



Allied Health Collaborative Arrangements with External Service Providers Guideline

1. Guiding Principles

This document aims to provide guidelines for collaborative allied health service arrangements between the WA Country Health Service (WACHS) and external allied health service providers in country Western Australia for all eligible, in-scope WACHS allied health services. The guideline aims to:

- inform WACHS allied health employees of their responsibilities where a similar external service provides a service to the local area
- maintain an effective working relationship and communication between all allied health service providers
- ensure timely communication and consultation with allied health consumers
- ensure responsive, flexible service options are available to meet the needs of individual consumers and ensure continuity of care
- facilitate improved service access and choice for consumers.

2. Guideline

The following is to be considered in developing such collaborative arrangements:

2.1 Consumer Access

- At the time of initial contact, clients are to be advised of the availability of an option to access services from external service providers. All external service providers providing services to the local area are to be equally promoted, either verbally or as a written list where information is available. Consideration of conflict of interest is important if the person providing information at the initial point of contact is also a potential alternate provider. If a potential conflict of interest exists, then notification to the appropriate Tier 5 manager should occur.
- Clients should be advised of anticipated waiting times for WACHS services and predicted service intensity at appropriate points of their client journey. This will support consumers to make informed choices regarding access to external service providers.
- If a patient elects to seek external or additional similar services whilst on a waiting list or while receiving WACHS services, consultation must be undertaken with the client/carer to determine the best service strategies for their need and situation and the potential need to develop a collaborative care plan as per section 2.3.

2.2 Scope of Service

- A range of allied services are considered out of scope for WACHS delivered allied health service (refer to the WACHS Allied Health Clinical Prioritisation Framework and associated guides).
- When a service is identified as out of scope, WACHS will support clients to access other service options, including external service providers, as relevant.

2.3 Service Planning and Coordination

- The external allied health service provider is to be considered an important stakeholder in the planning, implementation, coordination and evaluation of health services to meet community need.
- Where a WACHS client is accessing similar services from an external provider, a collaborative service plan should be established between the client, carer and all service providers. This will ensure (1) coordination of client goals and services (2) continuity of services between service providers (3) best use of service resources (4) establishment of a communication pathway between providers.

2.4 Support

- Allied health professionals of both the WACHS and external services are to endeavour to support each other's professional development and work together to promote allied health services in the region.
- The development of written agreements with external providers may be useful to assist in service planning and professional support.

2.5 Confidentiality

- All professional discussions concerning clients are to have the appropriate consent prior to the sharing of information between the public and external health professionals.
- WACHS patient records or patient information are not to be copied or distributed other than in the form of a direct handover or referral to the external service practice with the appropriate consent of the patient.
- See the WA Health [Patient Confidentiality Policy](#) and the WACHS [Allied Health Clinical Handover Policy](#) for further information.

2.6 Resources

In some circumstances it may be appropriate for WACHS allied health providers to share or provide resources to an external provider/service (refer definition). In these situations please refer to the following approval processes:

- Written approval is to be provided by the appropriate Tier Four (4) manager (e.g. Population Health Director, Operations Manager) for the use, loan or provision of any WACHS owned facilities or equipment .

- Authorisation is to be provided by the appropriate Tier Five (5) manager on the loan or provision of WACHS intellectual property (e.g. paper resources or materials)

2.7 Patient Rights

- Further information on patient rights and responsibilities can be found in the WA Council for Safety and Quality in Health Care and the Department of Health [Patient First Booklet](#).

3. Definitions

Allied Health Professional	Allied health services are defined as non-nursing, non-medical clinical healthcare professionals. Among others, allied health services include audiology, dietetics, podiatry, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, medical imaging, speech pathology and social work. Allied health professionals are defined as non-nursing, non-medical clinical healthcare professionals. Among others, allied health professionals include the audiologist, dietitian, podiatrist, physiotherapist, occupational therapist, medical imaging technologist, speech pathologist and social worker.
External Provider / Service	An allied health service provider/service that provides allied health services and is not directly employed by WA Health, or contracted by WA Health to provide services on their behalf. This includes other government, non-government, and private, fee for service capacity to people and organisations in the community.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

WACHS allied health professionals and managers have a responsibility to ensure compliance of this guideline in collaboration with private practitioners and the provision of information on alternate services to clients or families.

Information regarding this guideline should be included in the induction processes for new WACHS allied health staff.

5. Compliance

Failure to comply with this policy may constitute a breach of the WA Health Code of Conduct (Code). The Code is part of the [Employment Policy Framework](#) issued pursuant to section 26 of the [Health Services Act 2016](#) (HSA) and is binding on all WACHS staff which for this purpose includes trainees, students, volunteers, researchers, contractors for service (including all visiting health professionals and agency staff) and persons delivering training or education within WACHS.

WACHS staff are reminded that compliance with all policies is mandatory.

6. Evaluation

The WACHS Allied Health Leadership Team is to undertake the review of this guideline every five years, or sooner if required.

7. References

[National Healthcare Agreement](#)

WA Council for Safety and Quality in Health Care and the Department of Health
[Patient First Booklet](#).

8. Related Forms

[MR66 WACHS Allied Health Clinical Handover Form](#)

9. Related Policy Documents

WACHS [Allied Health Clinical Handover Policy](#)

10. Related Policies

[Patient Confidentiality Policy 0010/16](#)

[WA Health Complaint Management Policy 0589/15](#)

11. WA Health Policy Framework

[Legal Policy Framework](#)

[Clinical Governance, Safety and Quality Policy Framework](#)

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