

Whistleblowing and Corrupt Conduct Policy Direction



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Document overview

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Document Owner	Chief Executive Officer
Primary Contact	Chief People Officer
Executive Summary	This policy direction is to provide direction on what types of conduct should be reported, the channels available for reporting, and the protections offered under Whistleblower legislation for those who raise concerns about unethical, illegal, fraudulent, dangerous, corrupt, or otherwise disclosable conduct involving Anglicare.
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Applies to:

All Anglicare Southern Queensland (Anglicare) current or former employees, current and former commissioners, contractors, consultants, students, volunteers, families, people or entities who have received services from Anglicare, or lawyers, supporters, family or spouse, or representatives of one of the above categories.

Purpose

To provide direction on what types of conduct should be reported, the channels available for reporting, and the protections offered under Whistleblower legislation for those who raise concerns about unethical, illegal, fraudulent, dangerous, corrupt, or otherwise disclosable conduct involving Anglicare.

Direction

Anglicare is committed to fostering a safe and supportive environment aligned with its core values of love, care, hope, and humility. This includes encouraging individuals to report misconduct or illegal/dangerous behaviour without fear of retribution or personal detriment.

Anglicare does not tolerate any adverse actions against individuals who report misconduct. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Dismissal or threats of dismissal
- Demotion, transfer, or alteration of duties to disadvantage
- Discrimination, harassment, or intimidation
- Physical or psychological harm
- Damage to property, reputation, or financial position
- Breaches of confidentiality
- Legal action or threats of legal action
- Cessation of Service Delivery

To promote transparency and good governance, Anglicare extends protections equivalent to those offered under Australian Whistleblower legislation, the new Aged Care Act 2024, and Child Safe Organisations Act 2024.

Definition of a Whistleblower

A Whistleblower is a complainant or individual with inside knowledge of Anglicare who voluntarily reports disclosable conduct that they have directly witnessed, or reasonably suspect has occurred. This may also include reporting on behalf of another person.

Note: Client complaints about service delivery or personal employment-related grievances do not constitute disclosable conduct and are handled under separate policies.

Requirements

Disclosable Conduct

In Anglicare, disclosable conduct includes but is not limited to:

- breaches of legislation, regulations or local government by-laws or is otherwise illegal (including Whistleblower laws, corporations' and tax laws, aged care and child safe organisations laws, theft, drug sale/use, violence or threatened violence or criminal damage against property)
- any offence against any other law of the Commonwealth that is punishable by imprisonment for a period of 12 months or more
- corrupt conduct or conduct that is an abuse of public trust, dishonest or fraudulent activity
- unlawful, corrupt, gross mismanagement or irregular use of Anglicare's funds or resources
- unreasonably endangering health and safety or the environment
- unethical or immoral behaviour, including anything that would breach the Code of Conduct
- a breach of any legislation relating to Anglicare's operations or activities, behaviour that is oppressive, discriminatory or grossly negligent

Reporting Disclosable Conduct

Anglicare encourages all individuals to report suspected or actual corrupt conduct to support a culture of integrity and ethical behaviour.

Disclosures may be made verbally or in writing to the Whistleblower Protection Officer (WPO) at:

- Email: whistleblower@anglicaresq.org.au
- Whistleblower Hotline: 1800 676 787

All Reasonable efforts will be made to protect the anonymity of all individuals involved.

Reports relating to Aged Care Services may also be submitted through the following channels:

- An Anglicare staff member, manager, or Board member
- The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission
- The Department of Health or a departmental official
- A registered provider or a responsible person of a registered provider
- An aged care worker from a registered provider
- Police officer
- An independent aged care advocate

If a disclosure is made to someone other than the WPO (e.g. a line manager), they must refer the report to the WPO.

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If the disclosure involves or implicates the WPO, or if the Whistleblower believes the WPO is not suitably independent, the report must be made to the Chief Executive Officer, who will assign an external investigator in accordance with whistleblower protection provisions.

Whistleblowers may choose to disclose their identity (which will be kept confidential) or remain anonymous. All reports are taken seriously and investigated based on the quality and detail of information provided.

If a Whistleblower does not wish to have their concern managed under whistleblower protections, they may opt to report via Anglicare's complaints and feedback process.

If a disclosure triggers other legal obligations (e.g. Serious Incident Reporting Scheme under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 or Reportable Conduct Scheme under the Child Safe Organisations Act 2024) Anglicare will make all reasonable efforts to maintain Whistleblower protections whilst meeting its mandatory reporting or legislative requirements.

Whistleblower Protection Officer and Investigation Officer

Anglicare has appointed a Whistleblower Protection Officer (WPO)—the Chief People Officer, Corporate Services receive and manage disclosures. The WPO is responsible for safeguarding the interests of anyone making a disclosure or report under this Policy Direction, including:

- Receiving and investigating whistleblower reports
- Ensuring confidentiality and procedural fairness
- Protecting whistleblowers from detriment
- Keeping whistleblowers informed of investigation outcomes (subject to privacy laws)

The WPO may appoint an internal or external Investigation Officer (IO) who is independent of the area and individuals under investigation. The WPO will ensure investigations are conducted fairly, objectively, and confidentially.

Protection and support for the Whistleblower

Anglicare is committed to protecting the identity and rights of anyone making a protected disclosure.

