

A Resource for
Family and Friend Carers



Prepare to Care

Do you provide ongoing care and support to a family member or friend who has disability, a mental health challenge, chronic condition, terminal illness, an alcohol or other drug dependency, or who is frail aged?

Is the person you care for currently in hospital or being admitted into hospital? If so, this book is for you.

This booklet includes:

- Places to write down information you receive from hospital staff so that it can be easily remembered.
- Common hospital terms and what they mean.
- Important information to support you in your caring role.
- Useful contacts for services and supports for both you and the person you care for.

Funded by



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Health**



Welcome, we are here for you!

Carers WA understands that a hospital stay is a stressful time and your main concern is for the person you support.

As well as talking with the hospital staff, you can call Carers WA's dedicated Carer Gateway team on **1800 422 737** to talk through your caring situation. You may be caring for your parent, friend, cousin, sibling, neighbour, child, grandparent or any number or combination of friends or family. Maybe you also have your own health needs and are not sure where to turn? Whatever your situation, we are here, just for you!

Am I a "carer"?

A carer is someone who provides unpaid care and support to a family member or friend who is living with disability, a mental health challenge, a long-term health condition, an alcohol or other drug dependency, or who is frail aged.

Caring for someone at home can be a big commitment, but it is one that many family carers are happy to make. As a loved one's needs change with age or life circumstances, you may find yourself having to take on more responsibility. Carers WA help carers in any caring situation.

About this booklet

This booklet is designed to be used during this hospital admission and the period after discharge. It will help you navigate the hospital system, keep track of important information and provide you with useful contacts and supports. If the person you care for is admitted to hospital regularly, you may want to bring this copy back into hospital with you, so you have information from the most recent admission. Alternatively, if you would like a new copy for each admission that is fine too. Sometimes there are several people caring for the same person, so if you share the caring role with others, you can each have a booklet.

To find the PTC book:

www.carerswa.asn.au/prepare-to-care-hospital-program

My name: _____

Name of the person I care for:

Hospital: _____

Admission date: _____

Discharge date: _____



Acknowledgement of Country

Carers WA acknowledges and honours the Whadjuk Noongar people as the Traditional Owners of the Noongar lands on which the Carers WA office sits. Carers WA pays respect to the Elders, past, present and emerging and to the living cultural, spiritual, family and social relationships that the Traditional Owners have to this land.

Diversity and Inclusion

Carers WA is committed to understanding, embracing and celebrating the rich and multi-dimensional experiences that shape our lives and aims to ensure that everyone who engages with the organisation feels welcome and included. Carers WA welcomes all people irrespective of ethnicity, lifestyle choice, faith, sexual orientation and gender identity.



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Carer services and supports

It can be difficult to know what services are available to you and the person you care for.

Carers WA | Carer Services and Supports¹

Carers WA offers support services for you, as the person caring for your family member or friend. Types of support Carers WA can provide include:

- An opportunity to take a break from the caring role through a range of regular in-person and online support groups in metro and regional locations.
- Providing advice, information and resources to link carers to relevant services.
- Facilitating informative workshops and courses to assist carers to return to the workforce and increase their health and wellbeing.
- Advocating for improved services and supports for carers by addressing carer issues at a state and federal level and providing training for carers to participate in government committees and to use their lived experience to represent the voice of carers in the community.
- Providing support to young carers through community education, one-on-one needs assessment, peer support toolkits and young carer events and activities.

For more information call Carers WA on 1300 227 377 (8.30am-4.30pm) or visit www.carerswa.asn.au

¹ Carers WA, Our Services [website], <https://www.carerswa.asn.au/our-services/>

Carer Gateway²

An Australian Government initiative providing a mix of free in-person, phone, and online supports, services and advice for family carers in Australia. Carers WA is leading the delivery of in-person services in WA, in partnership with HelpingMinds.

Carer Gateway staff can provide information or develop a tailored personalised action plan with supports and services to alleviate areas of strain. These services may include peer support, counselling, funding for practical supports, or respite to have some time away from your caring role. Call **1800 422 737** (8.00am-5.00pm) or search “**Carer Gateway WA**”.

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse carers

Interpreter Services

If you require an interpreter, please call the National Translating and Interpreting Service³ (TIS National) on **13 14 50**. Carers WA can organise interpreters to be available during services we offer by phone or in-person. It is possible to request either a male or female interpreter*.

**Whilst Carers WA and TIS make every effort to provide these services, they may be subject to availability.*

National Relay Service

TTY/voice calls: **133 677**

Speak and Listen: **1300 555 727**

Internet relay users: **www.infrastructure.gov.au/national-relay-service**

² Carers WA, Carer Gateway Services [website], <https://www.carerswa.asn.au/our-services/>

³ National Translating and Interpreting Service, Help and Support [website], <https://www.tisnational.gov.au/en/Help-using-TIS-National-services>

Information for carers in other languages

ISHAR Multicultural Women's Health Services⁴

ISHAR provides a range of inclusive, holistic and culturally sensitive services for women from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds.

ISHAR provides three service streams of women's health, family support and carer support programs. Interpreters are available for all services. Contact **(08) 9345 5335** or visit **www.ishar.org.au**

Department of Health

Visit the HealthyWA website to view health related translated resources: **www.healthywa.wa.gov.au**

Kin Disability Advocacy for Diverse Communities⁵

Kin is a certified independent disability advocacy service helping people with disability challenge barriers to accessing services and empower them to self-advocate. Kin can advocate within the realms of healthcare.

Contact (Freecall) **1800 659 921** or visit **www.kinadvocacy.org.au**

⁴ ISHAR, About Us [website], <https://www.ishar.org.au/about>

⁵ Kin Advocacy [website], www.kinadvocacy.org.au

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family support person/carers

Aboriginal Health Liaison Officers/Staff

Aboriginal Health Liaison Officers (AHLOs) provide a liaison service for Aboriginal people and hospital services.

AHLOs can assist you with the following:

- Visiting the person you care for in hospital.
- Supporting you and the person you care for while in hospital in a culturally appropriate way.
- Navigating the hospital setting.
- Contacting family and friends.
- Linking Aboriginal patients for follow-up care after discharge.

Derbarl Yerrigan Health Service

Derbarl Yerrigan has an Aboriginal Liaison Service which includes direct contact with clients and families, assisting them in the smooth transition to and from hospital, follow-up care on discharge, ongoing specialist appointments and providing transport where necessary. Contact **1300 420 272** or visit **www.dyhs.org.au**.

