



# DOWN SOUTH THERAPY

## **Serious Incident Reporting Policy**

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## Serious Incident Reporting

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### 1.1. Purpose

Down South Therapy (DST) is committed to ensuring that serious incidents involving clients of the organisation are properly investigated and resolved. The Disability Services Act section 25(4) states it is compulsory for service providers (funded services) to report to the Disability Services Commission (the Commission) any death or non-trivial injury (including physical, psychological and sexual abuse or neglect), to a person in their care. The intent of the legislation is to safeguard people with disabilities and to make service providers more accountable.

### 1.2. Scope

This policy relates to all Down South Therapy activities and applies to all employees, contractors, students, advocates, Directors and others who may act on behalf of Down South Therapy.

### 1.3. Application of Policy

Down South Therapy is committed to meeting its obligations under the Disability Services Act and the General Provisions of its Service Agreement that requires reporting of all serious incidents to the Disability Services Commission.

#### Definition of serious incident

A serious incident means one or more of the following:

- The death of a person with a disability who is a client
- Serious physical injury of a person with disability who is a client
- Serious avoidable illness (for example food poisoning or instances where medication has been wrongly administered) of a person with disability who is a current client
- Abuse or neglect of a person with disability who is a current client
- The person is judged as posing a serious risk to the health, safety or welfare of themselves or others
- Exploitation or unauthorised restrictive practices used with a person with disability who is a current client; and
- An assault on staff or a visitor to the service by a person with disability who is a current client.

If none of the above has occurred, a serious incident form should still be completed if:

- In relation to a client, your service receives serious verbal or written complaints
- Is required to inform your insurer about a matter
- If a matter or complaint about your service is referred to any statutory or investigative body; and/or



- When a service provider has concerns over the welfare of a person with a disability.

#### 1.4. Performance Standards

The following performance standards must be met to ensure that the procedures specified are implemented effectively:

- Staff and contractors are informed about the definitions of a serious incident and the requirements of reporting.
- Information on the Serious Incident Reporting process is available to staff and contractors via the organisation website.
- In the event of a serious incident, staff and contractors forward the required information to the DSC in the prescribed manner and in a timely manner.
- The Director has responsibility for the overseeing of all Serious Incident Reporting and provides a summary of issues to the Reference Group at scheduled meetings.
- Where a matter involves potential criminal charges or a minor under the age of 18 years the matter is reported to the appropriate external agency.
- All Serious Incidents Reports are viewed as confidential and kept in accordance with the Policy on Privacy and Confidentiality.

#### 1.5. Procedures

The following procedures are to be implemented to ensure that Down South Therapy meet its policy objective of Serious Incident Reporting.

##### Reporting Responsibility

The responsibility for reporting all serious incidents rests with the service provider which is providing services to the client where and when the incident occurred.

A Serious Incident Report (SIR) form should be completed for each client even if several clients are involved in one incident. If a client is involved in several incidents each incident must be reported separately. Guidelines on how to complete the SIR form are available on the DSC website.

##### Reporting Format to Disability Services Commission

Whenever a serious incident has occurred, Down South Therapy must ensure the matter is reported to the Commission using the Commission’s notification of serious incident reporting system.

Down South Therapy are required to complete the Serious Incident Report Form, with sign off by the Director.

It is important that action is taken to minimise the consequences of the serious incident and where possible prevent the occurrence of a similar serious incident in the future.





## External Investigation

Where the matter involves the potential for criminal charges, such as sexual abuse or serious physical abuse of a person with disability by a staff member or contractor of the Commission or a disability sector organisation, it is essential that the police are consulted as part of the process of external investigation. This action should then be noted in the SIR.

Where the matter involves a child under the age of 18 years, the Commission requires the incident to be reported to the Department for Child Protection and Family Support (DCPFS). If DCPFS are not advised as part of the reporting sequence, an explanatory memorandum should be forwarded to the Commission's Director General detailing the reasons why DCPFS have not been notified.

Where statutory agencies such as Police, Department for Child Protection and Family Support, Office of the Public Advocate and the Coroner are involved this needs to be recorded in the Action Plan.

## Timeliness

**All serious incidents must be reported to the Commission within seven (7) days.**

## Confidentiality of Information

Reports of serious incidents will be kept confidential, in accordance with the Disability Services Act and/or other relevant legislation that is applicable unless disclosure is required in the public interest.

## Completed Forms

Completed forms should be approved by your Supervisor, Operations Manager and then Director. Final SIRs are to be sent to the DSC as prescribed by them.

The Commission may initiate any follow-up action deemed necessary.

