

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE AT RISK POLICY

HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS

Purpose

We care about the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children, young people and their families. Our role in child protection is to report to the Department of Communities (Child Protection) any reasonable suspicion that a child or young person is at risk of significant harm.

Where the suspected risk of harm is below the statutory reporting threshold, we will work with other government agencies and non-government organisations to identify and facilitate access to services to support children, young people and their families.

We will comply with requests for assistance from the Department of Communities (Child Protection), the police and any other regulatory organisation that needs us to identify, report and/or arrange support services for children or young people who may be at risk.

Policy

We will work collaboratively with Government and other agencies and organisations to provide support to families earlier, to prevent children and young people requiring statutory child protection intervention.

We will work in partnership with other agencies concerning the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people by:

- Recognising the signs of abuse and neglect and reporting the name or a Description of a child or young person reasonably suspected of being at risk of significant harm to the Department of Communities (Child Protection).
- Working with other government and non-government agencies to monitor Instances where a child or young person is reasonably suspected of being at risk of significant harm.
- Making appropriate referrals to agencies that support children, young people and families.
- Providing appropriate housing assistance to children, young people and their Families if they meet service eligibility requirements.

Our responsibilities

If our worker has a reasonable suspicion that a child or young person is at risk of significant harm, a report will be made as soon as practicable to the Department of Communities (Child Protection). Our workers are not authorised to investigate suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.

Our responsibilities include:

- Where possible, providing housing assistance to eligible households where children and young people are at risk.

- Assisting young people in the transition from out of home care to independent living in private and community housing.
- Taking into consideration the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people when assessing applications for priority assistance from eligible clients who are experiencing domestic violence.
- Referring families in crisis to appropriate support services.

We also have a responsibility to ensure that:

- Workers receive training in how to recognise and report cases of child abuse and neglect.
- Child protection policies, guidelines and procedures are properly implemented.
- Any allegations of child abuse made against our workers are reported to the Department of Communities (Child Protection).

Working with other agencies

We collaborate with Government agencies and other organisations where there are concerns about significant harm to children, young people and their families. Our staff use general indicators of child abuse and neglect, which can assist in identifying whether a child or young person is being abused or neglected.

Our collaboration aims to improve access to services and strengthen partnerships and early intervention approaches.

Working with Department of Communities (Child Protection)

The Department of Communities (Child Protection) is the lead agency in providing care and protection to children and young people. The Department receives, assesses, investigates and responds to reports of child abuse and neglect and provides statutory intervention when required.

Requests for information from Department of Communities (Child Protection)

The Department of Communities (Child Protection) has the legislative authority to request information from Accordwest and, when this occurs, we will respond immediately.

Safeguarding people who make reports

Reports by workers relating to child abuse or neglect are confidential. The identity of a reporter cannot be disclosed without their permission or unless directed by a judge or magistrate during court proceedings.

Disclosure of information by staff to a law enforcement agency is also authorised if the law enforcement agency is investigating a serious offence against a child or where disclosure is necessary for the protection and safety of the child and any other child.

Confidentiality

All information concerning a report is treated in the strictest confidence. Our workers will not inform parents or caregivers that the Department of Communities (Child Protection) or the Police are investigating an incident of suspected child abuse or neglect. Any person making an inquiry or complaint concerning a report will be referred to Department of Communities (Child Protection) or the Police.

Legislation & Compliance

In undertaking its role in child protection, we are required to comply with the following legislation:

- Australian Privacy Principles
- Children and Community Services Act 2004
- Health Act 1911
- Housing Act 1980
- Ombudsman Act 1974
- Privacy Act 1988
- Residential Tenancies Act 1987

Appeals Process

The making of child protection reports by our workers is not appealable. We will make a report the Department if, during the course of our work, we have reasonable grounds for suspecting a child is at risk of significant harm, or being subjected to any form of abuse or neglect.



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Office hours
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If you are deaf, or have difficulty speaking or hearing English,
we are committed to helping you to access our services.

Accordwest acknowledges the Australian Aboriginal and Torres
Strait Islander peoples as the first inhabitants of the nation and
traditional custodians of the land we live, learn and work.



Agencies for South West Accommodation (ASWA) Inc. trading as Accordwest
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accordwest.com.au

