leading quality in community services

Information Sharing Guidelines

1. Purpose

These Guidelines give effect to ACIA External 046 – Prevention and Management of Adverse Events in Community Care. They set out clear, practical requirements for how information is identified, escalated, shared, stored and used between ACIA, Certification Bodies (Conformity Assessment Bodied - CABs), and Scheme Funders.

The Guidelines are designed to support early risk identification, participant safety, procedural fairness for providers, and consistent, lawful decision-making across the ACIS Scheme.

2. Scope

These Guidelines apply to:

- All ACIA staff, contractors and representatives involved in certification, surveillance, quality assurance or provider support
- All CABs operating under the ACIS Scheme
- Information shared with Scheme Funders in connection with ACIS certification, surveillance, adverse events or serious risk reviews

These Guidelines apply to both identified and deidentified information.

3. Legislative and Policy Framework

Information sharing under these Guidelines must comply with:

- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
- Relevant State and Territory privacy legislation
- ACIA External 031 - The Australian Community Industry Standards (ACIS)
- ACIA External 032 - The Australian Community Industry Certification Scheme (ACICS)
- ACIA External 046 - Prevention and Management of Adverse Events in Community Care Policy

4. Guiding Principles

All information sharing will be guided by the following principles:

- **Lawfulness and Necessity** – Information will only be shared where it is lawful, necessary and directly related to managing safety, quality or certification risk
- **Proportionality** – The amount and sensitivity of information shared will be proportionate to the level of identified risk
- **Timeliness** – Information relating to serious or emerging risks must be shared promptly to enable early intervention
- **Accuracy and Objectivity** – Information shared must be factual, evidence based and clearly distinguish findings from allegations or preliminary concerns
- **Procedural Fairness** – Where appropriate, providers will be afforded procedural fairness consistent with ACIS processes
- **Confidentiality and Security** – Information will be handled securely and only disclosed to parties with a legitimate role in risk management

5. Information Shared by Certification Bodies

CABs must notify ACIA of serious or emerging risks within the required timeframes.

Immediate notification, within 24–48 hours, is required for:

- Serious or imminent risk to participant safety or wellbeing
- Evidence or credible allegations of abuse, neglect or exploitation
- Unauthorised restrictive practices
- Serious governance failure impacting service delivery
- Major nonconformities where there is a high likelihood of harm
- Any matter that may warrant suspension or revocation of ACIS certification

Prompt notification, within 5 business days, is required for:

- Repeated or systemic nonconformities
- Emerging patterns of poor practice identified across audits
- Significant deterioration in provider capability, staffing or controls
- Financial viability concerns impacting service continuity

Where practicable, CABs should provide:

- Provider name and ACIS certification status
- Nature of the risk or nonconformity
- Evidence and audit findings supporting the concern
- Initial risk rating and rationale
- Immediate actions taken or recommended

CABs must also follow ACIA External 045 – Audit Report Timeframes Policy.

6. Information Shared by Scheme Funders

Scheme Funders may share information with ACIA to support risk-based certification and audit planning.

This may include:

- Deidentified incident and adverse event trend data
- Notifications of serious adverse events involving ACIS-certified providers
- Intelligence relating to provider conduct, viability or systemic risk
- Requests for certification review, surveillance audits or targeted assurance activity

Serious or high-risk matters should be shared as soon as practicable. Routine or trend-based information should be shared prior to scheduled audits or through agreed periodic reporting.

7. Information Shared by ACIA

ACIA may share information with Scheme Funders where relevant and lawful, including:

- CAB audit outcomes and risk assessments
- Certification decisions, conditions, suspensions or revocations
- Escalation advice regarding significant or imminent risks
- Outcomes of risk reviews or surveillance audits

Only information necessary to manage safety, quality or scheme risk will be disclosed.

ACIA may provide CABs with:

- Relevant intelligence or concerns raised by Scheme Funders
- Information to inform audit scope, focus or timing
- Deidentified sector trends or emerging risk themes

8. Managing Serious Risks and Adverse Events

Where information indicates a serious risk, ACIA will coordinate with the CAB and relevant Scheme Funder.

Possible actions may include early surveillance audits, certification conditions, suspension or revocation.

Information sharing during this process will be ongoing, targeted and documented.

9. Deidentified Data and Sector Learning

ACIA may:

- Aggregate and deidentify information for trend analysis
- Share lessons learned with CABs and Scheme Funders
- Publish high-level insights to support sector improvement

No information that could reasonably identify an individual participant or provider will be published.

10. Record Keeping and Security

All information exchanges must be appropriately documented.

Records must be stored securely in accordance with ACIA's information management policies.

Access must be restricted to authorised personnel.

11. Review and Continuous Improvement

These Guidelines will be reviewed alongside ACIA External 046 – Prevention and Management of Adverse Events in Community Care Policy, or earlier if required.

These Guidelines may be updated in response to legislative change, stakeholder feedback or emerging risks.

Feedback from CABs and Scheme Funders will inform continuous improvement.

12. Related Documents

These Guidelines should be read in conjunction with relevant legislation, standards and ACIA documents, including:

- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
- Relevant State and Territory privacy legislation
- ACIA External 031 - The Australian Community Industry Standards (ACIS)
- ACIA External 032 - The Australian Community Industry Certification Scheme (ACICS)
- ACIA External 046 - Prevention and Management of Adverse Events in Community Care
- ACIA External 045 - Audit Report Timeframes Policy