Aboriginal Health Council of Western Australia (AHCWA)⁶

AHCWA support the development of Aboriginal community-controlled health services, health policy and advocates for Aboriginal community development. They aim to build the capacity of the health workforce to improve social, emotional and general health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people. Contact **(08) 9227 1631** or visit **www.ahcwa.org.au**.

⁶ Aboriginal Health Council of Western Australia, About Us [website], <https://www.ahcwa.org.au/about>

Rural and remote area carers

Rural and remote areas do not always have the same range of resources that are available in the city or large regional centres. To find out what your local hospital can offer, ask the nursing staff on the ward at that hospital. If you are not in hospital and you want more information, you can ask your GP or call the hospital. If you require further assistance, contact the Carers WA Carer Gateway team on **1800 422 737**.

Patient Assisted Travel Scheme⁷

The Patient Assisted Travel Scheme (PATs) provides a subsidy towards travel and where applicable, an accommodation subsidy to assist permanent country residents (and where eligible their escorts). For more information contact your GP or visit **www.wacountry.health.wa.gov.au/Our-patients/Patient-Assisted-Travel-Scheme-PATS**.

The following groups of people are eligible for PATs:

- Permanent residents of country WA and eligible for Medicare.
- Country patients needing to travel more than 100kms (one way) to access nearest eligible specialist service. To access specialist medical treatment for dialysis or cancer the travel criteria is 70 – 100 kms (one way).
- PATs is a subsidy scheme and does not cover all costs associated with travel and accommodation. If the specialist service you need is available locally or able to be conducted via Telehealth, PATs assistance may be declined.

⁷ <https://www.wacountry.health.wa.gov.au/Our-patients/Patient-Assisted-Travel-Scheme-PATS>



Telehealth⁸

On 1 January 2022, expanded telehealth services became an ongoing part of Medicare.

Telehealth allows you to consult a healthcare provider by phone or a video call. This is a good option as it can be more time efficient and reduces your need to organise transport.

You may need to assist the person you care for to access Telehealth by helping them link in to the appointments and resolve any technical issues.

For more information and to access these services, contact your regional hospital, family GP or call **1300 367 166**.

Regional hospital services

Hospitals in rural and remote areas offer a variety of allied health and outpatient services. These services differ in each area, so please contact your local hospital to see what they provide.

⁸ Government of Western Australia, WA Country Health Service (WACHS), Telehealth [website], <http://www.wacountry.health.wa.gov.au/index.php?id=telehealth>

**Information
about the person
requiring care**

Information about the person requiring care

The information you know about the person you care for is valuable to the hospital staff. You can let the staff know what is “normal” for the person you care for and can often alert staff to small changes that may indicate that something is wrong. It has been shown that when staff work in partnership with patients, families and carers there are multiple benefits, including an improved patient experience, reduced time in hospital and a reduction in unplanned events.⁹

Emergency and other contacts

If you are not able to provide care due to your own ill health or other circumstances, list below who can provide back-up support for the person you care for.

Type	Name	Contact
Emergency Contact 1		
Emergency Contact 2		

Other important contacts	Name	Contact
General Practitioner (GP)		
Community Pharmacist		

⁹ Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care, The NSQHS Standards [website], <https://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/standards>

Health history of the person you care for

Rather than having to repeat the health history of the person you care for every time you are asked, if you record it here, you can simply show this information to the hospital staff when they ask you.

Date of Birth: _____

Allergies: _____

Past medical history

Diagnosis	When Diagnosed	Doctor/Hospital

Other Notes: _____

Medical procedures

Procedures	Date	Doctor/Hospital

Special dietary/cultural or other considerations

Please inform hospital staff if there are any special likes, dislikes or routines of the person you care for. This will assist the staff in providing appropriate care.

You may wish to note them down here:



Other information

Health care item	Y/N	Type/Card No.	Location
Medicare Card			
Healthcare Card			
Pension/Benefit (1)			
Pension/Benefit (2)			
Private Health Fund			
Advance Health Directive			
Guardianship or Enduring Guardianship			
Power of Attorney (POA) or Enduring POA			
Will			
Medic-Alert			

Hospital admission

Hospital admission

Information I need to know

When the person you care for is admitted to hospital you may be speaking to several different hospital staff. A hospital admission can be a stressful time not only for the person you are supporting but also for yourself.

Patient and Consumer Centred Care¹⁰

The person-centred approach treats each person respectfully as an individual human being, and not just as a condition to be treated. It involves seeking out and understanding what is important to the patient, their families, carers and support people, fostering trust and establishing mutual respect. It also means working together to share decisions and plan care.

There is good evidence that person-centred care can lead to improvements in safety, quality and cost-effectiveness of health care, as well as improvements in patient and staff satisfaction.

Visiting Hours

Monday-Friday	Saturday-Sunday	Rest Period

¹⁰ Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare, Person-centred care [website], <https://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/our-work/partnering-consumers/person-centred-care>

Hospital main number: _____

Ward or area name: _____ **Direct line:** _____

Ward or area name: _____ **Direct line:** _____

Medical/Nursing staff

Doctors and nurses rotate through 2-3 shifts per day and will do a handover to other staff at a change of shift; this is also called a shift handover or clinical handover, depending on where it is done.

Doctors will also see the person you care for during a ward round. This may be a combination of doctors or just one and they may have the nursing shift coordinator with them to provide input and record any changes to the care, treatment or discharge plan.

Ward round and handover

As the patient's carer, if you are present at the time of staff doing a bedside ward round or handover, this is an opportunity to discuss information you have regarding the patient.

This could include the person's usual condition and any factors you are aware of that hospital staff should consider, to prevent any unwanted outcomes for the patient.

Consent

If the patient agrees, it is appropriate for you to be present during the handover; if the patient does not agree, you may be asked to leave. If the patient does not have the capacity

to make this decision, as the patient's carer you should be included in any decision-making that will have an impact on your caring role (see Carers Recognition Act (2004) and Carers Charter).

However, if the handover/ward round includes sharing confidential information or providing legal consent, you would also need to have a relationship with the patient or legal guardianship that would allow you to do this as well as the patient giving their consent (if applicable). If you are not comfortable discussing information about your caring role or regarding the person you care for in their presence, you may ask to speak with hospital staff away from the patient.

