

Carers Advisory Council

The Carers Advisory Council is established by the Act. The Council has up to 10 members appointed by the Minister (currently the Minister for Community Services). All members are either carers or have knowledge of matters relevant to carers. The Council:

- reports to the Parliament of WA on compliance with the Carers Charter by relevant service providers
- provides general advice to the Minister on carer-related matters.

WA Carer Services Directory

The Department of Local Government and Communities maintains the WA Carer Services Directory. The online resource is a directory of services which enables West Australian carers to easily access information on the services and support available to them.

You can access the WA Carer Services Directory on the department's website.

WA Carers Strategy

The department launched the WA Carers Strategy in April 2016. Developed in partnership with the Carers Advisory Council and Carers WA, the strategy guides the West Australian community on how to better recognise and support carers.

You can view the WA Carers Strategy on the department's website.

Department of Local Government and Communities

The department supports West Australian carers by:

- providing executive support to the Carers Advisory Council
- maintaining the Carer Services Directory
- advising the Minister on emerging issues and trends for carers
- contributing to inter-agency work relevant to carers
- funding ongoing and short-term activities to support carers (e.g. via Carers WA)
- administering the *Carers Recognition Act 2004* and WA Carers Strategy.

Department of Local Government and Communities

Gordon Stephenson House, 140 William Street, Perth WA 6000

GPO Box R1250, Perth WA 6844

Telephone: (08) 6551 8700

Fax: (08) 6552 1555

Freecall: 1800 620 511 (Country only)

Email: info@dlgc.wa.gov.au

Website: www.dlgc.wa.gov.au

Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) – Tel: 13 14 50



Carer's Recognition Act 2004

What it means for West Australian carers

July 2016



Who is a carer?



The *Western Australian Carers Recognition Act 2004* defines a carer as a person who provides ongoing care, support and assistance to a person with disability, a chronic illness (which includes mental illness) or who is frail, without receiving a salary or wage for the care they provide.

What is the Carers Recognition Act?

The Act is a Western Australian law which recognises the role of carers in the community. It includes the Carers Charter, which outlines how carers are to be treated and how they are to be involved in delivering services that affect them and their caring role.

What does it mean for carers?

The Act formally recognises carers as key partners in the delivery of care. The Carers Charter empowers carers to be involved in decision making, and ensures their needs are considered.

What does it mean for service providers?

The Act requires the Department of Health, Disability Services Commission and non-government services funded by those agencies to do all they can to comply with the Carers Charter. The government agencies are also required to involve carers or their representatives in developing policies or programs that might affect carers and their caring roles.

West Australian Carers Charter

1. Carers must be treated with respect and dignity.
2. The role of carers must be recognised by including carers in the assessment, planning, delivery and review of services that impact on them and the role of carers.
3. The views and needs of carers must be taken into account along with the views, needs and best interests of people receiving care when decisions are made that impact on carers and the role of carers.
4. Complaints made by carers in relation to services that impact on them and the role of carers must be given due attention and consideration.

When things aren't right

If you feel that a relevant service provider has not met their obligations in the Carers Charter, you should firstly raise your concerns with the service provider involved.

If the matter is not resolved you may wish to contact the Health and Disability Service Complaints Office (HaDSCO), who provide an impartial resolution service for complaints about Western Australian health or disability services.

HaDSCO: t: (08) 6551 7600
1800 813 583 (country free)
e: mail@hadsco.wa.gov.au
w: www.hadsco.wa.gov.au



Case study

Mary is the primary carer for her adult daughter Alice who has an intellectual disability.

Alice was recently hospitalised with a virus and is being discharged. Alice saw the doctor by herself and received instructions on how and when to take her medications. Alice asked for information about the side effects of the medication but the doctor would not respond, despite several requests. As Mary was not consulted in the discharge plan, she is unsure what medications Alice needs and when she should give them to her.

Mary complained to the hospital but was unhappy with the result. Mary then contacted HaDSCO and made a complaint under the *Health and Disability Services (Complaints) Act 1995* on behalf of Alice as a patient, and herself as a carer under the *Carers Recognition Act 2004*. HaDSCO liaised with Mary, Alice and the hospital to resolve the matter.

Mary and Alice had their issues resolved and the hospital was encouraged to communicate better and to involve carers in discharge planning.