



Dear Provider

Re: Serious Incident Response Scheme – Home Services

I am writing to you about the Serious Incident Response Scheme (SIRS), which expanded on 1 December 2022.

Information about the SIRS

As you know, the SIRS introduced new incident management and reporting obligations for home services providers. The overall aim of the Scheme, and specifically of these provider obligations, is to help prevent and reduce incidents of abuse and neglect impacting individuals receiving aged care services subsidised by the Australian Government.

A provider's obligations under SIRS, as set out in Part 4B of the *Quality of Care Principles 2014* or under relevant funding agreements, include:

- identifying incidents and near misses
- taking reasonable and timely action to assess and respond to incidents and support those affected
- improving your systems, processes and practices to prevent further incidents
- notifying all reportable incidents to the Commission.

There are eight reportable incident types that are required to be notified to the Commission. These are:

1. unreasonable use of force
2. unlawful sexual contact or inappropriate sexual conduct
3. psychological or emotional abuse
4. unexpected death

5. stealing or financial coercion by a staff member
6. neglect
7. inappropriate use of restrictive practices
8. missing consumer.

You can find more information about these reportable incident types on our website: www.agedcarequality.gov.au/sirs/provider-resources#resources-specific-to-home-services.

We also have a guide to incident management for aged care leaders and workers that you can find on our website: www.agedcarequality.gov.au/sirs/welcome-your-role-sirs.

Early insights on reportable incidents in home services (from analysis of initial data)

From 1 December 2022 to 30 April 2023, we have received 1,468 SIRS notifications from home services providers (Attachment 1).

Most notifications are about neglect. There may be warning signs that a consumer is experiencing neglect. Our fact sheet can help you to identify those warning signs so you can prevent consumers in your care experiencing neglect:

www.agedcarequality.gov.au/resources/sirs-home-services-reportable-incidents-neglect.

The second most common reportable incident is stealing or financial coercion by a staff member. Again, there may be warning signs that a consumer is experiencing this and our fact sheet can help you to identify and respond to warning signs:

www.agedcarequality.gov.au/resources/reportable-incidents-stealing-or-financial-coercion-staff-member.

Some providers are reporting incidents involving unsafe care, missed medication, falls that occur either in the home or in the community during care, and missed shifts. Missed shifts can be considered as a failure to provide care and services. You should assess whether the missed shift, and therefore the failure to provide care and services, could reasonably be expected to have caused harm.

As of 3 May 2023, we had received SIRS notifications from 443 home services providers, out of a total of 1,745 providers identified in the National Approved Provider System (NAPS) between 1 December 2022 and 30 April 2023. This means that 75% of home services providers have not yet notified the Commission of a reportable incident.

While we expect an increase over time in the percentage of providers which have submitted at least one SIRS notification, it is vital for all home services providers to focus on familiarising themselves and complying with their reporting obligations.

If you are a provider that has not yet submitted any SIRS notifications, please review your incident management system to ensure you are capturing and recording all incidents, and also notifying the Commission of the subset that are notifiable incidents. There are resources available on our website to assist you with this:

www.agedcarequality.gov.au/sirs/provider-resources.

Incidents are reported to the Commission via the My Aged Care website. If you have not yet registered with My Aged Care, please follow this link:

www.health.gov.au/resources/apps-and-tools/my-aged-care-service-and-support-portal.

We will be updating the SIRS in home services reporting data in our next quarterly sector performance report which you can access later in 2023 on our website.

For further information about your SIRS responsibilities and reporting obligations, you can:

- email us at sirs@agedcarequality.gov.au
- call us on 1800 081 549
- visit the SIRS section of our website at www.agedcarequality.gov.au/sirs.

Yours sincerely



Ann Wunsch
Executive Director – Approvals and Serious Incident Notifications

27 June 2023

Attachment 1: Summary of SIRS home services notifications (1 December 2022 to 30 April 2023)

ATTACHMENT 1

Summary of SIRS homes services notifications (1 December 2022 to 30 April 2023)
as of 3 May 2023

The home services SIRS notifications by incident type are detailed in the chart below.

