

Whistleblower Policy and Procedure

1. Purpose and Scope

The policy has been put in place to ensure any concerns raised regarding any misconduct or improper behaviour or circumstances in relation to Belong at Home's business is dealt with effectively, securely, appropriately, and in accordance with the Corporations Act 2001 and Aged Care Act 2024.

This policy applies to any person who is, or has been, any of the following with respect to the Company:

- Worker (including paid employees, volunteers and Board Members);
- Contractors and Associated Providers (including sub-contractors and employees of contractors);
- Supplier (including employees of suppliers);
- Consultant;
- Auditor;
- Any stakeholder of Belong at Home including Relative, dependant, spouse, or dependant of a spouse of any of the above.

2. Definitions

Whistleblower	<p>A whistleblower is a person who exposes information or activity within an organisation that is deemed illegal, unethical, or not in the public interest. This can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fraud • Corruption • Abuse • Health and safety violations • Environmental damage • Misuse of public funds • Violation of laws or regulations.
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3. Policy Statement

At Belong at Home ("**the Company**") we are guided by our company values. These values are the foundation of how we conduct ourselves and interact with each other, our clients, board members, suppliers, volunteers and any other stakeholders. The Company is committed to ensuring company compliance and promoting ethical culture by observing the highest standards of fair dealing, honesty and integrity in our business activities.

Belong at Home encourages the reporting of any instances of suspected unethical, illegal, corrupt, fraudulent or undesirable conduct involving the Company's business and provides protections and measures to individuals who make a disclosure in relation to such conduct without fear of victimisation or reprisal.

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4. Reportable Conduct

You may make a report or disclosure under this policy if you have reasonable grounds to believe that a board member, worker, volunteer, contractor, supplier or consultant or any other person who has business dealings with Belong at Home has engaged in conduct (Reportable Conduct) which is:

- Dishonest, fraudulent or corrupt;
- Illegal (such as theft, dealing in or use of illicit drugs, violence or threatened violence and criminal damage to property);
- Unethical including any breach of the Company's policies such as the Code of Conduct;
- Oppressive or grossly negligent;
- Potentially damaging to the Company, its workers or a third party;
- Misconduct or an improper state of affairs;
- A danger, or represents a danger to the public or financial system;
- Harassment, discrimination, victimisation or bullying.

Any disclosures that do not fall within the definition of Reportable Conduct, will not qualify for protection under the Act. It will be at the Company's discretion whether it considers there is a reasonable suspicion that the Reportable Conduct is occurring and/or whether the conduct constitutes "misconduct or improper state of affairs" under the Act.

For the avoidance of doubt, Reportable Conduct does not include personal work-related grievances. A personal work-related grievance is a grievance about any matter in relation to a staff member's current or former employment, having implications (or tending to have implications) for that person personally and that do not have broader implications for the Company. Examples of personal work-related grievances are as follows:

- An interpersonal conflict between the staff member and another worker;
- A decision relating to the engagement, transfer or promotion of the staff member;
- A decision relating to the terms and conditions of engagement of the staff member;
- A decision to suspend or terminate the engagement of the staff member, or otherwise to discipline the staff member.

Personal work-related grievances should be reported to your manager or in accordance with the Company's Grievance Policy.

5. Responsibilities – Making a Disclosure

Belong at Home relies on its workers maintaining a culture of honest and ethical behaviour. Accordingly, if you become aware of any Reportable Conduct, it is expected that you will make a disclosure under this policy.

There are several ways in which you may report or disclose any issue or behaviour which you consider to be Reportable Conduct.

Internal Reporting

For internal reporting it is recommended that you make an appointment with a Whistleblower Protection Officer where possible.

You may disclose any Reportable Conduct to the Whistleblower Protection Officers listed:

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People & Culture Manager

Sheree Jones

Phone – 08 9720 5100

Sheree.jones@belongathome.org.au

Chief Executive Officer

Michelle De Ronchi

Phone – 08 9720 5100

Michelle.deronchi@belongathome.org.au

Finance Manager

Octavia Woodfield

Phone – 08 9720 5100

Octavia.woodfield@belongathome.org.au

You can make a disclosure outside of business hours by emailing values@belongathome.org.au, which will be kept confidential where only the People and Culture Manager will have access.

