INCIDENT REPORTING AND INVESTIGATION PROCEDURE

PRN-76: Incident Reporting and Investigation Procedure
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Trading/Business Name: CAREHOPES
Company Registration Number: 15556946
SIC Code: 88100 – Social Work Activities Without Accommodation for the Elderly and Disabled
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Version Number: V01 20260815
Date of Review: (August 2026)

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1. Purpose

This procedure provides clear guidance for employees and volunteers on identifying, reporting, recording, managing, and investigating incidents that occur during organisational activities.

The organisation is committed to promoting a culture of openness, transparency, accountability, and learning.

This procedure aims to:

- Protect service users, employees, and volunteers.
- Ensure incidents are reported promptly.
- Support effective investigations.
- Reduce the likelihood of recurrence.
- Promote learning and service improvement.
- Meet legal and organisational requirements.

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2. Scope

This procedure applies to:

- Employees
- Volunteers
- Managers
- Directors

- Trustees
- Agency workers
- Students and placements

It applies to incidents occurring during:

- Home visits
- Community activities
- Wellbeing services
- Volunteer activities
- Organisational meetings
- Training events
- Remote working activities

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3. Definition of an Incident

An incident is any event or circumstance that results in, or could have resulted in:

- Harm to a person.
- Damage to property.
- Loss of information.
- Service disruption.
- Safeguarding concerns.
- Reputational damage.
- Financial loss.

Incidents may be actual events or near misses.

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4. Types of Incidents

Examples include:

Health and Safety Incidents

- Slips, trips and falls.
- Injuries.

- Accidents.
- Medical emergencies.

Safeguarding Incidents

- Abuse disclosures.
- Neglect concerns.
- Financial exploitation.
- Self-neglect concerns.

Security Incidents

- Theft.
- Criminal damage.
- Unauthorised access.

Information Incidents

- Data breaches.
- Loss of records.
- Confidentiality breaches.

Behavioural Incidents

- Aggressive behaviour.
- Threatening behaviour.
- Harassment.
- Discrimination.

Operational Incidents

- Service disruptions.
- Missed visits.
- Communication failures.

Near Misses

Events that could have caused harm but did not.

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5. Key Principles

The organisation's approach to incident management is based upon:

Safety

Protecting people from harm.

Timeliness

Reporting concerns promptly.

Accuracy

Maintaining clear and factual records.

Learning

Using incidents to improve practice.

Accountability

Ensuring responsibilities are understood.

Fairness

Investigating concerns objectively.

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6. Immediate Response to an Incident

When an incident occurs:

Step 1

Ensure immediate safety.

Step 2

Provide assistance where appropriate.

Step 3

Contact emergency services if required.

Step 4

Inform a manager.

Step 5

Preserve relevant evidence where appropriate.

Step 6

Complete an incident report.

Safety always takes priority over documentation.

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7. Emergency Situations

If an incident involves immediate danger or serious injury:

- Call **999** immediately.
- Follow emergency service instructions.
- Move to a safe location where possible.
- Notify management as soon as practicable.

Emergency action should never be delayed.

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8. Reporting an Incident

All incidents should be reported as soon as possible.

The employee or volunteer should:

- Notify their manager.
- Complete an Incident Report Form.
- Provide factual information.
- Submit the report within required timescales.

Serious incidents should be reported immediately.

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9. Incident Reporting Timescales

Incident Type	Reporting Timescale
Serious injury	Immediately
Safeguarding concern	Immediately
Data breach	Immediately
Threats or violence	Immediately

Significant service disruption	Same day
Minor incident	Within 24 hours
Near miss	Within 24 hours

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10. Completing an Incident Report

Incident reports should include:

- Date and time.
- Location.
- Persons involved.
- Description of events.
- Actions taken.
- Witness details.
- Immediate outcomes.
- Follow-up actions required.

Reports should be:

- Accurate.
- Objective.
- Clear.
- Completed promptly.

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11. Recording Standards

Employees and volunteers should:

Record Facts

Describe what happened.

Record Observations

Include relevant observations.

Avoid Assumptions

Do not speculate.

Use Respectful Language

Maintain professionalism.

Sign and Date Records

Where applicable.

Good records support effective investigations.

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12. Reporting Safeguarding Incidents

Where an incident involves safeguarding concerns:

- Follow the Safeguarding Reporting and Escalation Procedure.
- Notify the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately.
- Complete an incident record.
- Cooperate with safeguarding actions.

Safeguarding concerns must always be treated as a priority.

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13. Reporting Health and Safety Incidents

Accidents, injuries, and hazards should be reported promptly.

This includes:

- Employee injuries.
- Volunteer injuries.
- Service user injuries.
- Dangerous occurrences.
- Environmental hazards.

Managers will determine whether additional reporting or investigation is required.

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14. Reporting Data and Confidentiality Incidents

Where information has been:

- Lost.

- Stolen.
- Shared incorrectly.
- Accessed without authority.

