



Policy Development Policy

1. Background

Under the *Health Services Act 2016*, the Director General (DG) of the Department of Health is the System Manager responsible for the overall management, strategic direction and stewardship of the WA health system. The DG will use policy frameworks to ensure service coordination and integration, and efficiency and effectiveness in the provision of health services across the WA health system. Policy frameworks must be complied with and implemented as a part of ongoing operations.

The WA Country Health Service (WACHS) develops policies and supporting information and endorses the use of specific evidence-based practice guidelines to support organisational performance and individual practice.

These documents enable WACHS to standardise the approach toward the attainment of goals, values and objectives, to ensure the achievement of desired standards of health service delivery, to minimise risk and to meet legislative and governance requirements.

All staff are responsible for being fully conversant and compliant with WACHS policies and supporting documents that relate to their work.

The use of, reliance upon, or promulgation of policy-like documents which have not been endorsed in accordance with this policy poses unacceptable governance and clinical risks to the organisation, staff and customers and may result in disciplinary action being taken.

Policy frameworks released by the System Manager contain reference to mandatory requirements, as well as supporting information. Health Service Providers (HSPs) are responsible for the establishment of policy for their services, consistent with the relevant Policy Framework(s). A WACHS policy cannot override any legislative instrument or a policy endorsed by the Director General.

Policy Frameworks are aligned to national and international best practice and are in place to:

- provide greater consistency and transparency to ensure the quality and safety of health services
- support strong governance foundations with clear roles and responsibilities to enable better decision-making, operational and risk management
- support greater authority and innovation within HSPs to meet the needs of local communities, including decision-making closer to service delivery and patient care.

WACHS Executive members are apportioned accountability for the various Policy Frameworks (as demonstrated in the [WACHS Executive Policy Frameworks Accountability Structure](#)).

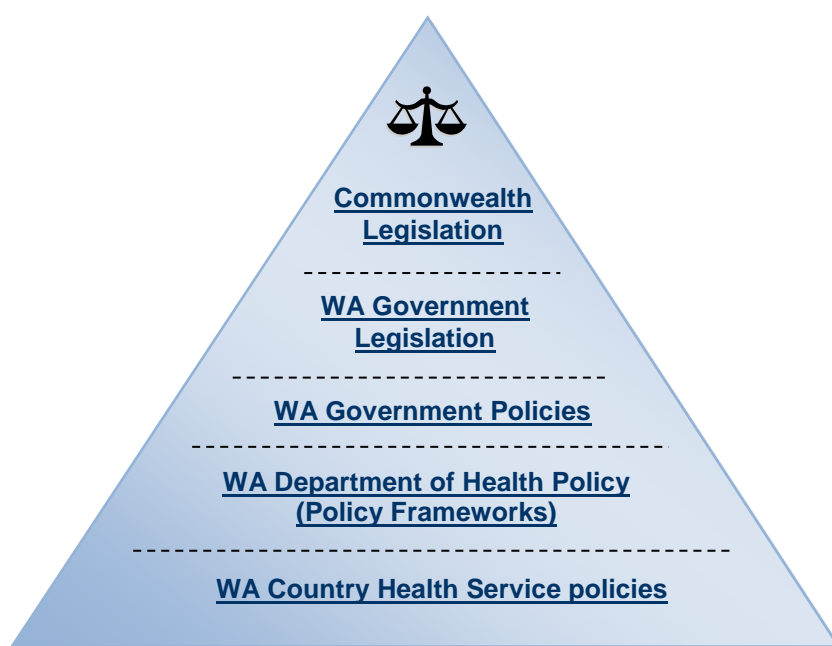
Compliance with legislation, WA health system wide and WACHS policies is mandatory.

2. Policy Statement

The development and implementation of WACHS policies and supporting documents is to follow quality improvement principles and comply with legislative requirements so that work practices and organisational processes are consistent throughout the health service.

All WACHS policies are to be consistent and compliant with the requirements of those implemented at a higher level in the hierarchical structure:

- Commonwealth and State legislation
- WA Government policies
- Department of Health Policy (Policy Frameworks)



Individual policies and supporting documents are to guide practice and ensure the maintenance of appropriate standards of service within the functional area to which they relate.

All policies and supporting documents are to be progressed through the structures and processes outlined in this policy and its supporting documents.

Documents which apply to a region, network, or multiple similar sites are to be developed in accordance with this policy to ensure appropriate authorisations and organisation-wide governance standards are met.

The WACHS Policy Unit coordinates publication of all WACHS policy documents via the [HealthPoint](#) platform hosted by the Department of Health. This is the only source of current WACHS policy documents. Printed copies can only be considered valid at the time of printing.