You are also encouraged to contact either of these two Executive staff to obtain any additional information you may require before making a disclosure or for any clarification regarding this policy.

If you are unable to use any of the above reporting channels, a disclosure can be made to an “eligible recipient” within the Company. Eligible recipients include:

- Board Members;
- Executive Managers.

The Whistleblower eligible recipient will safeguard your interests and will ensure the integrity of the reporting mechanism.

External Reporting

People can make a report to:

- The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission
- The Department of Health, Disability and Ageing
- a registered provider
- a responsible person of a registered provider
- an aged care worker of a registered provider
- a police officer
- an independent aged care advocate.

If someone makes a report, they will:

- be protected from any negative results that come from making the report;
- have their identities or identifying information protected, with some exceptions – for example, where it is necessary to share information with the ACQSC or a lawyer, or to prevent a serious threat to a person or people.

6. Anonymity

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When making a disclosure, you may do so anonymously. It may be difficult for the Company to properly investigate the matters disclosed if a report is submitted anonymously and therefore the Company encourages you to share your identity when making a disclosure, however you are not required to do so.

Where a disclosure has been made externally and you provide your contact details, those contact details will only be provided to an Executive Manager with your consent.

7. Public Interest and Emergency Disclosure

Protections will not be offered to personnel of the organisation who report internal wrongdoing to a journalist unless it can be established that the disclosure was made as a public interest disclosure or an emergency disclosure, in accordance with the terms of the Corporations Act.

You can only make an emergency disclosure if:

- you have reasonable grounds to believe that the information concerns a **substantial and imminent danger** to the health or safety of one or more persons, or to the natural environment;
- you have given written notification, including sufficient information to identify the previous disclosure to the authority to which the previous disclosure was made that you intend on making an emergency disclosure; and
- the extent of information disclosed is no greater than is necessary to inform the recipient of the substantial and imminent danger.

8. Investigation

The Company will investigate all matters reported under this policy as soon as practicable after the matter has been reported. The People & Culture Manager will investigate the matter and where necessary, appoint an external investigator to assist in conducting the investigation (if required).

All investigations will be conducted in a fair, independent and timely manner and all reasonable efforts will be made to preserve confidentiality during the investigation.

If the report is not anonymous, the People & Culture Manager or external investigator will contact you, by your preferred method of communication to discuss the investigation process and any other matters that are relevant to the investigation.

Where you have chosen to remain anonymous, your identity will not be disclosed to the investigator or to any other person and the Company will conduct the investigation based on the information provided to it.

Where possible, the People & Culture Manager will provide you with feedback on the progress and expected timeframes of the investigation. The person against whom any allegations have been made will also be informed of the concerns and will be provided with an opportunity to respond (unless there are any restrictions or other reasonable basis for not doing so).

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To the extent permitted by law, the People & Culture Manager may inform you and/or a person against whom allegations have been made of the findings. The Company will document the findings in a report however, any report will remain the property of the Company and will only be shared with you or any person against whom the allegations have been made if the Company deems it appropriate.

9. Protection of Whistleblowers

The Company is committed to ensuring that any person who makes a disclosure is treated fairly and does not suffer detriment and that confidentiality is preserved in respect of all matters raised under this policy.

10. Protection from Legal Action

You will not be subject to any civil, criminal or administrative legal action (including disciplinary action) for making a disclosure under this policy or participating in any investigation.

Any information you provide will not be admissible in any criminal or civil proceedings other than for proceedings in respect of the falsity of the information.

11. Protection against Detrimental Conduct

The Company (or any person engaged by the Company) will not engage in 'Detrimental Conduct' against you if you have made a disclosure under this policy.

Detrimental Conduct includes actual or threatened conduct such as the following (without limitation):

- Termination of employment;
- Injury to employment including demotion, disciplinary action;
- Alternation of position or duties;
- Discrimination;
- Harassment, bullying or intimidation;
- Victimisation;
- Harm or injury including psychological harm;
- Damage to a person's property;
- Damage to a person's reputation;
- Damage to a person's business or financial position; or
- Any other damage to a person.

The Company also strictly prohibits all forms of Detrimental Conduct against any person who is involved in an investigation of a matter disclosed under the policy in response to their involvement in that investigation.