The incident must be reported immediately to management.

Relevant data protection procedures should be followed.

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15. Manager Responsibilities Following Notification

Managers receiving an incident report should:

Review Immediate Risks

Ensure ongoing safety.

Assess Severity

Determine level of response required.

Implement Controls

Reduce further risk.

Decide Whether Investigation is Required

Based upon seriousness and potential impact.

Maintain Records

Ensure documentation is complete.

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16. Incident Classification

Incidents may be classified as:

Low-Level Incident

Limited impact and low risk.

Moderate Incident

Requires management review and follow-up.

Significant Incident

Involves substantial risk, harm, or safeguarding concerns.

Serious Incident

Requires immediate management involvement and potentially external reporting.

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17. Incident Investigation

An investigation may be required where:

- Harm has occurred.
- Risks remain unresolved.
- Safeguarding concerns exist.
- Serious complaints arise.
- Significant learning opportunities are identified.

Investigations should be proportionate to the seriousness of the incident.

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18. Objectives of an Investigation

The purpose of an investigation is to:

- Establish facts.
- Understand causes.
- Identify risks.
- Determine whether procedures were followed.
- Identify lessons learned.
- Prevent recurrence.

Investigations are intended to promote learning and improvement.

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19. Investigation Process

Step 1

Review incident report.

Step 2

Gather additional information.

Step 3

Interview relevant individuals where appropriate.

Step 4

Review records and documentation.

Step 5

Identify contributory factors.

Step 6

Determine actions required.

Step 7

Complete investigation report.

Step 8

Implement improvements.

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20. Evidence Collection

Relevant evidence may include:

- Witness statements.
- Incident reports.
- Photographs.
- Risk assessments.
- Communication records.
- Safeguarding records.
- Training records.

Evidence should be retained securely.

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21. Witness Information

Where witnesses are present:

- Accounts should be obtained promptly.
- Statements should be factual.
- Confidentiality should be maintained.
- Records should be securely stored.

Witnesses should not be pressured or influenced.

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22. Root Cause Analysis

Managers may consider:

- What happened?
- Why did it happen?
- Could it have been prevented?
- Were policies followed?
- Are additional controls required?

Understanding underlying causes supports meaningful improvement.

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23. Learning and Improvement Actions

Following investigation, actions may include:

- Additional training.
- Review of procedures.
- Risk assessment updates.
- Service improvements.
- Enhanced supervision.
- Communication improvements.

Actions should be monitored and reviewed.

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24. Serious Incidents

Serious incidents may include:

- Death of a service user during service activity.
- Serious injury.
- Major safeguarding incident.
- Significant data breach.
- Criminal behaviour.

- Serious threat or violence.

Directors should be informed immediately of serious incidents.

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25. Supporting Employees and Volunteers

Following an incident, support may include:

- Debrief meetings.
- Wellbeing discussions.
- Supervision.
- Additional training.
- Management support.

The organisation recognises that some incidents may be distressing.

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26. Incident Reporting Flowchart

Incident Occurs

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Ensure Safety

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Emergency?

Yes → Contact 999 → Notify Manager

No → Continue

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Complete Incident Report

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Manager Review

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Investigation Required?

Yes → Conduct Investigation

No → Record and Close

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Action Plan Developed

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Review Outcomes

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Close Incident

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27. Case Study

Scenario: Fall During Community Activity

A service user trips while attending a community wellbeing event and suffers a minor injury.

Action Taken

- First aid assistance is provided.
- The service user is supported appropriately.
- A manager is informed.
- An Incident Report Form is completed.
- The venue is inspected.
- Risk assessments are reviewed.

Outcome

The individual recovers fully and improvements are made to event safety arrangements.

Learning Point

Prompt reporting and investigation help improve safety and prevent similar incidents.

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28. Responsibilities

Directors

Responsible for:

- Oversight of serious incidents.
- Monitoring organisational risks.

- Supporting organisational learning.

Managers

Responsible for:

- Reviewing incidents.
- Conducting investigations.
- Implementing improvements.
- Monitoring outcomes.

Employees and Volunteers

Responsible for:

- Reporting incidents promptly.
- Completing accurate records.
- Cooperating with investigations.
- Following safety procedures.

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29. Monitoring and Quality Assurance

The organisation will monitor:

- Number and type of incidents.
- Safeguarding incidents.
- Near misses.
- Investigation outcomes.
- Action plan completion.
- Training needs identified.
- Trends and recurring themes.

Monitoring findings will be used to support continuous improvement and risk reduction.

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30. Review Arrangements

This procedure will be reviewed:

- Annually.

- Following serious incidents.
- Following investigations.
- Following legislative changes.
- Following organisational reviews.

Related Policies

- Incident Reporting Policy
- Adult Safeguarding Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Lone Working Policy
- Risk Assessment Policy
- Records Management and Record Keeping Policy
- Data Protection and GDPR Policy
- Employee Wellbeing Policy
- Business Continuity and Emergency Planning Policy