Family meeting

You or the staff can initiate a special meeting (often called a family meeting) if there are complex decisions to be made. This allows all the relevant health care team members to come together with you (with or without other family members/significant others and the patient depending on the circumstances) to discuss all aspects of the situation before making any decisions or planning.

Staff involved in the patient's care will be present. This is an opportunity for you, the carer, to prepare and gather information, as well as present your point of view.

It can be hard to remember information when you are under stress. If you write things down as you go along, it will make it easier to look back and find information that you may need later.

CARE call

CARE Call is the process in all WA public hospitals for you as the carer, patient or family member to use if you are worried you or the person you care for is getting sicker whilst in hospital.

The 3-step process is in place to ensure the nurses and doctors caring for the patient are aware of any changes to their health.

Step 1 – If you are worried about a change in the condition of the person you care for or your own condition, tell a nurse or staff member.

Step 2 – If you are still worried, tell a senior nurse or staff member.

Step 3 – If your concern is urgent you can call your hospital's CARE Call line or use the dedicated CARE Call phone installed in some emergency departments.

Each hospital has a different CARE Call phone number which will direct you to a dedicated senior staff member who will listen to your concerns and action these urgently. Ask a staff member at your hospital for the phone number where you are staying.



Discharge planning

The aim of discharge planning is to ensure a safe and smooth discharge from hospital.

It is important that you, as the carer, are also involved in the discharge planning. Carers Recognition Act (2004) and Carers Charter states that carers should be involved in any decision-making that may impact on their caring role. The only time this would not occur is if the person you care for does not consent.

The ward staff should talk to you about the care you will need to provide to your loved one, and you need to be comfortable providing that care. Speak up if you are worried that you may not be able to cope. You can speak to nursing staff or the social worker to organise a family meeting if you would like to discuss important issues in more depth.

Hospital staff	Name	Other information
Consultant/ Specialist/Doctor		
Registrar Doctor		
Intern/Junior Medical Officer/ Doctor		
Clinical Nurse Specialist or Manager		

Condition/diagnosis for this admission/procedure:

Information from the medical/nursing team

Date	Name

My questions

Often, we think of questions we would like to ask when we are at home or during other moments. To help you remember them, write them down as they come to you and note the answer below.

Question: _____

Answer: _____

By: _____ Date: _____

Question: _____

Answer: _____

By: _____ Date: _____

Question: _____

Answer: _____

By: _____ Date: _____

Communications page

Whilst the person you care for is in hospital you will talk to many different health staff. At this stressful time, it can be very hard to remember everything that has been said.

A communication page is a space to record information during these conversations.

Notes: _____

Considerations

If there are special considerations in relation to taking or using any medications, you can request a print-out of instructions from the hospital or community pharmacist. This is safer than writing it down in your own words just in case you did not quite hear or understand the instructions correctly. If the GP changes any medications after leaving hospital, ask your community pharmacist for an updated list to replace this one.

You may be asked by the doctor if the person you care for drinks alcohol or takes recreational or illegal/illicit drugs. This is confidential information and knowing this information may prevent reactions to treatment/s or other medications provided in the hospital.

Glossary

Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT)

A team of nurses, social workers, physiotherapists and occupational therapists led by a geriatrician that determine what level of care is needed in order to assist someone to remain living in their own home. This can be arranged by your GP or by a social worker if you are in hospital.

Clinical Handover

Clinical handover is the transfer of professional responsibility and accountability for some or all aspects of care for a patient to another person or professional group on a temporary or permanent basis.¹¹

¹¹ <http://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/publications/rtf-safety-and-quality-improvement-guide-standard-6-clinical-handover/>

Clinical Nurse Manager (CNM)

The CNM is an experienced nurse in charge of the administrative aspects of running the ward and the nursing staff (e.g. rosters, etc.).

Consultant

The consultant is the most experienced doctor. They are specialists within their area. May also be known as a 'specialist'.

Discharge Coordinator

A nurse, social worker, or other health care worker who coordinates a patient's transition (move) from one care setting to the next.

Discharge Plan

Documentation of what has happened whilst a patient has been in hospital including medications required and any follow up treatment.

Discharge Planning

A process involving the patient, carer, family and hospital staff to ensure a safe and smooth discharge from hospital.

Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) Order

A DNR order instructs health care workers not to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) or other actions to restart a person's heart or breathing once it has stopped.

Enduring Power of Attorney (EPA)¹²

An EPA is a legal agreement that enables a person over 18 to

¹² http://www.publicadvocate.wa.gov.au/E/enduring_power_of_attorney.aspx

appoint a trusted person - or people - to make financial and property decisions on their behalf.

Enduring Power of Guardianship (EPG)¹³

An EPG is a legal document that authorises a person of your choice to make important personal, lifestyle and treatment decisions on your behalf should you ever become incapable of making such decisions yourself.

Enrolled Nurse (EN)

An enrolled nurse is a nurse who works under the guidance of a registered nurse. They are trained at Technical and Further Education (TAFE) rather than university.

Some enrolled nurses have done further studies and may have extra skills or be referred to as Advanced Skilled Enrolled Nurses.

Family Meetings

Family meetings are used to inform families, gather information, make decisions, resolve any possible conflict and plan for the future.

Guardian¹⁴

A guardian can be appointed to make personal, lifestyle and treatment decisions in the best interests of an adult who is not capable of making reasoned decisions for themselves. This ensures that their quality of life is maintained, but also protects them from the risk of neglect, exploitation and abuse.

¹³ <http://www.publicadvocate.wa.gov.au>

¹⁴ <http://www.publicadvocate.wa.gov.au/g/guardianship.aspx>

Informed Consent

A legal term meaning that a person with mental capacity has given permission for medical treatment. Consent comes after a full disclosure (talk) of treatment risks and options.

Occupational Therapist (OT)

Assesses patient's levels of independence, cognitive skills and home safety. Mental health OTs provide education sessions on stress management, community engagement and disease management.

Physiotherapist

Treat physical problems caused by accidents, illness and ageing, particularly those that affect the muscles, bones, heart, circulation and lungs.

Registered Medical Officer/Intern (RMO) (also called Intern or Junior Medical Officer - JMO)

The RMO is the most junior doctor on staff.

Registered Nurse (RN)

University educated nurses who work across most areas of a hospital and may specialise in certain areas. RNs have varying degrees of experience.

Registrar

The registrar has completed a medical degree. They have some extra experience in a specialty area but work under the consultant's instructions.

Rehabilitation ("Rehab")

Services to help people get back their mental (thinking and feeling) and physical (body) functions lost due to injury or illness.

