

OFFICIAL

SA Health

Policy

Partnering with Carers Policy

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Government
of South Australia

SA Health

1. Name of Policy

Partnering with Carers

2. Policy statement

This policy sets out the mandatory requirements to enable and support carers within the public healthcare system, to assist carers to feel empowered and recognised for their individual needs and requirements of the role they perform in alignment with the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards, the [Carers Recognition Act 2005](#) and SA Carers Charter.

3. Applicability

This policy applies to all employees and contracted staff of SA Health; that is all employees and contracted staff of the Department for Health and Wellbeing (DHW), Local Health Networks (LHNs) including State-Wide services aligned with those networks and SA Ambulance Service (SAAS).

Out of scope

This policy does not apply to employed care workers. A person is not considered a carer under this policy if they provide support and assistance under a contract for the provision of services or in the course of voluntary work for a non-government organisation, or as part of the requirements of an education or training course.

4. Policy principles

SA Health's approach to partnering with carers is underpinned by the following principles:

- > We embrace carers as partners in health care.
- > We recognise the different roles of carers.
- > We treat carers with respect, dignity, and compassion.
- > We support carers both in their caring role and in maintaining their own health and wellbeing.
- > We provide carers with the right information at the right time, about the care provided for the person they are caring for.
- > We provide guidance and direction to help carers navigate the health system and to make informed decisions about the care that is required.
- > We ensure services are flexible to the individual circumstances and needs of carers and the people they care for.
- > We acknowledge carers' unique long-term perspectives.
- > We support carers as informed advocates for a better health system.

5. Policy requirements

Each health service must implement systems and processes to identify and recognise carers as partners in health care in accordance with:

- > The [Carers Recognition Act 2005](#)
- > [SA Carers Charter](#)
- > [Partnering with Carers key priorities](#)
- > [SA Health Consumer, Carer and Community Engagement Strategic Framework \(the Framework\) and Engaging with Consumers, Carers and the Community Guide and Resources](#), and the

- > [SA Health Consumer, Carer and Community Feedback and Complaints Management Strategic Framework, Guide and Resources](#)

DHW, LHNs and SAAS must ensure that carers are:

- > Partners in decisions and choices about the individual care and treatment of the person they care for.
- > Recognised and acknowledged as part of the treating team from the commencement of care and treatment.
- > Treated with respect, dignity and compassion.
- > Informed if something goes wrong and receive an explanation, apology, plan for next steps and support as appropriate.
- > Given the opportunity to provide feedback in accordance with the Consumer Feedback and Complaints Management Strategic Framework.
- > Supported and guided through the public health system.
- > Provided with services that support their role in caring for patients within the public health system.
- > Referred to services provided by carer support organisations outside of SA Health.
- > Provided access to information that enables them to fulfil their role.
- > Partners in the planning, implementation and evaluation of services.
- > Actively engaged with to identify their individual needs, and to develop appropriate services.

DHW, LHNs and SAAS must ensure that:

- > The experience and contribution of carers is captured and evaluated through existing systems.
- > Flexible employment processes are established and offered to support SA Health employees who are carers, as outlined in the SA Health Flexible Workplaces Policy and Guideline.
- > Information sharing in the interests of good health, safety and wellbeing outcomes for consumers complies with the [Privacy Policy](#).

Reporting

- > DHW must report annually on compliance or non-compliance with the [Carers Recognition Act 2005](#) through the SA Health Annual Report (Government SA Report).
- > LHNs must report annually on compliance or non-compliance with the [Carers Recognition Act 2005](#) through their LHN Annual Report (Government SA Report).
- > LHNs must report on compliance with the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards.

6. Mandatory related documents

The following documents must be complied with under this Policy, to the extent that they are relevant:

- > [Consumer, Carer and Community Engagement Strategic Framework and Guide](#)
- > [Consumer, Carer and Community Feedback and Complaints Management Strategic Framework and Guide](#)
- > [NSQHS Standard Partnering with Carers](#)
- > [Privacy Policy](#)
- > [South Australian Carers Recognition Act 2005](#) including [SA Carers Charter](#)
- > [SA Health Flexible Workplaces Policy and Guideline](#)

7. Supporting information

- > [Carers SA webpage](#)
- > [Department of Health and Aged Care webpage](#)
- > [SA Health Aboriginal Health webpage](#)
- > [SA Health Partnering with Carers webpage](#)
- > [SA Health Consumer, Carer and Community Engagement webpage](#)
- > [SA Health Consumer, Carer and Community Feedback and Complaints Management webpage](#)
- > [SA Health Mental Health Carers webpage](#)
- > [SA Health Partnering with Cultural and Linguistically Diverse Consumers webpage](#)

8. Definitions

- > **Advocate:** means a person who advocates for the person they care for and has the requisite experience to speak as an informed carer.
- > **Carer:** means, under the [Carers Recognition Act 2005](#), a person who provides care and support for their parent, partner, child or friend who has a disability, is unable to perform daily tasks due to frailty, or who has a chronic mental or physical illness. Carers can include parents and guardians caring for children and children caring for parents and guardians. An individual is not a carer merely because he or she is the spouse, de facto partner, parent, guardian, child or other relative of an individual, or lives with an individual who requires care.

In the context of Aboriginal communities and kinship systems, caring is a collaborative act with many people helping care for a single person. Because of this, people looking after family and friends often do not recognise themselves as Carers. Aboriginal Carers provide unpaid care and support to family members and friends who have a disability, mental illness, chronic condition, terminal illness or who are frail aged.

Carers are not salaried in their caring role however they may receive an allowance from the Australian Government.

- > **Consumer:** means patients and potential patients.
- > **Representative:** means a person who represents a carer or support organisation or group and is authorised to speak on behalf of that organisation or group.
- > **Responsible Person:** means a person close to the patient who is available and willing to consent to or refuse consent to health care when the patient has impaired decision-making capacity. The Advance Care Directives Policy provides further detail on Responsible Persons.

9. Compliance

This policy is binding on those to whom it applies or relates. Implementation at a local level may be subject to audit/assessment. The Domain Custodian must work towards the establishment of systems which demonstrate compliance with this policy, in accordance with the requirements of the [Risk Management, Integrated Compliance and Internal Audit Policy](#).

Any instance of non-compliance with this policy must be reported to the Domain Custodian for the Clinical Governance Safety and Quality Policy Domain and the Domain Custodian for the Risk, Compliance and Audit Policy Domain.

10. Document ownership

Policy owner: Domain Custodian for the Clinical Governance Safety and Quality Policy Domain

Title: Partnering with Carers Policy

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11. Document history

Version	Date approved	Approved by	Amendment notes
2.0	18/12/2023	Chief Executive, DHW	Amended to align with new Policy template and requirements. Reviewed with content changes being non-material in nature by providing links to additional information.
1.0	17/08/2015	Clinical Engagement and Strategy	Original policy