Anglicare must take reasonable steps to preserve anonymity if requested. Revealing the discloser's identity or information likely to lead to it is a contravention unless specifically authorised (authorised disclosure may include disclosure to regulators or legal advisors, disclosure with consent, or disclosure to prevent serious threat). Disclosure of information (other than identity) is permitted if reasonably necessary for investigating the contravention, provided steps are taken to reduce identification

Under Section 547 of the Aged Care Act 2024, anonymity will be preserved unless disclosure is necessary to prevent serious harm to health, safety, or wellbeing.

Whistleblower Protection includes:

- Immunity from dismissal, harassment, or disadvantage
- Anonymity, unless otherwise required by law
- Assurance that services or employment conditions will not be negatively impacted.
- Access to support services, including:
 - Anglicare Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
 - Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) for aged care matters

Any retaliation or threat of retaliation against a Whistleblower, their representatives, employer, or relatives is strictly prohibited and may lead to disciplinary or legal action.

Note: While whistleblowers are protected from liability related to making the disclosure, they are not immune from liability for any personal misconduct revealed by the disclosure.

False or Malicious Reports

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Knowingly making false, misleading, or malicious claims is not protected under this Policy Direction and may be treated as misconduct. Such claims will be addressed through Anglicare's grievance and dispute processes.

Client Complaints

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction regarding an aspect of service, where a response or resolution is expected. Complainants do not need to explicitly state that they are making a complaint.

Complaints may be categorised by severity (minor, moderate, major, or extreme risk) based on the Severity Risk Matrix and are managed under Anglicare's Client Feedback and Complaints Management Policy Direction.

Support for people who are reported

Those reported for alleged disclosable conduct are entitled to fair treatment and regular communication throughout the investigation process. If allegations are found to be unsubstantiated, all parties involved are informed of the outcome. Support is also available through internal and external services, such as EAP.

Breaches and failure to comply

Anglicare views as serious any breaches of this Policy Direction, including any retaliatory action or victimisation in reprisal for a protected disclosure, or trivial, false, or vexatious reports, or unsubstantiated allegations made maliciously or knowingly to be false. Breaches will result in disciplinary action that may include dismissal, termination or cessation of a service or client relationship, or exposure to criminal or civil liability.

Term	Definition
Complainant	<p>A person (or organisation) that makes a complaint regarding Anglicare service delivery. A complainant may be representatives, relative or friend of a client, external health professional, or other concerned individual, agency or group.</p> <p>Complainants can be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anonymous – does not provide identifying details, can't be contacted• Confidential – provides identifying details but requests that those details are not disclosed, can be contacted• Open – provides identifying details and consents to those details being shared for the purpose of resolving the complaint, can be contacted.
Corrupt conduct	Corrupt conduct is either a criminal offence or is serious enough to warrant dismissal including theft, fraud and any other identified, inappropriate and illegal conduct.
Disclosable conduct	<p>In Anglicare, disclosable conduct includes but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• breaches of legislation, regulations or local government by-laws or is otherwise illegal (including Whistleblower laws, corporations' law, theft, drug sale/use, violence or threatened violence or criminal damage against property)• any offence against any other law of the Commonwealth that is punishable by imprisonment for a period of 12 months or more• corrupt conduct or conduct that is an abuse of public trust dishonest or fraudulent activity

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">unlawful, corrupt, gross mismanagement or irregular use of Anglicare's funds or resourcesunreasonably endangering health and safety or the environmentunethical or immoral behaviour, including anything that would breach the Code of Conducta breach of any legislation relating to Anglicare's operations or activitiesbehaviour that is oppressive, discriminatory or grossly negligent
Misconduct/serious misconduct	Involves an employee deliberately behaving in a way that is inconsistent with continuing their employment e.g. include causing serious and imminent risk to the health and safety of another person, or to the reputation or profits of Anglicare, theft, fraud, assault, or refusing to carry out a lawful and reasonable instruction that is part of the job.
Personal work-related grievances	A personal work-related grievance is any matter related to the discloser's employment or former employment that has personal implications. These grievances are not under Whistleblower protection and are dealt with through Anglicare's internal grievance and external complaints mechanisms.
Whistleblower Investigation Officer	An Investigation Officer appointed by the WPO is independent to the line management in, and the circumstances surrounding, the disclosable conduct area. They must not be, or have perceived or actual links to, the people or practices subject to the investigation. The IO in strict confidence may seek expertise internally or externally to Anglicare.

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Related documents

Legislation/standards	Aged Care Act 2024 Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 Taxation Administration Act 1953 (Cth) Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld) Corporations Act 2010 (Cth) Fair Work Act 2009
Other	Human Resources Policy Position Client Feedback and Complaints Management Policy Position Code of Conduct Conflicts of Interest Policy Direction Fraud Control Policy Direction Grievances and Disputes Policy Direction Whistleblowing Procedure

Current revision cycle details

Document approver	Chief Executive Officer
Review status	Approved
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Revision history summary

Version	Date	Summary of changes
1.0	05/01/2021	This is a new Policy Direction that replaces the Reporting and Investigating Corrupt Conduct or Behaviour Policy.
1 (policy Portal)	23/11/2022	Document properties updated and link to new Code of Conduct added.
2	9/12/2025	Schedule review. Changes to ensure whistleblowing policy meets obligations of Aged Care Act 2025, including additional resources for clients of Anglicare, great detail of disclosable conduct/protection for whistleblowers.

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