Shift Coordinator

A nurse who is in charge of the coordination of the ward staff and the patients for that particular shift.

Social Worker

Deal with personal and social problems and may counsel individuals through a crisis due to death, illness, relationship breakdown, finances or other reasons.

Team Meeting

When the ward team gathers together to discuss each patient on the ward, the progress they're making, any issues or concerns and tentative discharge plans. This meeting is for staff only, but you could ask the nurse in charge to raise important information on your behalf, as well as to update you after the meeting.

Transition Care

Transition care is designed to improve older peoples' independence and confidence after a hospital stay. It allows them to return home rather than prematurely enter residential care.

Ward Round

This is when the doctor/s and nursing shift coordinator comes around to see the doctors' patients to review their condition and make any plans regarding treatment, care planning or discharge planning.

Medications

Types of medications¹⁵

- A medication is NOT always prescribed, it MAY be herbal medicine, vitamins, minerals or nutritional supplements. It may be in the form of an inhaler, cream, patch, injection, tablet or capsule.
- You may get medicines from doctors, nurses, pharmacists, homeopaths, naturopaths or herbalists.
- You may choose medicines yourself at a pharmacy, chemist, health food store or supermarket.

It is important to inform the doctor and/or pharmacist about any medications that the patient is taking and if they have had an allergic reaction to any medication in the past, for example, a rash. Bring in any medications the person you care for takes in their original containers or dispensing pack if possible, including non-prescription medications.

What is a generic medication?¹⁶

Many medications are available as different brands. They all contain the same active ingredient; however, they may be packaged differently or may look different. The active ingredient is the chemical that makes the medicine work. The pharmacist may offer you or the person you care for an alternative brand to the one that the doctor has prescribed. It is your choice as to which you prefer to use.

¹⁵ Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare, Medication safety [website], <https://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/our-work/medication-safety>

¹⁶ NPS Medicine Wise, Information for Consumers and Carers [website], <https://www.nps.org.au/consumers>



Medication checklist

My questions for the doctor or pharmacist

- ☐ What does the medicine do?
- ☐ When should the medication be taken?
- ☐ How long should it be used for?
- ☐ Does this medication need to be taken with anything or at a certain time?
- ☐ Are there any side effects, or should the person I care for expect to feel any different while using this medicine?
- ☐ Will this medication interact with any other medications?
- ☐ Is there anything that might affect the way this medication works (e.g., food, drinks, storage)?
- ☐ What should I do if a dose is missed?
- ☐ Using medications is a problem for me or for the person I care for due to sight/swallowing/strength/memory. How can you help me with this?
- ☐ What is the best way for me to dispose of old medication?

Notes: _____

Leaving hospital

Before the person you care for leaves hospital, there should be a discharge plan worked out. If they can, the person you care for should be involved in developing this plan. This is called shared decision-making.

Shared decision-making involves bringing together a patient's values, goals and concerns with the best available evidence about benefits, risks and uncertainties of treatment, to achieve appropriate health care decisions. It involves clinicians and patients (and carers where appropriate) making decisions about the patient's management together.

Carers should also be involved in any decision-making that may impact on their caring role as per the Carers Recognition Act (2004) and Carers Charter (see page 55 of this book). The only time this would not occur is if the person you care for does not consent (if they can) to you receiving information about their condition or care requirements.

Checklist before leaving hospital

- ☐ Has the medication been supplied for the person you care for?
- ☐ Have you/the person you care for received a copy of the discharge medication list?
- ☐ If there are any medications that have been stopped, have these been disposed of safely?
- ☐ Have services for the person you care for been organised to start after discharge?
- ☐ Has any equipment you need to provide care for the patient been organised prior to leaving hospital?
- ☐ Have you been shown how to use it?
- ☐ Have you/the person you care for received a copy of the discharge summary (this also gets sent to the patient's GP)?
- ☐ Is a follow-up appointment with a GP required? If so, hospital staff should advise you as to how soon the person you care for needs to see the GP.
- ☐ Have you thought about how you may take some time out for yourself, to take a break?
- ☐ Are there any family members or friends you can call on for help should you need it?
- ☐ Does the person you care for have any follow up appointments you need to write down or have you/the person you care for been given their appointment cards?
- ☐ Have you registered with Carer Gateway to receive ongoing support and advice? If not, call **1800 422 737**.

Planning for after hospital

[illegible]

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

After hospital discharge

After hospital

Once you leave hospital, the person you care for has their health managed by a General Practitioner (GP). The GP should receive a discharge summary from the hospital. If the person you care for does not have a regular GP, you may be given a paper copy of the discharge summary. Take this to the next GP appointment that is organised. The person you care for may also be referred to specialist outpatient appointments at the hospital or in the community.

What if the person I care for does not, or will not be living with me after leaving hospital?

The person you care for may have already been living in supported accommodation (e.g., an aged care facility, hostel, or group home) or did not live with you (e.g., lived alone or with a friend/relative) before they came into hospital. If, following discharge from hospital, they are not able to return to their home and are moving into supported accommodation this does not mean your caring role ceases. In fact, you are often still providing, arranging, or managing care for someone who does not live with you.

It is still important to acknowledge your caring role and to ensure you seek out support for yourself. If this is the first time the person you care for is going to be living apart from you following leaving hospital you may experience feelings of loss, guilt, and grief. If you would like to discuss this further or talk to someone about how you are feeling, please call the Carers WA Carer Gateway Team on **1800 422 737**.

Support services at home

You may be in a situation where the person you care for requires extra help with daily activities such as showering, transport, cleaning, and shopping. While paid support staff may be providing this help a few hours a week, it is important to remember that you are still in a caring role and have access to Carers WA services.

Community services

Please be aware that depending on where you live not all the following services may be available. Also note, certain eligibility criteria may apply for these services.

When the person you care for is discharged from hospital, there may be services available to assist with things such as nursing care, personal care, shopping, transport, taking a break and housekeeping. If the person you are caring for is still in hospital, you can talk to the doctor, nurse, a social worker, or discharge planner about services available.

If the person you care for has already left hospital, please discuss options with your GP or call Carer Gateway on **1800 422 737** for more information. If you have any issues in accessing services e.g., long waiting times before you can have services provided, feel free to call the agency providing care and if you still have issues regarding the impact this has on your caring role, contact the number above.

What home and community supports are available?

