



Significant Incident Management - Requirements for Service Providers

1. Purpose

This guideline:

- outlines the requirement for service providers to have a Significant Incident Management Policy and Procedure
- provides a definition of a significant incident
- outlines the responsibilities of service providers to advise the Department for Child Protection (DCP) of significant incidents.

2. Scope

These requirements apply to all employees, sub-contractors, students or volunteers of service providers who provide services to DCP.

3. Authority

3.1 Legislative context

Please refer to the [Legislation and standards](#) service provision requirement page on the service provider area of the DCP website.

3.2 DCP requirements

- [DCP Contract Management Framework](#)
- [DCP Contract Performance Management Framework](#)
- [DCP Performance Measurement Specification](#)

3.3 Principles

- The safety and wellbeing of children and young people is the paramount consideration.
- Decision making is child and young person focused.
- Responses and decision making are prompt.
- Children and young people have a voice in decisions made about them.
- Responses to incidents will be culturally safe, respectful and responsive and meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people, families and communities.
- The management of incidents is responsive to meet the needs of children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.
- Responses to incidents are considerate of the needs of children and young people who identify as LGBTQIA+.
- Interagency collaboration leads to better outcomes.

4. Requirements

4.1 Service Providers’ Significant Incident Policy and Procedure

All service providers must provide evidence of their Significant Incident Management Policy and Procedure which, at a minimum, must:

- define a significant incident; and
- identify steps to ensure a coordinated and appropriate response to the incident.

The procedure should clearly document processes of escalation and communication with DCP.

4.2 Definition and examples of significant incidents

Significant incidents are defined as those events that occur as a result of, or during the delivery of, services directly provided or funded by the department, that cause or are likely to cause significant negative impacts on the health, safety or wellbeing of clients, staff or others involved in the event. Such events may attract media attention that can amplify the negative impacts.

Examples of significant incidents include (but are not limited to):

Significant incident	Minimum requirements for Service Providers’ response
<p><i>The death of a child or young person (including expected, accidental or non-accidental death)</i></p> <p>The death of a child or young person:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • who is in care; or • with an open DCP case, open to DCP in the last 12 months, or • who is under a Long-term guardianship (specified person) order pursuant to section 53(1)(h) of the <i>Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017</i> (CYPS Act). 	<p>During business hours the service provider must contact the child or young person’s allocated DCP case worker, the supervisor or the manager of the office at which the child or young person is allocated.</p> <p>After hours the service provider must notify the DCP After-Hours team.</p> <p>If the service provider forms a reasonable suspicion of harm or risk of harm to any other child or young person, they must report their suspicion to the DCP Child Abuse Report Line (CARL).</p>
<p><i>Child or young person experiences serious injury, serious harm or serious illness</i></p> <p>A serious injury or harm, illness or medical condition is one that is life threatening and/or requires immediate medical attention of the child or young person, who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is in care; or • has an open DCP case or was open to DCP in the last 12 months. 	<p>During business hours the service provider must contact the child or young person’s allocated case worker, the supervisor or the manager of the office at which the child or young person is allocated.</p> <p>After hours the service provider must notify the DCP After-Hours team.</p> <p>If the service provider forms a reasonable suspicion of harm or risk of harm to a child or young person, they must report their suspicion to the DCP Child Abuse Report Line (CARL).</p>

Significant incident	Minimum requirements for Service Providers' response
<p><i>Child or young person in care commits a criminal offence of significant nature</i></p> <p>A child or young person in care is arrested or charged with a serious criminal offence in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an offence resulting in death • physical assault resulting in serious harm to victim • sexual assault including unlawful sexual intercourse or rape • child exploitation offences • any other serious criminal offence (such as aggravated robbery, aggravated serious criminal trespass). 	<p>During business hours the service provider must contact the child or young person's allocated case worker, the supervisor or the manager of the office at which the child or young person is allocated.</p> <p>After hours the service provider must notify the DCP After-Hours team.</p> <p>If the service provider forms a reasonable suspicion of harm or risk of harm to a child or young person, they must report their suspicion to the DCP Child Abuse Report Line (CARL).</p>
<p><i>Child or young person in care is the victim of criminal offence or witness to a serious criminal offence</i></p> <p>The alleged perpetrator is arrested or charged with a serious criminal offence in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • offence resulting in death • aggravated/serious physical assault/injury • sexual assault offences including unlawful sexual intercourse • child exploitation offences (including grooming offences) • a breach of written direction that results in criminal charges. 	<p>During business hours the service provider must contact the child or young person's allocated case worker, the supervisor or the manager of the office at which the child or young person is allocated.</p> <p>After hours the service provider must notify the DCP After-Hours team.</p> <p>If the service provider forms a reasonable suspicion of harm or risk of harm to a child or young person, they must report their suspicion to the DCP Child Abuse Report Line (CARL).</p>