3. Definitions

Board (Tier 1A)	Constituted under section 71 of the Health Services Act 2016 . The functions of the Board, in the name of the HSP, are set out in section 34 of the HSA 2016.
WACHS Board Committees	The WACHS Audit and Risk; Finance; and Safety and Quality Committees have been established by the Board under section 92 of the <i>Health Service Act 2016</i> .
WACHS Executive Team Tier 1B, Tier 2A, Tier 2B, Tier 3A, Tier 3B	As per the WACHS Authorisations and Delegations Schedule
WACHS Executive Sub-Committees	WACHS Executive Sub-Committees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Emergency Management · Finance and Performance · Health Care Safety and Quality · Information Governance · Infrastructure · Patient Experience and Consumer and Carer Engagement · Procurement and Contract Management · Strategy and Service Development · Workforce
Other Committees / Networks	Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Nursing and Midwifery Leadership Group · Medical Directors' Forum · Mental Health Central Office Clinical Policy and Procedure Steering Committee · Emergency Medicine Leadership Group · Midwifery Advisory Forum · Obstetrics and Gynaecology Clinical Advisory and Patient Safety Group (O&G CAPS) · Allied Health Leadership and Governance Team · Operations Managers' Network · WACHS Learning and Development Network · Infection Prevention and Control Committee · Health Information Managers' Network
Policy	A document that describes the organisation's purpose or standard for a given customer process or issue, the expected outcome, guiding principles, roles and responsibilities, definitions of terms within the document and references. Compliance with policies is mandatory.

<p>Supporting Information</p>	<p>Other policy-related documents which support the implementation of best practice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Addendum · Brochure · Checklist · Form · Flowchart · Guideline · Information Sheet · Manual · Poster · Procedure · Terms of Reference
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4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 WACHS Board

The WACHS Board, through the senior executive, is responsible for ensuring WACHS maintains a comprehensive set of organisational policies and associated supporting information and that these documents are reviewed regularly. These documents need to:

- provide direction for the operation of WACHS
- address clinical safety and quality
- be consistent with the regulatory obligations of WACHS, the Board and senior executive.

The Board delegates responsibility (via the WACHS Authorisations Schedule) to the senior executive for the development and maintenance of the policies and associated supporting information.

The Board is responsible for:

- ensuring a comprehensive set of policies and associated supporting documents is developed and implemented
- ensuring a system exists to review compliance with WACHS policies.

4.2 WACHS Board Committees

The committees are established to assist the Board to perform its functions, as set out in the committee’s terms of reference. Functions of the committees include:

- monitoring of performance and ensuring compliance with relevant laws, regulations, government and system manager policies and WACHS developed policies
- providing advice on compliance
- periodically reviewing and evaluating the WACHS policies and practices with respect to risks
- advising the Board on respective policy, governance, compliance and performance matters.

4.3 Chief Executive

The Chief Executive (CE) establishes the strategic direction for policy development within WACHS.

4.4 WACHS Executive Team

WACHS Executive Team members determine policy priorities within their area(s) of functional responsibility. They are responsible for the regular and timely review of policies and supporting documents, and ensuring that the appropriate stakeholders are involved in the review and development of those documents.

Where a policy or supporting document is not reviewed and updated within the endorsed timeframe it remains in force and available to staff via the HealthPoint site, with the Executive Director assuming responsibility for the document's currency and applicability.

The Regional Director's authority in respect of policy-related documents extends to operational [supporting information](#) applicable within their region.

WACHS Tier 2 Executive members are responsible for endorsing the publication or rescindment of WACHS policies and supporting information relevant to their area of responsibility and providing this advice in a timely manner to the Policy Coordination Officer.

The Director Office of the CE has the delegated responsibility for ensuring the development, maintenance and administration of the WACHS policy framework.

4.5 WACHS Directors and Managers

Directors and managers are responsible for the implementation of policy documents, and monitoring of implementation and compliance in their area(s) of functional responsibility.

4.6 WACHS Executive Sub-Committees

WACHS Executive Sub-Committees are responsible for ensuring that policies and [supporting documents](#) relevant to their remit conform to better practice principles and national, professional and industry standards and that organisational, staff and clients' needs are met. This includes providing advice on which stakeholders are to be involved in the review and development of those documents.

4.7 Other WACHS Committees / Networks

Other WACHS committees / networks may provide advice on which stakeholders are to be involved in the review and development of policies and/or supporting documents, and may be responsible for providing support and recommendations for those documents.

4.8 Manager Policy Development

The Manager Policy Development is responsible for:

- developing relevant information associated with the development, endorsement and withdrawal of policies and supporting information within the WACHS
- representing the WACHS' interests in relation to HealthPoint policy publication via the HealthPoint Policies Administrators' Governance Sub-Committee.

4.9 Policy Coordination Officer

The Policy Coordination Officer is responsible for assisting staff with the process of policy and supporting information development and the publishing of endorsed documents.

The Policy Coordination Officer is responsible for registering and allocation of newly published WA Department of Health policy documents to the relevant Executive Team member(s) for their action.