The Company will take all reasonable steps to protect you from Detrimental Conduct and will take necessary action where such conduct is identified. If appropriate, the Company may allow you to perform your duties from another location or reassign you to another role (at the same level) or make other modifications to your workplace or your duties to protect you from the risk of detriment.

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If you are subjected to Detrimental Conduct as a result of making a disclosure under this policy or participating in an investigation, you should inform the People & Culture Manager or eligible recipient in accordance with the reporting guidelines outlined above.

You may also seek remedies including compensation, civil penalties or reinstatement if:

- You suffer loss, damage or injury because of a disclosure; and
- The Company failed to take reasonable precautions and exercise due diligence to prevent any Detrimental Conduct.

12. Protection of Confidentiality

All information received from you will be treated confidentially and sensitively. If you report on an anonymous basis, you will still qualify for the protections in this policy.

You will not be required to provide your name when making a disclosure. To make a disclosure on an anonymous basis, it is recommended that you use a pseudonym and contact the Whistleblowing Protection Officers in the manner outlined above.

If you make a disclosure under this policy, your identity (or any information which would likely to identify you) will only be shared if:

- You give your consent to share that information; or
- The disclosure is allowed or required by law (for example where the concern is raised with a lawyer for the purposes of obtaining legal advice); or
- The concern is reported to the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC), the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (APRA), the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) or the Australian Federal Police (AFP);
- Where it is necessary to disclose information for the effective investigation of the matter, and this is likely to lead to your identification, all reasonable steps will be taken to reduce the risk that you will be identified. For example, all personal information or reference to you witnessing an event will be redacted from any report, you will be referred to in a gender-neutral context, where possible you will be contacted to help identify certain aspects of your disclosure that could inadvertently identify you. Any disclosure under this policy will also be handled and investigated by qualified staff.

The Company will also take the following measures for protecting your identity:

- All paper/ electronic documents and materials relating to disclosures will be stored securely;
- Access to all information relating to a disclosure will be limited to those directly involved in managing and investigating the disclosure;
- Only a restricted number of people who are directly involved in handling and investigating a disclosure will be made aware of your identity (subject to your consent) or information that is likely to lead to your identification;
- Communications and documents relating to the investigation of a disclosure will not be sent to an email address or to a printer that can be accessed by other staff; and
- Each person who is involved in handling and investigating a disclosure will be reminded about the confidentiality requirements, including that an unauthorised disclosure of your identity may be a criminal offence.

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If you are concerned that your identity has been disclosed in relation to a disclosure, and without your consent, you should inform a Whistleblower Protections Officer or eligible recipient immediately.

13. Support Available

Any worker who makes a disclosure under this policy or is implicated as a result of a disclosure that is made may access the Company's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) which is a free and confidential counselling service via Clear Health Psychology.

www.clearhealthpsychology.com.au or phone 08 9424 8177.

Where appropriate, the Company may also appoint an independent support person from the Human Resources team to deal with any ongoing concerns you may have.

You may also access third party support providers such as Lifeline (13 11 14) and Beyond Blue (1300 224 636) for support.

14. Other Matters

Any breach of this policy will be taken seriously and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

In so far as this policy imposes any obligations on the Company, those obligations are not contractual and do not give rise to any contractual rights. To the extent that this policy describes benefits and entitlements for workers, they are discretionary in nature and are also not intended to be contractual. The terms and conditions of employment that are intended to be contractual are set out in a workers written employment contract.

This policy will be provided to all workers (including employees, volunteers and board members) of the Company upon commencement of their employment or engagement and will also be available via Employment Hero. The policy is also available to persons outside the organisation and can be accessed on the Company website.

The Company may invite workers to attend training sessions to ensure ongoing education regarding the application of the policy.

The Company may unilaterally introduce, vary, remove or replace this policy at any time. Workers are encouraged to read this policy in conjunction with other relevant Company policies.

15. Related Documents

- Corporations Act 2001
- Aged Care Act 2024
- Strengthened Aged Care Standard 2
- Statement of Rights for Aged Care
- Statement of Principles for Aged Care
- Incident Management Policy and Procedure
- Feedback and Complaints Management Policy and Procedure

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