The Commonwealth Home Support Program¹⁷ in WA (CHSP) provides basic support services to some older people, people with a disability and their carers, to assist them to continue living independently at home. You may be eligible for CHSP if you are older and frail and have difficulty with everyday tasks, if you have a disability or if you are a carer of a frail older person or someone with a disability. If you or the person you care for is under 65 with a disability, check for your local National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) provider.

CHSP services include:

- Support to participate in social activity in a group or one-on-one.
- Assistance with everyday household tasks.
- Assistance to enhance nutrition, function, strength, independence, and safety.
- Assistance to support independence in personal care activities such as showering and dressing.
- Assistance to keep up with essential activities such as shopping, banking, and maintaining social contacts.

NOTE: From 1st July 2025, a new Support at Home program will replace the existing Home Care Packages and Short-Term Restorative Care programs. The Commonwealth Home Support Program, will transition no earlier than 1st July 2027. This change will provide more flexibility and person-centred care, more flexible funding and a more smooth and accessible entry point for assessments.¹⁸ You can contact My Aged Care on **1800 200 422**.

¹⁷ Australian Government, My Aged Care, Commonwealth Home Support Program [website], <https://www.myagedcare.gov.au/help-at-home/commonwealth-home-support-programme>

¹⁸ Australian Government, Department of Health and Aged Care [website], <https://www.health.gov.au/news/new-support-at-home-program-to-be-rolled-out-in-2-stages>

Transport

Patient transport services

Patient transport services may provide some non-emergency transport for people attending hospital appointments. Please speak with either the hospital social worker, your treating team or outpatient clinic staff for more information. If you want to book transport prior to the person you care for being admitted to the hospital, please phone the hospital and ask to speak with the Patient Transport Department.

Local council/shire transport

Many local council/shire offices provide transport for people to access hospital appointments.

Carer respite

Respite helps carers find a balance between caring for others and caring for themselves.

What is respite?

Respite is when carers are given the opportunity of a break from their usual caring role and duties. The tasks associated with their caring role are temporarily provided by someone else.

Respite provides time out for both carers and the person they care for.

Organising respite

Respite for people with care needs can be organised through My Aged Care if the person is aged 65 or over. Alternatively, through the NDIS if the person has a disability and can get an NDIS package.

Some funding for respite for carers may be available through Carer Gateway as either emergency respite or planned respite, depending on eligibility criteria. This will be ascertained during the intake process.

Visit:

My Aged Care

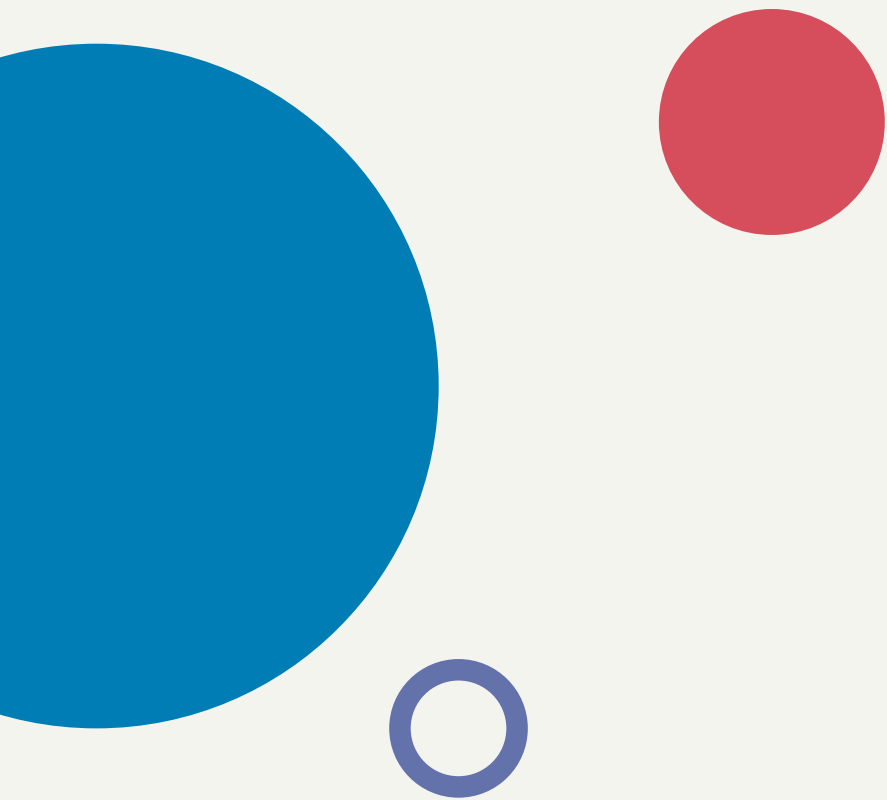
www.myagedcare.gov.au or call 1800 200 422
(Monday to Friday 8.00am - 8.00pm and
Saturday 10.00am - 2.00pm)

NDIS

www.ndis.gov.au or call 1800 800 110
(Monday to Friday 8.00am – 8.00pm)

Carer Gateway

www.carergateway.gov.au or call 1800 422 737
(Monday to Friday 8.00am – 5.00pm)



**Self-care for you
– the carer**

Self-care for you – the carer

What about YOU?

Your own health and mental health are important. Being in a caring role may, for some people, bring feelings of stress, guilt or loss. It is important to acknowledge these feelings and speaking with someone may be beneficial.

You may want to use the time while the person you care for is in hospital to get the extra support that you need, either by asking to speak to a social worker or contacting the Carers WA Carer Gateway Team. Consider if you need to catch up on some of your own appointments.

Maintaining your own health and wellbeing is an important part of sustaining your caring role.

Taking a break

Taking care of yourself

Looking after your physical and mental health is important, so be sure to make this a priority. There is no need to feel guilty about caring for you. Many people receiving care feel better if they know their carers are taking time to enjoy themselves and rest.

Taking a break

You have a choice as to whether you spend time with the person you care for when they are in hospital, or you may want to use this time to take a break. You can also use this time to plan ahead how you can take regular breaks following discharge from hospital.



Some simple ideas to take a break:



Get some exercise



Get enough sleep



Maintain a healthy diet



Be social



Practice your own spirituality or religion



Do something for yourself everyday

My thoughts

Writing down your thoughts can help with maintaining your own health and wellbeing whilst in the caring role, as well as remembering information you have been told by others. A counsellor may be able to assist with how to get the most out of keeping a journal.

