



Carer Inclusion Policy

Document number: MHS-PP-4124 Version 3.0

Approval

Policy owner	Manager, Mental Health Services		
Business Unit	Mental Health Services		
Approved by	Manager, Mental Health Services		
Date approved	03/06/2025	Review date	03/06/2027

1 Purpose

- 1.1 Vinnies Mental Health Service (MHS) is committed to identifying and providing opportunities for consultation and meaningful engagement with Carers where possible and appropriate. This is in relation to direct support provided to consumers and with regards to service delivery and design.
- 1.2 This policy is intended to communicate MHS's commitment to creating an inclusive environment and culture that offer opportunity for meaningful engagement with Carer's, upholding their right to be involved in the recovery journey of the consumer within the scope of consent.

2 Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all staff who work in all MHS sites.
- 2.2 The capacity for a Carer to be involved in a consumer's life and recovery journey while engaged with MHS is always within the scope of consumer consent. Where there is not consent from the consumer for their Carer to be involved, the views and needs of Carers will be considered as stated in the Western Australian Carers Charter.

3 Policy principles

- 3.1 MHS is committed to furthering efforts for meaningful engagement Carer engagement as outlined in the MHS Carer Engagement Framework.
- 3.2 MHS is committed to ensuring the successful completion and, implementation of the Carer Engagement Plan, which firmly details actions to meet objectives and criteria under the National Standards for Mental Health Services.
- 3.3 MHS Management will actively seek opportunities for formal and informal collaboration with other services within the sector, to facilitate opportunities for Carer support and representation.
- 3.4 MHS will provide Carers with a Welcome Pack, containing information about the service, as well as a written statement of the Rights and Responsibilities for both consumers and their Carers, as part of their introduction to the service. The Coordinator Consumer Services is responsible for ensuring the Welcome Packs remain current and are distributed to family as appropriate.
- 3.5 Carers are invited to provide feedback or make complaints via the Complaint, Compliments and Feedback process. Forms are located at the Village, in Community Share Houses and, included in the Welcome Pack. All complaints, compliments and feedback are reported to the Clinical Governance Committee for continuous improvement discussion and, to identify any patterns or concerns.
- 3.6 Staff will be supported via professional development processes to develop skills and competencies in working with Carers.
- 3.7 All staff are required to be familiar with the Carers Recognition Act 2004.
- 3.8 Staff will facilitate opportunities to work in partnership alongside Carers through regular communication and, inclusion of Carers in decision making processes, appointments and consultations within the scope of consent.
- 3.9 Staff will ensure that a consumer's Authority to Obtain and Share Information

Form, granting Carer consent is updated at least Quarterly, as per the MHS Document Review Schedule, with any changes documented. The specific type of information consumers' consent to being shared/not shared with their Carer, must be clearly documented on this form.

- 3.10 Staff will ensure information regarding identified Carers is accurately recorded on the consumers' progress notes and reviewed on a regular basis.
- 3.11 Staff will contact identified Carers in relation to the wellbeing of consumers, including any concerns, as per the consumers' Wellness Response Plan.
- 3.12 Staff will consider the specific cultural needs of Carers in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) persons, religious/spiritual beliefs, gender, sexual orientation, physical and intellectual disability, age profile and socio-economic status.
- 3.13 Staff will document communication and involvement with Carers on the service's consumer database system.
- 3.14 Consumers will indicate their consent, or otherwise, regarding the Carer(s) they authorise information to be shared with, advising staff if and when this changes for any reason.
- 3.15 Operating from a person-centred approach it is recognised that consumers determine Carer involvement, however recognising their rights as stated under the Carer Recognition Act 2004, staff will endeavour to;
 - Encourage consumers to provide regular updates on achievements to Carers.
 - Support consumers to maintain ongoing engagement with Carers and partners in the delivery of care, if they wish.
 - Support consumers to inform Carers about the changes in their medications and medical procedures, where they have indicated their consent to involvement.
 - Encourage consumers to consult with identified Carers in exit and transition planning.

4 Roles and responsibilities

- 4.1 The Manager, Mental Health Services is responsible for maintaining the currency of this policy.
- 4.2 Society representatives are required to adhere to this policy. Failure to comply may be considered a breach of our policies and may result in disciplinary action.

5 Review

- 5.1 This policy will be reviewed at least every two years, after consultation. Some circumstances may trigger an early review; this includes but is not limited to legislative changes, organisational changes, incident outcomes and other matters deemed appropriate by the SCS Management Team or the Executive Manager SCS.

6 Further assistance

- 6.1 Society personnel should speak with their Manager regarding any questions about the implementation of this policy.

7 References

References made in this policy are:

- 7.1 MHS Carer Engagement Framework
- 7.2 MHS Carer Engagement Plan
- 7.3 SCS-PP-4018 Privacy and Confidentiality Consumer/Client/Tenant Policy
- 7.4 SCS-PP-4004 Managing Service user Feedback
- 7.5 MHS Document Review Schedule
- 7.6 MHS Wellness Response Plan
- 7.7 The National Standards for Mental Health Services. *Department of Health, Australian Government.*

8 Related documents and legislation

Related documents and legislation at the time of approval include:

- 8.1 SCS-PP-4012 Recovery Oriented Service Delivery Policy
- 8.2 SCS-PP-4001 Continuous Improvement Policy
- 8.3 SVDPWA Complaints and Grievances Policy
- 8.4 Western Australian Charter
- 8.5 The Privacy Act 1988, *Federal Register of Legislation, Australian Government.*
- 8.6 The Carers Recognition Act 2004, *The Department of Justice, Government of Western Australia.*
- 8.7 Australian Privacy Principles, *Office of the Australian Information Commissioner, Australian Government.*
- 8.8 The Mental Health Act 2014, *The Department of Justice, Government of Western Australia.*
- 8.9 The Charter of Mental Health Care Principles, *Mental Health Act 2014.*

9 Approval and amendment history

Version	Approval authority	Date	Amendment summary
1.0	EM, SCS	27/05/2021	Initial version
1.1	EM, SCS	01/12/2021	Conversion to new template
2.0	Manager, MHS	09/05/2023	Scheduled review and update
3.0	Manager, MHS	03/06/2025	Review and Update

10 Definitions

Term	Definition
Carer	<p>Under the Carer's Recognition Act 2004, the term 'Carer' can apply to family members, friends and even neighbours who provide ongoing support and assistance (without payment) to people who have a mental illness.</p> <p>For the purpose of this and other SVDPWA Specialist Community Services policies, Carer refers to the consumer's identified family, including children and parents, as well as other Guardians and people significant and nominated by the consumer/client and given consent to act as their Carer.</p>