

NDS Quality and Safeguards Sector Readiness Project

Building a culture of reporting

Information about the safety of services, can come from lots of different places. Building a culture of reporting, is about ensuring people feel safe to raise issues, make complaints, report incidents, or even just talk about the things that don't feel right.

When people do 'report', the experience they have can impact future reporting.

This resource is about reflecting on how concerns or issues are responded to and dealt with.

It is general in nature and is intended to be used as a guide and will need to be changed or adapted to suit each organisation and the supports and services they provide. It provides prompts to consider and links to a selection of resources.

The resources are drawn from a range of different sources. They are **not** an exclusive list and do **not** replace your organisation's policies and procedures. The information provided is a starting point and should be used and adapted to meet the size and scope of your organisation and the supports you provide.

Building a Culture of Reporting



- Involving in the solutions, people who bring forward issues.
- Reviewing systems and processes in response to reports.
- Considering what is working well in addition to what isn't working well.
- Always providing feedback to people involved.

- Taking all reports seriously.
- Ensuring the person making the report feels listened to, that their opinion is valued and that you are doing everything you can to address their concerns.
- Prioritising the safety and support of all people involved.
- Being transparent about what happens next, including if other people need to be notified.

- Processes for incident and complaint management, including investigations, are documented and available to anyone.
- Processes are carried out in a timely way, keeping people informed in their preferred communication method.
- Giving all people affected, the opportunity to be heard.
- Making decisions on the best evidence available.
- Using external investigators as needed.

- Supporting workers, people with disability and their networks to understand and recognise incidents and how to report them.
- Having a process for anonymous reporting.
- Supporting the reporter and people involved to ensure everyone is supported and safe.
- Encourage and facilitate access to independent advocacy.
- Debriefing and offering additional support, as needed.

- People are **not** blamed for actions which are in line with policies, procedures and training.
- Accountability is shared for things that go wrong.
- Everyone understands the organisation's expectations.
- Decision making is consistent and in line with policies.

Resources to support

Response to reporting

- **NDS Sector Readiness** [NDS Tools, Resources and Information for Lead Complaints Handlers \(nds.org.au\)](https://nds.org.au) includes links to resources to support effective communication, building rapport and managing complex complaints.
- **NDS Zero Tolerance** [Responding to Abuse \(nds.org.au\)](https://nds.org.au) is a set of short films to help frontline disability workers to think about how to respond quickly and appropriately to abuse, neglect, and violence of people they support, these include the role of supervisors and managers.
- **NDS Risk, Incidents and Complaints Management:** [The 4 A's of Complaints](#) talks about the process of responding to a complaint and the importance of an organisational culture that learns from complaints.
- **Gov.UK** [Whistleblowing: Guidance for Employers and Code of Practice](#) provides information on responding to disclosures and supporting workers who report 'wrongdoing' (Whistleblowing).
- **Queensland Mental Health Commission** have produced [3 principles for supporting someone in distress](#).
- **WA Ombudsman** [Effective handling of complaints made to your organisation \(ombudsman.wa.gov.au\)](https://ombudsman.wa.gov.au) include principles for responding to complaints.
- **NDIS Commission** [Detailed guidance expectations workers managing incidents](#) provides guidance for workers in incident management, p19 includes guidance on responding to disclosures of abuse.

Supporting people

Resources to support people with disability

- [NDS How we respond to incidents](#) can be displayed and given to people to explain your process and a prompt to encourage reporting.
- [NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission Speak Up Resources](#) empower people with disability to 'speak up' if they need to, about the quality and safety of their supports and services.
- [Speak Up and be Safe from Abuse](#) toolkit from Scope and the Victorian Government assists people with disability to identify and report abuse.

Resources to support workers

- **NDIS Commission** [Identifying and responding to incidents: 6 step guide for workers](#) and [Resources to support incident reporting and management](#).
- **NDS** [Incident Management Resources for Staff Training](#) includes a range of resources can used to support workers.
- **Respect at Work** [Supporting people before, during and after an incident](#) looks at systems and practices that supports workers (in the context of sexual harassment in the workplace).
- **NDS** [Addressing Occupational Violence in the Victorian Disability Sector](#) offers practical resources to help ensure the safety of staff and research highlighting how high-quality supports that uphold the human rights of people with disability lead to worker safety.
- **NDS** [Debriefing Tool](#) offers tips on the process for debriefing incidents.

Just culture

- **NSW Government** have produced [A guide to building workplace culture](#) to help recognise what a positive culture might look like.
- **Safer Care Victoria** [Just Culture Guide for Health Services](#) provides an overview of Just Culture principles and how to apply them within your workplace and includes information on recognising bias.
- **Aged Care and Quality Commission** have produced [Organisational Culture](#).

Fair and process driven

- **NDIS Commission** [Detailed guidance on incident management systems](#) assists NDIS providers in developing or improving their incident management systems.
- **WA Ombudsman** [Procedural Fairness \(ombudsman.wa.gov.au\)](#) talks about the procedures used by decision makers.
- **NDS** [Conducting Investigations Guide](#) offers information, a process and templates for carrying out investigations.
- **Australian Institute of Family Services** - [Evidence-informed decision making webinar](#) which looks at frameworks, barriers and examples of how evidence has been used to create impact and change.

Continuous improvement

- **NDS Sector Readiness** have produced a [checklist and tools](#) for continuous improvement.
- **NDIS Commission** [Continuous improvement continuum fact sheet practice reviews](#) consider activities which providers should be commonly doing to continuously improve.
- **ACECQA** [Using Complaints To Support Continuous Improvement](#) looks at complaints as an opportunity for reflection and driving quality improvements.
- **NDS** [Quality Management](#) resource for developing and implementing quality management for disability service providers, looks at the quality management process as a simple cycle of continuous improvement.

Please note: The Safer Services toolkit was funded by Lotterywest in 2018 and reviewed by the NDS Quality and Safeguards Sector Readiness Project in January 2024. This resource is general in nature and is provided as a guide only. NDS believes that the information contained in this publication is correct at the time of publishing, however, NDS reserves the right to vary any of this publication without further notice. The information provided in this publication should not be relied upon instead of other legal, medical, financial, or professional advice. Please always refer to online documents for the latest versions including the NDIS Practice Standards and advice to providers on the Code of Conduct.