



# Employee Workplace Change Procedure

Effective: 4 August 2021

## 1. Guiding Principles

This procedure provides guidance to managers and staff about the implementation of workplace change.

The term 'Workplace Change' applies planning and implementation of change processes designed to achieve organisational objectives. This procedure provides guidance in the management of workplace change, particularly where the proposed workplace change is likely to impact on the work life of individuals, such that the change process requires effective leadership and management.

Workplace change may arise in several ways. Workplace change may be imposed, through changes to legislation, Federal or State Government or WA Health policy; changes to funding arrangements; or due to findings and recommendations of an external or independent audit, inquiry or review (e.g. the Office of the Auditor General, the WA Coroner, the WA Ombudsman, the Australian Safety and Quality Commission, the Public Sector Commission, Corruption and Crime Commission, or the Office of the Chief Psychiatrist).

Workplace change may also arise from a proactive desire to change. This may be to implement strategic outcomes of the WACHS Strategic Plan and associated service strategies; to progress cultural change; to improve safety and quality of services; deliver improved outcomes to the community through service reform; to address outcomes of WACHS commissioned reviews [see [WACHS Conducting Reviews Procedure](#)]; or to improve the effectiveness of functional business units.

Workplace change may affect team structures, reporting relationships, roles and responsibilities, work practices, services delivered, and/or the way that work is organised or performed. Workplace change may also affect the nature and type of employment arrangements for one or more staff.

A key principle of effective change management within WACHS is that the proposed change aligns with the WACHS strategic priorities, has in-principle support by the relevant Executive member and that it is supported by a consultation and engagement process that is commensurate with the nature and extent of the planned change.

The implementation of change should occur in a way that is consistent with the WACHS Values, and in particular those of Compassion, Integrity, Equity, and Quality.

While consultation during change is required as a minimum expectation, genuine engagement by employees in the proposed workplace change will significantly improve the likelihood of the change being successful. Clear communication of the reasons for the change, and what is to be achieved, and involvement by staff in 'how' the change is to be implemented is important.

It is also important to ensure that those involved in planning and implementing the change remain open and flexible to adjust their approach as a result of feedback and information that becomes available through the workplace change process.

Depending on the nature, scale and potential consequences of the change, there may be formal consultation obligations specified within relevant industrial instruments which require notification to employees and employee associations prior to change being implemented. Other types of workplace change may require a ballot of affected workers. These requirements are prescribed within industrial agreements [refer WA Heath [Awards and Agreements library](#)].

There are legislative provisions within the [Heath Services Act 2016](#), the [Public Sector Management \(Redeployment and Redundancy\) Regulations 1996](#), and standards set out in the [Public Sector Standards in Human Resource Management](#) which are also applicable to workplace change, particularly where the implementation of workplace change may involve the transfer, secondment, redeployment or redundancy of staff.

Consultation with Human Resources early in the change process will ensure that any obligations under these instruments are understood and able to be addressed through the workplace change process.

### **Minor workplace change**

Line managers are able to plan and implement minor workplace change within their own business units, provided that the change is consistent with organisational policy and industrial provisions, has minimal impact or change for staff, and does not affect or change models for the delivery of services to consumers. In these circumstances, advice to the relevant Executive member should be provided. Consultation and engagement with staff is also required, with opportunities provided for staff to contribute their perspective on the proposed change, for their views to be heard and acknowledged.

### **Significant workplace change**

For more significant workplace change, where the change is likely to impact on services to consumers, extends beyond the individual work or business unit, includes changes to work roles and responsibilities, and work practices, work location or tenure, then formal support for the change is required.

It is important that workplace change is well considered, and that the proposed change is informed by research and analysis. This may include consideration of lessons learnt from other organisations including WA Health Service Providers or from other jurisdictions. The change may also be informed by a management review [see [WACHS Conducting Reviews Procedure](#)], Executive discussion, workshops, or business performance analysis. Importantly, the drivers for workplace change should be informed by analysis and evidence, and not in a way that is arbitrary or ill-considered.

Formal support for the change can be achieved through a Briefing Note prepared, in consultation with Human Resources, which outlines the reason for change, associated

risks (with progressing implementing or not implementing), as well as any anticipated implications for budget and/or staff.

The Briefing Note should also include any associated evidence in support of the change and describe at a high level the engagement approach and change process proposed. The Briefing Note should be referred to the relevant executive leads (Regional Director and the Executive Director for relevant professional discipline(s)) for endorsement. The relevant Executive member will discuss the planned change with the Chief Operating Officer and the Chief Executive prior to progressing.

## 2. Procedure

The following steps apply to the implementation of significant change, and should be followed once in principle endorsement of the change has been achieved. While this procedure offers guidance to managers implementing workplace change, it is noted that each change process is unique and will require a considered and planned approach, tailored to the particular circumstances.

