

Mandatory reporting advice for case managers

As a case manager, you have obligations as a mandatory reporter under the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* (NSW) (the Care and Protection Act). Under the Care and Protection Act, a person who, in the course of his or her professional work or other paid employment delivers health care, welfare, education, children's services, residential services, or law enforcement, wholly or partly, to children, is required to make a report if they have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child or young person is at risk of significant harm.

There is detailed information available via the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) website <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/families/Protecting-kids> to help you feel confident in fulfilling your duty as a mandatory reporter.

The DCJ website also contains a Mandatory Reporter Guide (MRG) <https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/> which contains guidance to assist service providers in determining whether they need to report a matter they are concerned about.

The MRG supports mandatory reporters to:

- *determine whether a report to the Child Protection Helpline is needed for concerns about possible abuse or neglect of a child (including unborn) or young person*
- *identify alternative ways to support vulnerable children, young people and their families where a mandatory reporter's response is better served outside the statutory child protection system*

DCJ recommends that mandatory reporters complete the MRG on each occasion they have risk concerns, regardless of their level of experience or expertise.

We recognise that this can be a challenging part of your work. For sole-traders in particular, there can be limited opportunities for you to talk through concerns while working out the required course of action. To ensure that you have adequate support, we suggest that you:

- Familiarise yourself with the DCJ website content and take advantage of training in this area
- Use the MRG to determine if the issue requires you to log a report
- Speak with the contact person at Lifetime Care or Workers Care
- Speak with other members of the treating team involved with the participant/worker/family
- Contact the child protection unit at one of the hospitals
- Contact the social worker from the paediatric team known to the family.

The management of child protection issues across Lifetime Care/Workers Care, NSW Health and private providers has been discussed at the BIRP-Lifetime Schemes Collaboration Governance Group meetings (Nov 2017). The NSW Health representatives agreed that while a private case manager can familiarise themselves

with their obligations, the NSW Health teams can provide support if required. We encourage you to exhaust all options for support and guidance before involving anyone that is not a current member of the person's treatment team.

Lifetime Care/Workers Care does not require you to provide evidence of having completed child protection training. Nor do we make recommendations about which course/s to attend. We do, however, expect you to take child protection and obligations as mandatory reporters seriously, and ensure your knowledge and understanding is current to ensure you're confident in managing this important aspect of your work. Under the Terms of Approval for approved case managers (Lifetime Care), case managers represent and warrant that they will comply with all relevant laws (ref. 3.3(e)), and this necessarily includes child protection laws.

We encourage you to regularly update your training in child protection, for example every 2 years. The NSW government provides free on-line training on a range of child protection subjects:

- DCJ and MRG links: <http://ngolearning.com.au/courses/online-classroom/>
- Dept of Education link: <https://education.nsw.gov.au/student-wellbeing/child-protection/child-protection-training> - this training is tailored for people working with children within the school environment.

Case managers working with children also need to familiarise themselves with the requirements of other organisations when working with children in their care. As an example, the Department of Education has requirements for visitors to their school premises, and the requirements are different depending on the purpose of the visit and the nature of the interaction with the child. The Department's website contains free child protection training for non-staff if you meet the criteria for doing so.

Lifetime Care
GPO Box 4052, Sydney, NSW 2001
General Phone Enquiries: 1300 738 586
Email: care-requests@icare.nsw.gov.au
www.icare.nsw.gov.au

Workers Care
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