Transcript

Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission

What is the SIRS:

Overview

**Presented by:**

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Aged Care Quality and Safety Commissioner

[*Opening visual of slide with text saying ‘Australian Government with Crest (logo)’, ‘Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission’, ‘Engage’, ‘Empower’, ‘Safeguard’, ‘What is the SIRS:’, ‘Overview’*]

[The visuals during this webinar are of Janet Anderson speaking to camera]

§(Music Playing)§

**Janet Anderson PSM:**

Hello. I’m Janet Anderson, the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commissioner. As the national regulator of aged care the Commission’s fundamental purpose is to make sure that you as approved providers are complying with your legal obligations under the Aged Care Act and most importantly are delivering safe, quality care that respects each individual’s identity, dignity and choice.

As you know these obligations are variously set out in the Aged Care Quality Standards, the Principles and the Charter of Aged Care Rights.

From April this year your obligations to protect and enhance the safety, health, wellbeing and quality of life of aged care consumers will be expanded by the introduction of the Serious Incident Response Scheme or SIRS. SIRS is a new initiative to help prevent and reduce the risk of incidents of abuse and neglect in residential aged care.

There is widespread support in the aged care sector and the wider community for the introduction of SIRS to keep older people in care safe. This short video is part of a series that explains how the Serious Incident Response Scheme will work in practice.

There are two components to SIRS.

[*Visual of text saying ‘1. Incident management obligations’*]

First there are incident management obligations which require providers to have appropriate systems in place to effectively manage and work to prevent incidents.

[*Visual of text saying ‘2. Reportable incident obligations’*]

Second there are reportable incident obligations which detail requirements relating to incidents affecting consumers that must be reported to the Commission.

Providers must have an effective incident management system in place by the 1st of April 2021. An effective incident management system will help to prevent incidents from occurring and if an incident does occur will support providers to respond in a timely manner. An incident management system will also support a continuous improvement process and ensure that residents have the support they need.

The reportable incident obligations under SIRS require approved providers to report a broader range of incidents to the Commission than under compulsory reporting arrangements. Under the longstanding compulsory reporting arrangements you have been required to report three categories of known, suspected or alleged incidents affecting a resident. One, unreasonable use of force. Two, unlawful sexual contact. And three, unexplained absence of a resident.

Under SIRS more categories of reportable incidents have been added.

[*Visual of text saying ‘Unreasonable use of force’, ‘Unlawful sexual contact or inappropriate sexual conduct’, ‘Unexplained absence from care’*]

The expanded list again starts with unreasonable use of force, unlawful sexual contact or inappropriate sexual conduct, and unexplained absence from care.

[*Visual of text saying ‘Psychological or emotional abuse’, ‘Unexpected death’, ‘Stealing or financial coercion by a staff member’*]

The new list also includes psychological or emotional abuse, unexpected death, stealing or financial coercion by a staff member, neglect and inappropriate physical or chemical restraint.

[*Visual of text saying ‘Neglect’, ‘Inappropriate physical or chemical restraint’*]

In total there will be eight categories of reportable incidents under SIRS. Importantly in every one of these categories any incidents where the known, suspected or alleged perpetrator has a cognitive impairment must also be reported. Of course if the incident is of a criminal nature providers must also report it to the police.

Moving to the timetable for introduction of the SIRS requirements.

[*Visual of text saying ‘From 1 April 2021’, ‘Providers to report all Priority 1 incidents’*]

From the 1st of April 2021 providers must report any Priority 1 incidents within 24 hours of becoming aware of an alleged, suspected or known incident. Priority 1 incidents are reportable incidents that have caused or could reasonably have been expected to have caused a consumer physical or psychological injury or discomfort that requires medical or psychological treatment to resolve.

[*Visual of text saying ‘From 1 October 2021’, ‘Providers to report all Priority 1 and Priority 2 incidents’*]

From the 1st of October 2021 providers must also report any Priority 2 incidents within 30 days of becoming aware that the incident has been alleged, suspected or has occurred. A Priority 2 incident is any reportable incident that is not a Priority 1.

If you’re a residential aged care provider you must respond to and manage all incidents whether they involve consumers, visitors, volunteers, staff or anyone else. You can do this most effectively using your incident management system. And if the incident is reportable you must also notify the Commission.

The requirements under SIRS build on processes that many aged care providers already have in place.

The SIRS requirements are designed to strengthen your capability to prevent, manage and resolve incidents and in so doing to protect the people in your care, keep them safe and support them to enjoy the best possible experience and outcomes of care.

The Commission is here to help you understand your obligations under SIRS and to provide relevant information and resources you can use to ensure your compliance with those obligations. To access the Commission’s guidance materials and the other videos in this series, please visit our website.

[*Visual of text saying ‘www.agedcarequality.gov.au/sirs’*]

You can also find online learning activities about SIRS on our Aged Care Learning Information Solution, ALIS.

[*Visual of text saying ‘learning.agedcarequality.gov.au’*]

§(Music Playing)§

[*Closing visual of slide with text saying ‘Australian Government with Crest (logo)’, ‘Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission’, ‘Engage’, ‘Empower’, ‘Safeguard’, ‘www.agedcarequality.gov.au/sirs’*]

[End of Transcript]