### 2.1 Establishing workplace change objectives

It is important that prior to commencing the change process, that the objectives or outcomes of the change are clearly defined. This will ensure that all steps within the change process are directed towards achievement of these objectives. Any materials for staff consultation should include the change objectives and key messages articulating the reasons for the change.

### 2.2 Identifying workplace change stakeholders

At this early stage, it is important to consider the likely impacts of the change, and who is affected. This may include staff, contracted service providers (e.g. Aboriginal Medical Services and Visiting Medical Practitioners). Identifying stakeholders will assist in identifying those who need to be consulted and at which stage of the change process.

### 2.3 Planning workplace change consultation

The level of consultation will vary depending on the nature of the workplace change and the time period over which the change is to be implemented.

Consultation should include all employees impacted by the change, including those on fixed term contracts and casual contracts. Employees on leave from the workplace, who are impacted by the change, should be included in consultation. Information may need to be provided in various forms for those not able to attend consultation forums or change planning workshops in person.

Noting that open, transparent and timely communication is always encouraged, it is important to ensure that any formal consultation requirements (e.g. prescribed in contracts, MOUs or industrial agreements) are understood such that they can be reflected in the Change Management Plan (as listed in section 10). Early discussions with the relevant HR Manager will assist in identifying any such obligations

### 2.4 Notification

WA health system industrial instruments require the employer to notify and consult with employees and the relevant union(s) when change is either proposed or a decision has been made. Whilst each instrument is principally similar, each will have a slight variation. Therefore, decision makers must familiarise themselves with each instrument that applies to their workforce or consult with your human resources team as they can provide advice on the consultation requirements specific to a change process.

All Industrial Instruments can be sourced through the [Awards and Agreements library](#).

### 2.5 Identifying workplace change budget implications

Forecasting of potential budget implications of the change should be undertaken at an early stage and include advice from WACHS Finance. Where the cost of the change cannot be met from within existing operational funding, and an alternative funding source cannot be identified, a request for approval to develop a business case should be progressed.

### 2.6 Developing a Workplace Change Management Plan

Once the objectives of the change have been defined, stakeholders have been identified and potential costs forecast, a proposed change process should be developed and documented in a Change Management Plan. [Note this plan will serve as both a HR Plan and Communications Plan].

The Change Management Plan aims to document key stages of the change, including key milestones, and agreed activities including consultation, and formal notification of change requirements.

- Change objective
- Change implementation strategy
- Communication strategy (including communication with key stakeholders, employees and unions where applicable)
- Key activities and milestones
- Roles and responsibilities
- Role of line manager
- Role of Human Resources

In the case of proposed structural change, the Change Management Plan should also include:

- Current organisational structure
- Proposed organisational structure
- Positions impacted by the proposed change
- Process for filling vacant positions
- Redeployment and redundancy options
- Case management approach for Registerable or Registered Employees

- Support services including Employee Assistance Programs
- Information regarding how grievances or disputes may be managed

A copy of the Change Management Plan should be provided to employees and the relevant union(s) (if applicable).

### 2.7 Governance and Reporting

Where a significant workplace change is to be progressed, consideration should be given to the establishment of a time limited [working group](#) consistent with the WACHS Committee Procedure. An existing Regional or Executive Sub-Committee should also be identified to provide oversight of the workplace change program.

Regular reporting should occur with reports provided to the relevant Governance group at key milestones (initiation and closure as a minimum) together with reporting to the WACHS Executive and/or the Board as required.

### 2.8 Workplace Change Review and Evaluation

Throughout the change process, the line manager should continually evaluate progress against the Change Management Plan including approaches to communication and consultation with staff. This may involve:

- Assessing the benefits of the change;
- Reviewing 'lessons learnt';
- Adapting the change process in response to learnings.

## 3. Definitions

<b>Industrial Instrument</b>	WA health system Industrial Agreement which is registered in the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission and is binding on WACHS, employees covered by the Agreement, and the union(s) party to the Agreement.
<b>Change Management Plan</b>	The plan developed to provide information to stakeholders impacted by the change to articulate how the change process will be managed.
<b>Registerable Employee</b>	An employee as defined by subsection 94(1A) of the <i>Public Sector Management Act 1994 (WA)</i> . Specifically, an employee who is surplus to the requirements of WACHS; an employee whose office, post or position has been abolished, or an employee in a category defined by the <i>Public Sector Management (Redeployment and Redundancy) Regulations 2014</i> .
<b>Registered Employee</b>	An employee as defined by subsection 94(1A) of the <i>Public Sector Management Act 1994 (WA)</i> who has been registered on RAMS for redeployment.

