



Carer Procedure

Effective: 19 August 2020

1. Background

The Goldfields Mental health Service (GMHS) is committed to ensuring that carers and patients are informed of their rights and responsibilities, and have the opportunity to participate in the planning and delivery of their health care with due regard for privacy and confidentiality requirements.

The GMHS acknowledges the capacity of unpaid carers, personal support person/s and advocates and the contribution made to support and care for people with mental health problems and mental disorders, thus establishing and maintaining mechanisms for the involvement of carers in the provision of services.

Under the *Mental Health Act 2014 (WA)* [MH Act], the role of carer is specifically recognised and their involvement is required in patient assessment, care and discharge planning. Furthermore, mental health services are required to consider the needs of the carers, personal support person/s and advocates in the context of their caring role.

If a patient is Aboriginal, a close family member can extend to any person regarded under the customary law or tradition of that person's community.

Mental health patients may also choose to nominate a friend or support person outside their family, to be their 'nominated person' under the MHA 2014. This will give the nominated person the same role, rights and status as a carer or close family member.

2. Procedure

Carers are to be involved where there is patient consent in the assessment, planning, delivery and review of a patient's care provided by GMHS, especially where that care impacts on the carer's roles. Evidence of this involvement is to be documented in the patient's medical records in line with the WACHS [Documentation Clinical Practice Standard](#).

There may be circumstance where the patient is unable to give consent or may refuse consent because of their mental state. In such cases, it may be appropriate for clinicians to initiate contact and involve those who may be able to assist with the patient's diagnosis and care, following consultation with the Team Leader or Clinical Nurse Manager.

Unless it is deemed not in the best interests of the patient by the treating psychiatrist, GMHS staff shall adhere to the requirements of the MHA 2014 in respect to the rights of carers being upheld, as well as [Chief Psychiatrist's Standards for Clinical Care 2015](#) ensuring services are responsive to carers, personal support person/s and advocates input and needs.

Carer identification should occur at the first point of entry into GMHS. The Triage Officer is to complete the Carers Triage Sticker and place in the patient's medical record. If this is not possible, staff are to regularly check throughout the patient's experience to identify a carer, personal support person/s and or advocate and using the Carer Status Sticker, record this in the patient's medical record. Carer Packs are offered to carers, personal support person/s and advocates on the patient's activation at this service.

Carers, personal support person/s and or advocates are to be provided with information regarding the pathway for escalating concerns regarding the patient's health and wellbeing. Refer to Call and Respond Early ([CARE](#)) information.

GMHS shall continue to actively seek representation of carers, personal support person/s and advocates in key executive, planning and review activities. A register will be maintained of those carers who wish to provide consultation and be invited to training opportunities. Carer representatives are encouraged to seek support from [Carers WA](#) prior to taking on the role of representative.

With consent of the patient, carers and or personal support persons are entitled to:

- Can communicate with the patient
- be consulted by clinicians about measures under consideration for treatment of the patient or for their welfare
- arrange support services such as respite care, counselling and community nursing facilities
- exchange information with clinicians providing treatment concerning the patient's lifestyle and their relationships with others
- interpreter services for non-English speaking patients
- AUSLAN interpreter and to communicate through the National Relay Service for patients who are deaf or who have a speech or hearing impairment.

Patients with disabilities are addressed through the *Disability Services Act* and *Carers Recognition Act* reporting requirements

3. Definitions

Consumer	For the purpose of this procedure a consumer is referred to under the Mental Health Act 2014 as a " <i>patient</i> ". patient means — (a) an involuntary patient; or (b) a mentally impaired accused required under the MIA Act to be detained at an authorised hospital; or (c) a voluntary patient
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Carer	A person is a carer for the purposes of this Act if he or she is an individual who provides ongoing care or assistance to — (a) a person with a disability as defined in the Disability Services Act 1993 section 3; or (b) a person who has a chronic illness, including a mental illness as defined in the <i>Mental Health Act 2014</i> section 4; or (c) a person who, because of frailty, requires assistance with carrying out everyday tasks; or (d) a person of a prescribed class. ¹
Nominated Person	A nominated person can be a friend or relative of the patient or even a patient’s guardian. It is whoever the patient feels can help them. The person nominated must be an adult over the age of 18 even if the patient is a child (under the age of 18). ²

4. Roles and Responsibilities

The **Clinical Director and Regional Manager, Mental Health** are to:

- oversee and ensure clinical governance within the GMHS
- assist Case Managers and RMMH in the resolution of any issues or problems that arise in the use of this procedure
- ensure that the principles and requirements of this procedure are applied, achieved and sustained
- develop systems to ensure all GMHS staff are provided with training and are made aware of their obligations and accompanying documentation relative to this procedure.

