

CRITICAL INCIDENT REPORTING POLICY FOR COMMUNITY PROGRAMS & PARISH PARTNERSHIPS

1. POLICY PURPOSE AND RATIONALE

It is important that all serious incidents that occur within Anglicare Victoria's Family Services, Community Programs and Parish Partnerships are reported to management.

This will:

- support the provision of high quality services to clients through the full and frank reporting of adverse events and subsequent analysis;
- inform Anglicare Victoria management of significant incidents affecting clients and staff, in a timely and accurate manner;
- assure and enhance the quality of Anglicare Victoria's programs, through monitoring, and acting on trends identified through incident reports; and
- ensure that due diligence and duty of care requirements are met and any identified deficits addressed.

The aim of this document is to ensure that all staff are aware of the guidelines for critical incident reporting. Following these guidelines will ensure consistency of reporting across Anglicare Victoria, which will provide senior management with accurate information for reviewing and learning from incidents, resulting in better service provision for clients.

Please note that a separate reporting process applies to Anglicare Victoria's Placement and Support Services.

2. DEFINITIONS

Critical Incident

A serious event associated with Anglicare Victoria Family Services, Community Programs, or Parish Partnerships that results in risk or harm to the client, a co-client or staff member, or property and equipment.

These incidents include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Client death, or death of a client family's child or young person due to natural causes, illness, drug overdose, misadventure, suicide, motor vehicle accident, murder or for any other reason.
- Serious injury of a client, staff member or damage to Anglicare Victoria property or equipment.
- Allegations that a child or young person has been abused by an employee or volunteer.
- Any event that the CEO might be asked to account for or defend.
- An event that has the potential to subject Anglicare Victoria to public, media or legal scrutiny.
- Serious threats made against other program clients or staff.
- Criminal action against Anglicare Victoria or its staff.

Please note:

- Work place risks or accidents, complaints, allegations and staff discipline are also dealt with through other policy statements; and
- All criminal acts must be reported to the Police.

Staff

In this instance, staff also refers to volunteers.

3. PROCEDURES

3.1 When to write an incident report:

An incident report is required whenever an event occurs during service delivery that represents a threat or risk to a client, staff or others in a program. Incident report templates are available on the intranet.

3.2 Writing the incident report:

The incident report form must be completed by the most senior witness to the incident, or the person to whom the incident was reported, if there were no witnesses. The incident report should contain all necessary factual details. It must include who was involved; how, where and when the incident occurred; who is injured and the nature and extent of injuries (if applicable); and what action is being taken in response to the incident. Objective language should be used. The information necessary for the aims of incident reporting is required. Consistent with privacy principles, it may not be necessary to name witnesses. All reports must be legible and presented in the specified report format.

The worker writing the report must complete and sign Section A. Once an incident report is completed by a witness or the person to whom the incident was reported, the completed sections of the report must not be changed, amended or altered in any way or for any reason. Occasionally, other witnesses or individuals may disagree with the content of the report. Where this occurs, the alternative views must be put in writing, on a separate piece of paper, and attached to the completed incident report.

The relevant Team Leader or Program Manager is then required to complete and sign Section B of the report.

All incident reports must be completed as soon as possible but no later than two working days after the incident has occurred.

3.3 Distribution of a completed incident report:

All reports must be forwarded to the relevant Program Manager, Area Manager and General Manager, as well as the Deputy CEO – Community Services.

All Program Managers are required to ensure a register is maintained to record all incidents.

A decision may be made by Area Managers or the Deputy CEO – Community Services to refer details of an incident to DHS or other authorities required as part of contractual obligations.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Privacy: Privacy is an important consideration in relation to incident reports, which often contain personal and other sensitive information. Staff are required to comply with Anglicare Victoria's Privacy Policy. Consistent with this, appropriate security safeguards must be in place when transmitting and storing information. Paper incident reports and related electronic data must be stored securely in locked cabinets or cupboards. They must be accessed only by staff who have a business purpose for doing so. Where they are faxed, the fax number should be checked twice. If email is used to deliver reports, similar care should be taken with the list of addressees. Copies that are no longer required by Central Office should be kept for a

period of 12 months and then destroyed. (query records management; criteria for keeping / destroying records. Are there two registers: program / central office)

This policy became effective as at: 1 July 2006
This policy was last amended: September 2012
This policy is due to be reviewed: September 2013
Queries about this policy should be directed to: Deputy CEO – Community Services