WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY SECTION 1 – AGED CARE

Our Whistleblower Policy has three Sections because we must comply with multiple legislation including, the Aged Care Act 2024, National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Act 2013 and the Corporations Act 2001. Each law has different rules we must meet. Please review the section most appropriate to you as per below. In some cases, all three parts may apply and we will make sure your disclosure is managed under the right rules.

- **Section 1** – Aged Care Act 2024 – this section applies if your concern relates to aged care services or responsibilities.
- **Section 2** – National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Act 2013 - this section applies if your concern relates to NDIS services or responsibilities.
- **Section 3** - Corporations Act 2001 - this section applies if your concern relates to corporate or financial matters.

Policy Guiding Principles for all Sections

- **Safety and Protection** – People who speak up in good faith are protected from victimisation, retaliation, or disadvantage.
- **Confidentiality** – Disclosures will be handled sensitively and confidentially, with information only shared where necessary and permitted by law.
- **Fair Process** – All concerns raised will be assessed and managed in a fair, timely, and consistent manner.
- **Compliance with Law** – We meet our obligations under both the Aged Care Act 2024 and the Corporations Act 2001, ensuring whistleblowers receive the protections available under each.
- **Accessibility** – This policy is written and implemented in a way that is clear, practical, and accessible to all clients, staff, volunteers, and other stakeholders.
- **Continuous Improvement** – Disclosures and the way they are managed will be used to improve our systems, culture, and services.
- **Connection to Complaints and Feedback** – Whistleblowing is one part of our broader culture of openness. Where appropriate, you may choose to raise issues through our Complaints and Feedback Policy, and whistleblower disclosures may also be referred to that process if suitable.

Section 1 – Aged Care Act 2024

What Is a whistleblower disclosure?

A whistleblower disclosure under the Aged Care Act 2024 is:

- A report made by an individual who has reasonable grounds to suspect that ADSSI may have contravened (broken) a provision of the Aged Care Act 2024 and who gives that information to a person listed in the Act (see below for who to make a disclosure to).

Who can make a disclosure?

Anyone can make a disclosure, including:

- Clients and their families or supporters.
- ADSSI staff, volunteers, contractors, or suppliers.
- Any other person connected to our services.

Who to make a disclosure to

Disclosures can be made:

- Directly to ADSSI including to:
  - A responsible person of ADSSI
  - An aged care worker of ADSSI
- To an external agency listed below:

- an Appointed Commissioner or a member of the staff of the Aged Care Quality Safety Commission;
- the System Governor, or an official of the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing;
- a police officer;
- an independent aged care advocate

How to Make a Disclosure

Disclosures can be made verbally or in writing directly to us or anonymously.

A disclosure can be made to any staff member, using the contact details below.

However, you may ask to speak directly to our whistleblower officer or one of our other dedicated disclosure officers:

- Whistleblower Officer: Chief People, Governance and Communications Officer
- Disclosure Officers:
  - Chief Executive Officer
  - Quality and Compliance Manager

Contact Details

Adssi In-home Support

1300 578 478

3A Pioneer Ave Tuggerah NSW 2259

Contact Us
(https://www.adssi.com.au/contact-us/feedbackandcomplaints/)

Beresfield Community Care

(02) 4964 1131

10/16 Huntingdale Dr Thornton NSW 2322

Contact Us
(https://www.bccare.org.au/contact-us/)

Dungog & District Neighbourcare

(02) 4992 3348

62 Hospital Rd Dungog NSW 2420

Contact Us
(https://www.neighbourcare.org.au/contact/)

Maitland Community Care Services

(02) 4932 5755

Unit 3-6/27 John St Telarah NSW 2320

Contact Us
(https://www.mccs.org.au/contact-us/)

Anonymously

Make a disclosure anonymously via our Portal

(https://talkintegrity.com/adssi/)

Or **Phone**: 1800 976 360

External Agencies

Disclosures can also be made verbally or in writing to external agencies listed in the Aged Care Act.

Contact Details of External Agencies

Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission

Online: https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/making-complaint

Phone: 1800 951 822. Interpreters can be arranged, or you can contact:

- Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) - 131 450 ask them to call 1800 951 822
- Aboriginal Interpreter Service (AIS) - 1800 334 944 ask them to call 1800 951 822
- National Relay Service: ask for 1800 951 822

Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN)

Web: https://opan.org.au/contact-us/get-advocacy-support/

Phone: 1800 700 600

Protection for Whistleblowers

Under the Aged Care Act, the following protections apply to anyone who makes a protected disclosure:

- Anonymity – if you make a disclosure anonymously, we will take reasonable steps to preserve your anonymity unless disclosure is required by law.
- Confidentiality of identity – we will keep your identity confidential unless you provide consent or disclosure is required by law.
- Protection from detriment – we will make sure you are protected from any form of retaliation including (but not limited to), victimisation, dismissal, harassment, or discrimination.

Support and Fairness

- Whistleblowers will receive appropriate support, including access to advocates or language services if needed.
- People named in disclosures will also be treated fairly and given the opportunity to respond if appropriate.

How We Will Respond

When a disclosure is made to us directly:

- We will acknowledge receipt (unless it is anonymous).
- We will take immediate steps to protect the whistleblower from harm.
- We will provide support to the individual who made the disclosure and any other individual, or an entity, that employs or is otherwise associated with the first individual, and to which detriment might be caused, or a threat of detriment might be made, because of the disclosure.
- We will assess and, where appropriate, investigate the disclosure promptly and fairly.
- We will keep the whistleblower informed where possible.
- Outcomes will be used to improve our services and prevent future issues.

Other Options

You may choose to have the matter handled under our Complaints and Feedback Policy. Where this option is chosen, the matter will be managed in accordance with that policy, and the protections under the whistleblower provisions may not apply.

What if you're not happy with our response?

We would always prefer to resolve your disclosure directly, but you are also able to make a complaint to any of the following external agencies listed above.

Accessibility

- This policy is available to all clients and their supporters, staff, volunteers, associated providers and anyone upon request.
- We will provide it in alternative languages or formats if requested.
- Regular communication and training will remind everyone that raising concerns is safe and welcome.

Review of This Policy

We will review this policy at least annually to ensure it continues to meet legislative requirements and best practice.