Significant incident	Minimum requirements for Service Providers' response
<p><i>A missing child or young person (extreme or emergency)</i></p> <p>A child or young person in care who is missing from care and the urgency assessment rating is extreme or it is an emergency situation (for example, the child or young person has been abducted, exhibits suicidal ideation or is in immediate or life-threatening danger).</p>	<p>The service provider must contact 000.</p> <p>The service provider must follow guidance in the Missing or absent from placement Service Provider Requirements.</p> <p>During business hours the service provider must contact the DCP allocated case worker, supervisor or the manager of the office at which the child or young person is allocated.</p> <p>After hours the service provider must notify the DCP After-Hours team.</p> <p>If the service provider forms a reasonable suspicion of harm or risk of harm to a child or young person, they must report their suspicion to the DCP Child Abuse Report Line (CARL).</p>
<p><i>Pregnancy</i></p> <p>A child or young person in care has a confirmed pregnancy (father or mother) by blood test.</p>	<p>During business hours the service provider must contact the DCP allocated case worker, supervisor or the manager of the office at which the child or young person is allocated.</p> <p>After hours the service provider must notify the DCP After-Hours team.</p> <p>If the service provider forms a reasonable suspicion of harm or risk of harm to a child or young person, they must report their suspicion to the DCP Child Abuse Report Line (CARL).</p>
<p><i>Care concern/harm in care</i></p> <p>Serious care concerns/significant incidents where there is a reasonable suspicion that a child or young person in care has been harmed or is at risk of harm.</p>	<p>During business hours the service provider must contact the DCP allocated case worker, supervisor or the manager of the office at which the child or young person is allocated.</p> <p>After hours the service provider must notify the DCP After-Hours team.</p> <p>If the service provider forms a reasonable suspicion of harm or risk of harm to a child or young person, they must report their suspicion to the DCP Child Abuse Report Line (CARL).</p>

Significant incident	Minimum requirements for Service Providers' response
<p>Data Breach</p> <p>Unauthorised access, unauthorised disclosure or loss of personal or confidential information that an organisation holds.</p>	<p>During business hours the service provider must contact the DCP allocated case worker, supervisor or the manager of the office at which the child or young person is allocated.</p> <p>After hours the service provider must notify the DCP After-Hours team.</p> <p>If the service provider forms a reasonable suspicion of harm or risk of harm to a child or young person, they must report their suspicion to the DCP Child Abuse Report Line (CARL).</p>
<p>Employee, Contractor or Carer commits a criminal offence (irrespective of whether the offence relates to employment)</p> <p>Allegations that an employee, carer, contractor, volunteer or client has committed a serious criminal offence (including fraud, child sexual harm/exploitation offences or assault).</p>	<p>Where the allegations are related to harm of a child or young person, the service provider must notify CARL or the DCP After-Hours team.</p> <p>If the allegations are related to a child or young person in care or with an open case with DCP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • during business hours the service provider must contact the allocated DCP case worker, supervisor or the manager of the office at which the child or young person is allocated • after hours the service provider must notify the DCP After-Hours team • if the service provider forms a reasonable suspicion of harm or risk of harm to a child or young person, they must report their suspicion to the DCP Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) • if the incident relates to an allegation of sexual harm against a child or young person, the service provider must comply with all requirements under sections 64A and 65 of the <i>Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935</i>.
<p>Staff death or serious injury</p> <p>The death or serious injury of staff who are directly engaged with or known to children or young people in care.</p>	<p>During business hours the service provider must contact the DCP allocated case worker, supervisor or the manager of the office at which the child or young person is allocated.</p> <p>After hours the service provider must notify the DCP After-Hours team.</p> <p>If the service provider forms a reasonable suspicion of harm or risk of harm to a child or young person, they must report their suspicion to the DCP Child Abuse Report Line (CARL).</p>