4.10 Policy Document Developer

The Policy Document Developer is responsible for demonstrating the need for policy document development, including ensuring that the information is not covered by other endorsed, external policy sources.

The Policy Document Developer is responsible for managing the process of policy document development including completion of relevant supporting documents, ensuring broad and appropriate consultation, and developing communication and implementation strategies.

The Policy Document Developer is responsible for maintaining records of the decision trail which includes all correspondence, drafts, and feedback associated with the development of the document in compliance with section 4.13 below.

4.11 Manager Forms Development

The Manager Forms Development is responsible for assisting staff with the process of forms development.

4.12 WACHS Learning and Development Staff

WACHS Learning and Development staff are to ensure that information related to accessing WACHS policies is incorporated into the staff induction, orientation and continuous learning programs and promoted via the WACHS Learning Management System.

4.13 All staff are responsible for maintaining records associated with the development of WACHS policy documents in compliance with the *State Records Act 2000* and State Records Commission Principles and Standards 2002, and the [WACHS Recordkeeping Plan](#) and [Records Management Policy](#).

5. Document Management

To promote consistency in the development of policies and related documents, standard templates and supporting information are provided by the WACHS Policy Unit.

Policies and supporting information are to:

- refer to relevant international, national, State, Government and Policy Frameworks
- meet legislative and compliance requirements and relevant standards
- reflect WACHS purpose, vision, and strategic intent
- manage risks
- reflect system wide processes and outcomes from a consumer and carer perspective
- clarify the desired consumer and carer outcomes
- promote consistency in standards of service delivery
- clearly identify roles and responsibilities
- be concise and written in terms and language that are familiar to the intended audience
- adhere to the WACHS Policy Development Policy
- identify performance measures which specify compliance measures or standards
- support and empower staff in the delivery of high quality customer service and consumer-centred care
- assist efficient and effective work practices
- facilitate a process of continuous review and improvement.

6. Consultation

The number and range of policy stakeholders (who will be affected by the policy and in what way) identified during the policy research and analysis stage, will determine the level and scope of stakeholder consultation required to inform policy development.

Consultation with consumers and carers should occur where the policy has a direct impact on the consumer experience and should be undertaken in line with the principles and processes outlined in the WACHS [Partnering with Consumers Guideline](#).

7. Review of policies and policy related documents

Policies will generally have a review cycle of not more than five (5) years. Shorter interim reviews of a policy and supporting information for accuracy and currency may be specified based on an appropriate risk analysis of the issues contained within the document.

Published policies will remain valid until withdrawn or superseded.

The review dates for policy documents are easily determined by all staff using the HealthPoint [WACHS Policies library](#) (see [documents](#) for assistance).

Policies and policy-related documents are to be reviewed prior to their nominated review date.

The review is to establish whether a policy remains current, is to be revised, or withdrawn. At the time of review, the policy is to be evaluated for relevance, currency and ease of use.

The reviewer is to advise the Policy Unit:

- if the document remains current, the subsequent date of review
- if the document is to be withdrawn, the date and reason for its withdrawal or
- if the content of the document requires amendment, and timeframe for its completion and if the current version can remain in place pending the review.

The Policy Document Developer reviews the document following the same process as for a newly developed document. The reviewed document also follows the same endorsement process as a newly developed document.

8. 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.

9. Evaluation

The effectiveness of this policy will be determined through consultation and feedback with stakeholders including policy owners and authors.

Performance measures for this policy may include the:

- qualitative feedback on the policy development process
- accreditation assessments
- practical implementation of the policy process
- timely publication of policy documents once endorsed
- timely allocation of new, updated and rescinded WA Department of Health policies following their publication
- reports relating to the development and progress of policy documents.

10. Standards

[National Safety and Quality Healthcare Standards](#) (Second edition)

Standard 1: Governance, Leadership and Culture – 1.7

Standard 2: Partnering with Consumers – 2.11

National Standards for Mental Health Services 2010

Standard 3: Consumer and carer participation – 3.1, 3.2

Standard 10: Delivery of Care – 10.1.8

Standard 6: Consumers - 6.17

National Standards for Disability Services: Standard 3

National Residential Aged Care Accreditation: Standard 1

11. Legislation

State Records Act 2000 and State Records Principles and Standards 2002

Carers' Recognition Act 2004

Disability Services Act 1993 (WA)

Health Services Act 2016

12. References

ISO 15489 – Information and Documentation: records management.

Althaus, C. 2013 *Australian Policy Handbook* Fifth Edition. Allen & Unwin, Sydney.

Public Sector Commission Good Governance Guide April 2013

Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare, 2015, Guide to the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards for health service organisation boards

13. Related Policy Documents

WACHS Policy Development Flowchart

WACHS Partnering with Consumers Guideline

WACHS Records Management Policy

14. Related WA Health Policies

MP 0035/16 Health Service Provider Boards - Governance Policy

15. WA Health Policy Framework

Risk, Compliance and Audit Policy Framework

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

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