### 4. Roles and Responsibilities

The **line manager** is responsible for leading the proposed change. This includes:

- Identifying drivers and objectives for the proposed change.
- Seeking in-principle endorsement for the change through the development of a Briefing Note. Developing, in consultation with Human Resources, a Change Management Plan (where required).
- Ensuring consultation and communication is well planned, fit for purpose and fully complies with the WA health system Industrial Instruments.
- Leading consultation process through discussions with the employee/s and relevant union(s).
- Leading implementation and providing assurance regarding achievement of the endorsed change process.
- Ensuring their line manager and senior managers remained briefed throughout the change process.

The **Regional or WACHS Finance** team is to:

- Review and validate any proposed change cost implications where required.
- Review and validate any actual change cost implications.

**Regional and Central Human Resources** are to be aware of, and proficient in, the 'rules' of change prescribed by the relevant Industrial Instrument and assist managers with employee related change, aligning all actions to the WACHS values and strategic directions, for their region including:

- Advice on Industrial Instrument provisions.
- Pre-emptive risk identification and risk mitigation.
- Increasing awareness of employee assistance providers.
- Troubleshooting within change management processes.
- Providing training and support to line managers.
- Drafting notifications of change to ensure both employees and the relevant union(s) are adequately notified.
- Ensuring all communications (both formal and information notifications of change and ad hoc support) are in compliance with the relevant industrial provisions and consideration is given to broader issues within the affected workforce.

The **Regional Human Resources Manager** is responsible for:

- Liaison with stakeholders including relevant union(s) where necessary.
- Managing restructure outcomes including redeployment and redundancy.
- Understanding that each change process varies and requires flexible and responsive approaches, addressing contextual and people issues that demonstrate WACHS values.
- Manage restructure outcomes, including redeployment and redundancy.
- Be flexible and responsive – each change management process is different.



### **Central Human Resources** are to:

- Provide advice on complex workforce change processes;
- Troubleshoot complex issues related to change processes and act as an agent to change leaders;
- Provide training and support to regions on workforce change;
- Monitor and report on all WACHS workforce change processes;
- Manage WACHS wide workforce change processes, including drafting notifications of change to ensure both employees and the relevant union(s) are adequately notified in relation to WACHS wide change; and
- Liaise with stakeholders including relevant union(s) in relation to WACHS wide workforce change processes where necessary.

### **WACHS Industrial Relations** are to:

- Provide industrial advice and expertise in relation to workforce change processes;
- Review correspondence regarding change for both employees and the relevant union(s); and
- Represent WACHS in the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission or other tribunal should a dispute arise.

**All Staff** are required to work within policies and guidelines to make sure that WACHS is a safe, equitable and positive place to be.

## **5. Compliance**

Managers implementing change are required to familiarise themselves with this procedure and to follow the guidelines to the extent that they are relevant to the change being implemented.

Managers are required to comply with the consultation provisions set out within the various WA health system Industrial Instruments. Failure to do so may result in corrective action arising from an application by the relevant union(s) to the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission (WAIRC). This may result in the change process being delayed. Any breach of these provisions is likely to present reputational damage to WACHS as a result of a failure to comply with its obligations and this is likely to significantly hamper change efforts.

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

## **6. Records Management**

All WACHS corporate records must be stored in the approved Electronic Documents and Records Management System.

[Records Management Policy](#)

### 7. Evaluation

Evaluation of this procedure and the extent to which it has provided clear guidance to workplace change process will be undertaken by WACHS Human Resources, through consultation with the WACHS Executive, in advance of the procedure review date.

### 8. Standards

National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards - Nil

### 9. Legislation

Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (WA)

Health Services Act 2016 (WA)

Industrial Relations Act 1979 (WA)

Public Sector Management Act 1994 (WA)

Public Sector Management (Breaches of Public Sector Standards) Regulations 2005 (WA)

Public Sector Management (Redeployment and Redundancy) Regulations 2014 (WA)

Minimum Conditions of Employment Act 1993 (WA)

### 10. References

Public Sector Commissioner's Instruction No. 1: Employment Standard

Public Sector Commissioner's Instruction No. 2: Filling a Public Sector Vacancy

Public Sector Commissioner's Instruction No. 11: Redeployment Standard

Public Sector Commissioner's Instruction No. 12: Redeployment and Redundancy

WA health system Industrial Instruments

Public Sector Commission's Structural Change Management documents which includes templates for:

- Change Management Plan
- Change Management Group Terms of Reference
- Human Resources Plan
- Change management questionnaire

### 11. Related Forms

Nil



## 12. Related Policy Documents

[WACHS Conducting Reviews Procedure](#)  
[WACHS Risk Management Policy](#)

## 13. Related WA Health System Policies

Nil

## 14. Policy Framework

[Employment Policy Framework](#)

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

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