## National Disability Services

## Whistle-blower Protection Policy Template

This policy template in general in nature and is provided as a guide only. It can be modified to suit your circumstances and needs.

**Policy statement**

This policy guides organisations on how to support staff to raise concerns about service delivery in the interests of service safety and quality.

This policy is used to support whistle-blowers, who in good faith and without malice, disclose information or raise concerns about alleged improper or illegal activity.

[Organisation] and our staff are committed to providing services in a safe and honest way. We expect everyone to comply with all legal requirements. We will support and respect anyone who acts as a whistle-blower to draw attention to suspected inappropriate, corrupt or illegal conduct or behaviour.

**Definitions**

**Whistle-blower**

A person who raises concern regarding illegal and/or improper conduct that affects others. The person is not usually involved in the issue but is wanting to alert others to suspected misconduct. The alert may be raised outside of usual reporting lines or processes.

**Scope**

This policy applies to all current and former employees and directors, including permanent and casual, contract workers, temporary agency workers, and volunteers. This policy applies to disclosures made on reasonable grounds about a disclosable matter such as illegal misconduct, improper state of affairs (relates to systemic issues). It excludes staff raising personal grievances. Anonymous disclosures are accepted.

**Principles**

* [Organisation] encourages people to speak up, to make complaints and raise concerns about service integrity, safety and quality.
* [Organisation] has good governance and responds appropriately to concerns about illegal or inappropriate conduct, whether that’s provided as feedback, a complaint or a person acts as a whistle-blower.
* People who ‘blow the whistle’ are not victimised, are protected from detrimental conduct and will be treated fairly and with respect at all times
* [Organisation] will not retaliate against whistle-blower including employees, for raising an alert about suspected misconduct.

**Procedures**

*How to make a disclosure*

Information can be provided in any format. Claims made in conversation should be documented by the person receiving the claim. The record of conversation should be signed by the whistle-bower to verify it is a true account.

*Who can receive a disclosure?*

(Organisation) has identified the role of XXXXXXX (a manager) to receive disclosures.

*How the disclosure will be handled and treated.*

Any information shared about the allegations raised by a whistle-blower will be de-identified to protect the whistle-blower’s identity and stored securely while the matter is examined.

Where a staff member has acted as a whistle-blower, the person to whom the disclosure was made will secure any records or information related to the alleged issue.

Should the organisation decide an internal investigation is required, care must be taken to protect the integrity of any evidence and the usual internal investigation process should be followed.

[Organisation] will conduct an investigation using its Investigations Policy or guidelines.

Investigations will be confidential, fair and objective. The Code of Conduct applies at all times.

[Organisation] and our staff will comply with all legal requests for information in a timely manner. Requests by external parties for information will be responded to using the organisation’s complaints, access to information and privacy policies.

The Manager overseeing the investigation or working on the issue raised by the whistle-blower will keep the whistle-blower and all other parties informed about the process and the outcome of the investigation where permitted.

If the matter is investigated by an external organisation or referred to police or another investigating body, there may be limits on what information can be shared. In this case, involved parties will be advised of any limitations on the release of information.

*Support offered*

Staff who are impacted will be offered support through the employee assistance program.