident is:
 - (i) the death of a person with disability; or
 - (ii) the serious injury of a person with disability; or
 - (iii) the abuse or neglect of a person with disability; or
 - (iv) the unlawful sexual or physical contact with, or assault of, a person with disability; or
 - (v) sexual misconduct committed against, or in the presence of, a person with disability, including grooming of the person for sexual activity.

Total Angles must provide

- (a) the name and contact details of the registered NDIS provider;
- (b) a description of the reportable incident;
- (c) except for a reportable incident of a kind covered by subparagraph (1)(b)(i)—a description of the impact on, or harm caused to, the person with disability;
- (d) 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 has been reported to police or any other body;
- (e) the name and contact details of the person making the notification;
- (f) if known—the time, date and place at which the reportable incident occurred;
- (g) the names and contact details of the persons involved in the reportable incident;
- (h) any other information required by the Commissioner.

Sections a-e must be provided within 24 hours, other details if not available at the time of initial report must be provided within 5 business days

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of each employee to ensure that they remain informed regarding Total Angles procedures which impact upon their duties, and to work within them.

6. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

All Total Angles employees are encouraged to provide feedback on this procedure to their supervisor, to ensure that it remains relevant and continues to reflect the actual manner in which activities are undertaken.

RELATED FORMS
FORM Client Incident Report

RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS
Disability Services Act (1993), section 25(4)
National Disability Insurance Scheme (Incident Management and Reportable Incident) Rules 2018