The **Team Leader/ Clinical Nurse Manager (CNM)** are to:

- ensure that all GMHS staff receives sufficient training, instruction, and supervision in the use of this procedure
- promote a culture of carer involvement with regard for privacy and confidentiality
- ensure that staff embrace, engage and support the culture of carer involvement
- ensure that resources are available in support of carer involvement
- monitor compliance and ensure staff comply with its requirements.

All staff are to:

- actively enhance an engagement culture by supporting, contributing to and reporting on patients, carers, personal support person/s and advocates engagement activities as relevant to their role
- develop and maintain their skills and knowledge about best practice in patient, carers, personal support person/s and advocates engagement, relevant to their roles
- support patients, carers, personal support person/s and advocates to participate in ways that they choose

¹ *Mental Health Act 2014* (WA)

² Clinicians’ Practice Guide to the *Mental Health Act 2014* (WA)

- assist carers in understanding their rights and responsibilities
- provide carers with relevant information and support to enable them to fulfil their roles and responsibilities
- ensure they comply with all requirements of this procedure
- promote a recovery oriented, person-centred culture within clinical practices, policies, operational directives, guidelines and the Australian Law to ensure a safe, equitable and positive environment for all
- required to work within policies and guidelines to make sure that WACHS is a safe, equitable and positive place to be.

The Carer is to:

- provide information with consent concerning family relationships and any matter to the mental state of the patient
- seek further options regarding diagnosis and care of the patient
- advise of any limits on their availability to the patient
- consider the opinions of clinicians and recognise their skills in providing care and treatment for the person who has a mental health problem or mental disorder
- cooperate, as far as possible, with reasonable programs of treatment and care aimed at returning the patient to optimal personal autonomy.

5. Compliance

This procedure is a mandatory requirement under the *Carers Recognition Act* and the *Mental Health Act 2014 (WA)*.

Failure to comply with this procedure may constitute a breach of the WA Health Code of Conduct (Code). The Code is part of the [Integrity Policy Framework](#) issued pursuant to section 26 of the [Health Services Act 2016](#) (WA) 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. Records Management

Non-Clinical:

All WACHS corporate records must be stored in the approved Electronic Documents and Records Management System. [Records Management Policy](#)

Clinical:

All WACHS clinical records must be managed in accordance with [Health Record Management Policy](#).

7. Evaluation

All processes and practices of this procedure are to be monitored, evaluated, and developed as part of an overall quality improvement process on at least every three years or as necessary should any changes to legislation or incident occur where the procedure has not been satisfactory.

8. Standards

[National Safety and Quality Healthcare Standards](#) – 1.11b, 1.13a, 2.7, 6.3a
[National Standards for Mental Health Services](#) – 1.11, 1.12, 3.2. 3.4

9. Legislation

[Carers Recognition Act 2004](#) (WA) (including Carers Charter)
[Mental Health Act 2014](#) (WA)

10. References

[Carers WA](#)
[Office of the Chief Psychiatrist: Clinicians Practice Guide to the Mental Health Act 2014](#)
[Australian Charter of Health Care Rights](#)
[Charter of Mental Health Principles](#)

11. Related Documents

[Department of Health You Matter A guideline to support engagement with consumers, carers, communities and clinicians in health](#)

12. Related Policy Documents

WACHS [Consumer and Carer Engagement Policy](#)
WACHS [Recognising the Importance of Carers Policy](#)
WACHS [Partnering with Consumers Guideline](#)

13. Policy Framework

[Mental Health](#)

14. Appendices

[Appendix 1 – Carers Status Sticker](#) (Note – local TRIM link)
[Appendix 2 – Carers Triage Sticker](#) (Note – local TRIM link)

**This document can be made available in alternative formats
on request for a person with a disability**

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