Thoughts/Notes: _____

Your role as a carer

Often people don't identify themselves as a 'carer'. But if you are providing more assistance than a spouse, parent, sibling or friend normally would, you are a carer.

Being aware of your feelings and emotions

It is normal for carers to experience a range of feelings and emotions, including fear, resentment and happiness.

Being aware of your feelings and emotions will help you to cope with any grief, anxiety and sadness that are a natural part of being a carer. Ensure that you also recognise your physical and emotional limits.

Asking for help and accepting it

Do not be afraid to ask for help. Your wellbeing is vital to your role as a carer. Try to share the load so you don't become overwhelmed and exhausted.

Providing care at home is a big commitment which requires the help of family members, friends and others close to the person who is unwell. Often family and friends would like to help but are unsure what to do. Practical assistance like making a meal, walking the dog, buying groceries and hanging out the washing can make a big difference to your load.

Communicating effectively

It is normal for your relationship with the person you are caring for to have ups and downs. Your relationship may at times feel strained, or stronger than ever.

It is important to keep communicating with the person you are caring for, even about difficult topics like their illness and the future.

Communication problems are often at the heart of family conflict, so it can help to get everyone together to discuss what is happening and why. Consider asking a skilled professional to facilitate a family meeting and follow this up with regular catch-ups where all parties can share information, problem solve, and provide support.

There may come a time though when you are not able to continue in your caring role. Even though you may have promised that you would always look after someone, it may not be possible. This is ok. There is no right or wrong way to feel about giving up this role and you may find you still want to be involved but in a lesser way.

Useful contacts and information



Useful Contacts

This list will provide you with some information about supports and services available to you and where to find them. Carers WA and the Carer Gateway can help you with any questions you may have, provide you with referrals, and can be contacted on **1800 422 737**.

Carer Services

Carer Gateway

1800 422 737

www.carergateway.gov.au

Carer Gateway is an Australian Government initiative providing a mix of free online, telephone and in-person support services and advice for family carers.

Carers WA is leading the delivery of these in-person services, in partnership with HelpingMinds.

Carers WA

1300 227 377

www.carerswa.asn.au

The peak body for family and friend carers in WA. Carers WA provides a range of innovative practical and emotional support services.

Emergency Contacts

Ambulance, Fire, Police

For emergencies call 000.

Emergency Contacts

Crisis Care

1800 199 008

Operates 24 hours a day,
7 days a week

Crisis Care provides telephone information and referrals for people experiencing crisis, especially for people at risk of homelessness, domestic violence, suicide ideation or child protection.

Lifeline

13 11 14

www.lifeline.org.au

Online chat available

Operates 24 hours a day,
7 days a week

Providing all Australians experiencing emotional distress with access to 24 hour crisis support and suicide prevention services.

Mental Health Emergency Response Line (MHERL)

Perth Region 1300 555 788

Peel region 1800 676 822

Operates 24 hours a day,
7 days a week

Responds to mental health emergencies including psychiatric emergency assessment and advisory service to assist mental health clients and their carers.

Emergency Contacts

Rural Link

1800 552 002

Mon-Fri: 4:30pm to 8:30am
Sat, Sun & Public Holidays:
24 hours

After-hours telephone service for people in rural and regional Western Australia experiencing a mental health crisis.

Beyond Blue

1300 224 636

www.beyondblue.org.au

online chat available

Operates 24 hours a
day, 7 days a week

Focused on supporting people affected by anxiety, depression, and suicide.

Suicide call back service

1300 659 467

www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au

Operates 24 hours a day,
7 days a week

A free nationwide service providing phone and online counselling to people affected by suicide.

Family drug support

1300 368 186

www.fds.org.au

Operates 24 hours a day,
7 days a week

Offers telephone support service for families affected by alcohol and other drug issues.

Emergency Contacts

Poisons Information Centre

13 11 26

www.scgh.health.wa.gov.au/Our-Services/Service-directory/Poisons

Operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

A telephone service line for all areas, all hours. Provides consultation regarding poisoning. This includes prescription/non-prescription medication, household and industrial chemicals, plants, animal/insect bites, pesticides and other agricultural products.

Samaritans

Helpline:

(08) 63 839 850

Office:

(08) 9381 5725

www.thesamaritans.org.au

Operates 8am to 8pm

The crisis line provides anonymous, non-judgemental, non-religious emotional support from appropriately trained individuals.

Emergency Contacts

Domestic Violence Liaison Officer (WA Police)

13 14 44

www.entrypointperth.com.au/directory/domestic-violence-liaison-officer-wa-police-24-hrs

Operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Provides support to victims of family violence by providing information on relevant laws/community intervention.

1800 Respect

1800 737 732

1800respect.org.au

Operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

National domestic family and sexual violence counselling service. Supports everyone impacted by domestic, family and sexual violence, including men.

13 Yarn

13 92 76

www.13yarn.org.au

Operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

National crisis support line for mob who are feeling overwhelmed or having difficulty coping. Provides confidential one-on-one yarning opportunity with a Lifeline-trained Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Crisis Supporter.

Aged Care

My Aged Care

Department of Health
1800 200 422
www.myagedcare.gov.au

My Aged Care is your one-stop-shop for aged care services and information in Australia.

Advocacy

Advocare

(08) 9479 7566
Free call: 1800 655 566 (Country Callers)
Elder Abuse Helpline: 1300 724 679
www.advocare.org.au

Advocare provides a free, professional advocacy service for older Western Australians to understand their rights, resolve any issues with aged and community care service provision and access the right supports.

Kin Disability Advocacy for Diverse Communities

1800 659 921
www.kinadvocacy.org.au

Kin is a certified independent disability advocacy service helping people with disability challenge barriers to accessing services and empower them to self-advocate. Kin can advocate within the realms of healthcare.

Developmental Disability WA (DDWA)

(08) 9420 7203
www.ddwa.org.au

Supporting people with developmental disabilities and their families

Advocacy

Explorability Inc.

(08) 6361 6001
1800 290 690
www.explorability.org.au

Provides a specialist advocacy service for people with a disability, their families and carers in Western Australia.

Health Consumers' Council

(08) 9221 3422
Free call: 1800 620 780
www.hconc.org.au

The Health Consumers' Council (HCC) is an independent community-based organisation, representing the consumers' voice in health policy, planning, research and service delivery.

Mental Health Advocacy Service

(08) 6234 6300
Free call: 1800 999 057
www.wa.gov.au/organisation/mental-health-advocacy-service

A free, independent service, helping people with mental health issues know and protect their rights.