Significant incident	Minimum requirements for Service Providers' response
<p>Significant Media attention</p> <p>Media coverage relating to the above reportable incidents via major local media outlets, online media, social media, radio and television content that stands to negatively influence community perceptions of DCP.</p>	<p>During business hours the service provider must contact the DCP allocated case worker, supervisor or the manager of the office at which the child or young person is allocated.</p> <p>After hours the service provider must notify the DCP After-Hours team.</p> <p>If the service provider forms a reasonable suspicion of harm or risk of harm to a child or young person, they must report their suspicion to the DCP Child Abuse Report Line (CARL).</p>

4.3 Requirements related to responding to and managing significant incidents

Service provider staff involved in, or who witness, a significant incident must:

- if necessary, immediately notify SAPOL, SA Ambulance Service and other emergency services
- immediately alert their supervisor or manager
- ensure the service provider supervisor or manager immediately contacts:
 - the child or young person's allocated DCP case worker, supervisor, or the manager of the DCP office the child or young person is allocated to (during business hours) or
 - CARL or the DCP After-Hours team after business hours
- notify SafeWork SA if a notifiable incident
- complete an incident report that accurately records those involved and a description of the event
- provide the completed incident report to the DCP case worker and/or supervisor within 24 hours of the incident occurring
- notify the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Quality and Safeguards Commission if the incident relates to a child or young person who is a NDIS participant in receipt of NDIS funded supports.

When notified of a significant incident by a service provider, DCP will ensure the matter is reported to the DCP Significant Incident Reporting Unit for appropriate assessment and escalation.

4.4 Mandatory reporting requirements

In addition to their significant incident reporting responsibilities, service providers must be mindful of their mandatory reporting requirements.

4.4.1 Suspected harm or risk of harm to a child or young person

Suspected harm or risk of harm to a child or young person must be reported to the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) which is available 24 during and after business hours, seven days a week.

4.4.2 Corruption, misconduct and maladministration

As public officers, service providers are encouraged to report to the Office for Public Integrity (OPI) or Ombudsman SA matters where they form a reasonable suspicion of corruption, misconduct or maladministration in public administration. Further information about matters that may be reported and how to report is available from the [OPI website](#).

4.4.3 Sexual harm perpetrated by a DCP employee

DCP employees must make a report to SAPOL if they know or suspect sexual harm to the child or young person under the age of 18 years (including historical incidents within the previous ten years) perpetrated by another DCP employee. Failure to report to SAPOL suspected child sexual harm in accordance with section 64A has a maximum penalty of imprisonment for three years.

A DCP employee who becomes aware of concerns that a child or young person (17 years of age or under) is at *substantial risk* that another DCP employee (which includes students undertaking practical training, DCP volunteers and service providers who are contracted to conduct DCP services as defined above) will engage in sexual harm of the DCP a or young person, the DCP employee must take steps to reduce or remove the substantial risk the abuse will occur to ensure the immediate safety of the child or young person. Failure to protect a child from sexual harm (either by reducing or removing the risk) has a maximum penalty of imprisonment for 15 years.

For the purposes of reporting, the following are considered DCP employees:

- students who undertake practical training with the service provider as part of an educational or vocational course
- volunteers with the service provider to provide services to DCP.

Document control

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15/05/2021	1.1	Clarification that the incident report must be provided to DCP within 24 hours form the incident, and service provider reporting obligations to the NDIS (National Insurance Scheme Act 2013) to the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission
15/10/2021	1.2	Update to align with the Significant Incident Reporting Unit procedures.
1/02/2022	1.3	Minor amendment to reflect new ICAC changes.
20/10/2022	1.4	Update to include new requirements under the <i>Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935</i> .
14/4/2023	1.5	Updated to align with Missing or absent from placement service provider requirements.

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7 March 2025	2.0	Updated to align with SIRU reporting Procedure and categories.