

Guide to the NSW Carers (Recognition) Act 2010

Why the Act is needed in NSW

- The *Carers (Recognition) Act 2010* (the Act) is needed to support the social inclusion of carers in NSW who provide support to another person because of disability, chronic illness, mental illness, dementia or ageing.
- In NSW there are approximately 850,000 family members, friends and neighbours who are carers.
- The Act introduces a standard definition of a carer which will help family, friends and service providers to identify carers*.

The Act provides recognition for carers' contribution to their community and the person they care for through the establishment of a NSW Carers Charter.

The Act established a NSW Carers Advisory Council to promote the interests of carers. The Council also reviews and makes recommendations to the Minister for Disability Services and Minister for Ageing on relevant issues. The majority of members are carers.

The Act explains the obligations of government departments and local councils and the additional obligations of human service agencies.

Benefits of the Act

Carers should have greater opportunities for employment and social inclusion which will improve their financial security and quality of life.

The public sector will benefit from workplace diversity, improved retention and increased staff morale and loyalty.

The community will benefit from flexible workplace arrangements, a socially inclusive community and the reassurance that if they become a carer they will be supported to combine caring and work.

Other fact sheets in this series

- Who are carers?
- Guide for public sector staff
- Guide for public sector managers

* NOTE: Broader definitions of a carer can be found in industrial awards, other legislation and internal human resources policies.

NSW Carers Charter

Government departments and local councils must make sure their staff are aware of and understand the NSW Carers Charter. Human service agencies must also reflect the Carers Charter principles in their daily activities.

The Charter contains 13 principles that provide guidance on issues of significance for carers, including respect and recognition, inclusion indecision making, and access to services they may need. In plain English the principles are:

- a. Recognise the valuable social and economic contribution that carers make to the people they care for and the community.
- b. Consider the health and wellbeing of carers.
- c. Take into account both the person being cared for and the carer when assessing, planning, delivering and reviewing services.
- d. Inform carers about services that can help them and refer them appropriately following their own assessment or the assessment of the person they care for.
- e. Respect the relationship between a carer and the person they care for.
- f. Recognise that carers have their own individual needs within and beyond their caring role that may be influenced by culture, age, disability, religion, socio-economic status, gender identification and place of residence.
- g. Recognise that children and young people under 25 who are carers (young carers) have the same rights as all children and young people.
- h. Support young carers to overcome any extra difficulties associated with their caring role.
- i. Carers should have the same rights, choices and opportunities as other Australians.
- j. Support carers' choices in their caring role and recognise them in the assessment, planning, delivery and review of services.
- k. Acknowledge that rural and regionally based carers may need additional help to overcome barriers caused by isolation.
- l. Support for carers should be timely, responsive, appropriate and accessible.
- m. Acknowledge and recognise carers' knowledge and experience.

More information and resources

NSW Health

Web: www.health.nsw.gov.au/carers

Email: Carers@moh.health.nsw.gov.au

NSW Health Carers Program Carer Support Officer contacted through your Local Health District

Department of Family and Community Services

Web: www.facs.nsw.gov.au | **Email:** nswcarersact@facs.nsw.gov.au