People with Disability WA (PWDWA)

(08) 9420 7279
Country Callers: 1800 193 331
www.pwdwa.org

PWDWA provides non-legal advocacy to people with disabilities who have serious or urgent problems.

Counselling

HelpingMinds

Metro (08) 9427 7100
Regional free call:
1800 811 747

www.helpingminds.org.au

HelpingMinds offers support and services to children, youth, adults and families caring for someone with a mental illness.

Community services and supports

Alzheimer's WA

1300 66 77 88

www.alzheimerswa.org.au

Alzheimer's WA provides a range of social support and engagement opportunities for people living with dementia and their carers.

ConnectGroups

(08) 9364 6909

www.connectgroups.org.au

ConnectGroups/Support Groups Association WA Inc. is the peak body for self-help and support groups across the state.

Commonwealth Home Support Program

1800 200 422

www.myagedcare.gov.au/help-at-home/commonwealth-home-support-programme

The Commonwealth Home Support Program provides services for some older people and their carers to assist them to continue to live independently at home.

Complaints

Advocare

See contacts under Advocacy.

Care Opinion

1300 662 996

www.careopinion.org.au

A public voice to share your experiences of Australian Health and Care services, good or bad. They pass your stories on to the right people to try and make a difference.

Health and Disability Services Complaints Office

(08) 6551 7600

1800 813 583

TTY: Phone 133 677 then ask for (08) 9222 4222

www.hadsco.wa.gov.au

The Health and Disability Services Complaints Office (HaDSCO) is an independent statutory authority providing an impartial resolution service for complaints relating to health, disability and mental health services provided in WA.

Ombudsman Western Australia

(08) 9220 7555

Free call: 1800 117 000

www.ombudsman.wa.gov.au

The Ombudsman investigates complaints about Western Australian public authorities including state government agencies, statutory authorities, local governments and public universities.

Culturally and linguistically diverse information

Kin Disability Advocacy for Diverse Communities	See contacts under Advocacy.
Umbrella Multicultural Community Care (08) 9275 4411 umbrellacommunitycare.com.au	Culturally appropriate aged care services for seniors in the community.

Disability

Companion Card Program 1800 617 337 www.wacompanioncard.org.au	Supports Western Australians with a significant and permanent disability who require attendant care to participate at community venues and events.
Multicultural Services Centre of WA (MSCWA) (08) 9328 2699 www.mscwa.com.au	Supporting culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) Western Australians, addressing unmet needs of migrants and refugees

Disability

Department of Communities – Disability Services (08) 9222 4580 access@communities.wa.gov.au www.wa.gov.au/organisation/departments-of-communities/disability-services	The Disability Services offer support to individuals, families and carers through providing services, funding and information.
Explorability Inc.	See contacts under Advocacy.
Kiind (08) 6164 9806 www.kiind.com.au	Supporting family members and carers of a child with a disability or special need.
National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Free call: 1800 800 110 TTY: 1800 555 677 www.ndis.gov.au	Provides funding to eligible people with disability to gain more time with family and friends, greater independence, access to new skills, jobs, or volunteering in their community, and an improved quality of life.

Drug and alcohol services

Alcohol and Drug Support Line

(08) 9442 5000
Free call: 1800 198 024

Operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Professional support funded by the Mental Health Commission.

Drug and Alcohol Withdrawal Network (DAWN)

(08) 9388 5000
www.sjog.org.au

Assists people to reduce or stop their substance abuse by providing care or support at home.

Next Step Drug and Alcohol Services

(08) 9219 1919

Next Step Drug and Alcohol Services provide a range of treatment services for people experiencing problems associated with their alcohol and other drug use, as well as support for families.

Parent and Family Drug Support Line

(08) 9442 5050
Free call: 1800 653 203

Anyone concerned about a loved one's drug use can call. This Mental Health Commission funded service provides confidential, anonymous professional and peer support.

Drug and alcohol services

Wungening Aboriginal Corporation

(08) 9221 1411
www.wungening.com.au

Provides holistic and culturally appropriate programs to assist with the treatment and prevention of alcohol and drug misuse amongst Aboriginal people.

Gambling Helpline

1800 858 858
www.gamblinghelponline.org.au

Operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Support and counselling for anyone affected by gambling.

Equipment

Indigo (formerly Independent Living Centre)

(08) 9381 0600
www.indigosolutions.org.au

Indigo provides information and advice, assessment, funding and hire services. This enables Western Australians of all ages and abilities to live more independent and fulfilling lives.

Financial support/legal advice

Services Australia (Centrelink/Medicare) 13 27 17 (Disability, Sickness and Carers line) www.servicesaustralia.gov.au	A Government Agency providing financial assistance to eligible carers. This includes the Carers Allowance and Carers Payment. <i>*Eligibility criteria applies.</i> Centrelink has a Social Worker for carers who you may request to speak to (phone 13 28 50).
Mental Health Law Centre 1800 620 285 www.mhlcwa.org.au	Free legal advice for people with mental illness.
Financial hardship crisis payment www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/crisis-payment	A one- off payment if you've experienced an extreme circumstance and are in severe financial hardship. You'll need to have Centrelink linked to your myGov account to claim this payment.

Financial support/legal advice

Life Support Equipment Electricity Subsidy Scheme (08) 9262 1373 concessions.communities.wa.gov.au/Concessions/Pages/Life-Support-Equipment-Electricity-Subsidy-Scheme.aspx	Assists financially disadvantaged persons (those with concession cards), or their dependants to meet the electricity costs associated with operating life support equipment at home.
Office of the Public Advocate 1300 858 455 (08) 9278 7300 Level 2, International House, 26 St Georges Terrace, Perth WA www.publicadvocate.wa.gov.au	The Office of the Public Advocate provides information and advice on guardianship, administration, Enduring Power of Attorney, Enduring Power of Guardianship and protecting vulnerable adults.
Public Trustee 1300 746 116 553 Hay Street, Perth WA public.trustee@justice.wa.gov.au www.publictrustee.wa.gov.au	The Public Trustee offers a range of free and fee-based asset management including Will and EPA drafting and deceased estate administration.

Financial support/legal advice

National Debt Helpline

1800 007 007
www.ndh.org.au
 online chat available

Professional financial counsellors offer a free, independent and confidential service that helps people tackle their debt problems.

Consumer credit legal service

(08) 9221 7066
www.cclswa.org.au

Provide legal advice and assistance to, and advocacy on behalf of, people with issues arising out of their credit and debt related problems.

Legal Aid WA

1300 650 579
www.legalaid.wa.gov.au

Aims to promote access to legal services and information relating to criminal, civil and family law.

Medical Advice

Healthdirect Australia

Free call: 1800 022 222
www.healthdirect.org.au

24 hours a day, 7 days a week health information and advice service.

Medication

Poisons Information Centre

13 11 26

See under emergency contacts.

Interpreter/translation services

Auslan Interpreter Service

1300 287 526
www.auslanservices.com

Auslan Interpreter Service is a national service that provides interpreters for hearing-impaired patients and carers.

National Relay Service

Voice: 1800 555 660
 TTY: 1800 555 630
helpdesk@relayservice.com.au
www.relayservice.com.au

A phone solution for people who are deaf or who have a hearing or speech impediment.

Translating and Interpreting Services

13 14 50
www.tisnational.gov.au

Provides translation and interpretation to assist with accessing health services. If you or the person you care for requires an interpreter, please call TIS, they can contact who you need to speak to while you are on the phone.

Access hub

1800 075 001
www.infrastructure.gov.au/media-communications-arts/phone/services-people-disability/accesshub

Information for people who are Deaf, hard of hearing or who have a speech impairment and need to communicate over the phone.

Mental health	
HelpingMinds	See contacts under Counselling.
Mental Health Advocacy Service (08) 6234 6300 Free call: 1800 999 057 www.wa.gov.au/organisation/mental-health-advocacy-service	A free independent service helping people with mental health illness know and protect their rights. They provide information and advocacy.
Mental Health Emergency Response Line (MHERL)	See under emergency contacts.
Mental Health Law Centre (MHLC) (08) 9328 8012 Free call: 1800 620 285 www.mhlcwa.org.au TTY: 1800 720 101	See under financial help/legal advice.
Mental Illness Fellowship of Western Australia (MIFWA) (08) 9237 8900 www.mifwa.org.au info@mifwa.org.au	They offer comprehensive information and support services to people with mental illness, their carers, families and friends.

Mental health	
Office of the Chief Psychiatrist (08) 6553 0000 reception@ocp.wa.gov.au	The key functions of the Chief Psychiatrist are legislative responsibilities, expert advice and medications.
Richmond Wellbeing 1800 742 466 www.rw.org.au	Richmond Wellbeing provides accommodation and support services to people with a diagnosable mental illness, as well as support for their carers.
Palliative Care	
Palliative Care WA 1300 551 704 www.palliativecarewa.asn.au	Palliative Care WA is the peak body for the palliative care sector in WA. They work for the community and with the palliative care, aged care and community services sectors to ensure access to quality palliative care services for all Western Australians.

Transport/parking

Patient Assisted Travel Scheme (PATS)

Please contact your local hospital and ask to speak to the PATS officer or your GP for further information.

www.wacountry.health.wa.gov.au/Our-patients/Patient-Assisted-Travel-Scheme-PATS

PATS provides financial support for travel and accommodation for eligible patients and their approved escorts needing to travel to access specialist medical services.

St John Ambulance

Non-emergency number:

(08) 9334 1222

www.stjohnwa.com.au

The St John's non-emergency number can be used to make a booking for an ambulance transfer or for non-emergency situations. In an emergency always call 000.

Taxi User Subsidy Scheme

1300 660 147

(08) 9216 8109

www.transport.wa.gov.au/aboutus/taxi-user-subsidy-scheme.asp

The Taxi User Subsidy Scheme provides taxi travel at a reduced rate for people who have a disability that will prevent them using conventional public transport services.

The Carers Recognition Act (2004) and Carers Charter¹⁹

Introduction

The Carers Recognition Act (2004) came into effect on the 1st January 2005 and is an important step in supporting the crucial and often complex role of carers.

The Act is aimed at changing the culture of service providers so that the impact on carers is considered when services are assessed, planned, delivered and reviewed.

A key part of the Act requires service providers to comply with the Western Australian Carers Charter. The Charter provides clear direction on how carers are to be treated and how carers are to be involved in the delivery of services.

Background

This legislation was developed in response to calls by carers for greater recognition and consideration by service providers.

In passing the Carers Recognition Act (2004), the Western Australian government is acknowledging the estimated 230,000 carers in Western Australia who provide informal or unpaid care to family members, friends or neighbours. It was the first legislation of its type in Australia.

¹⁹ Government of Western Australia, Department of Communities, Carers Recognition Act 2004 [website], <https://dlgc.communities.wa.gov.au/Publications/Pages/Carers-Recognition-Act-2004.aspx> (accessed 28 May 2021)

What does the Carers Recognition Act (2004) mean for carers?

- This legislation formally recognises carers as key partners in the delivery of care.
- It provides a means for carers to be involved in the assessment, planning, delivery and review of services that impact on them and the caring role.
- It allows carers to make a complaint about how they are treated and involved in decision making processes.

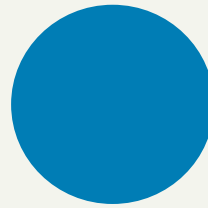
Carers Charter

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 considered 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.

Disclaimer

The information in this booklet is current at time of print. If any of the services mentioned in here are no longer available, please call the Carers WA Carer Gateway Team on 1800 422 737 and we can put you in touch with the services you require. Please note this booklet is for carers living in Western Australia.

Whilst all effort has been made to provide correct details, Carers WA is not liable for any outcomes as a result of using this booklet. If you have any queries regarding your own health or the health of the person you care for, please seek medical advice. This booklet is not to replace medical advice. Some services will differ from hospital to hospital and in regional and remote hospitals/health services. If there are any services mentioned in this booklet that are not available in your area, please speak to the staff at the hospital you are visiting or call the Carers WA Carer Gateway Team on 1800 422 737.



Carers WA

Carers WA is a non-profit, community-based organisation and registered charity dedicated to improving the lives of family carers in Western Australia. Part of the National Network of Carers Associations, Carers WA is the peak body recognised by government as the voice of family carers.



Phone

1300 227 377



Email

info@carerswa.asn.au



Website

www.carerswa.asn.au

Search "Carers WA"



Translating and Interpreting Services

13 14 50 (24 hours, 7 days)



An Australian Government Initiative



24-hour relay call numbers:

TTY/voice calls	133 677
Speak and Listen	1300 555 727
SMS relay	0423 677 767