

# Guide for public sector staff

The NSW *Carers (Recognition) Act 2010* (the Act) was introduced to improve the recognition of carers.

The Act establishes a Carers Charter to help public sector staff to respond to the needs of carers. Under the Act, public sector agencies are required to raise awareness and understanding of the Carers Charter among staff.

A carer provides ongoing help to someone who needs it because of disability, a long term or life-limiting illness, mental illness, dementia or ageing. Your colleague or client may also be a carer\*.

## Carers working in the public sector

As a carer working in the public sector, there is nothing you have to do, but there are things that you might benefit from doing. Become familiar with your agency's flexible work policies. These can help you in your caring role, including carers leave, job sharing, flexible hours/start and finish times, part time work and working from home. Once you know what would help you, talk to your manager about what is possible in your circumstances.

You could also speak to your manager about establishing a Carer Employee Network or become a member of an existing network.

## Obligations for public sector agencies

### All public sector staff must:

- become aware of and understand the Carers Charter at Schedule 1 of the Act. Staff in human service agencies must reflect the principles in their activities
- consult with appropriate organisations that represent carers when developing policies that impact on carers
- develop internal human resources policies following appropriate consideration of the Carers Charter.

### Public sector agencies means any of the following:

- a Division of the Government Service
- a Local Health District or statutory health corporation (within the meaning of the *Health Services Act 1997*)
- the NSW Police Force
- a NSW Government agency or other authority of the State
- a local council
- a State owned corporation.

More information about departments, authorities and corporations can be found on the Department of Premier and Cabinet website: [www.dpc.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dpc.nsw.gov.au)

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

## Obligations for human service agencies

All human service agencies in NSW have additional obligations under the Act. A human service agency is a public sector agency that provides services directed at carers or the people they care for. These include:

### Principal departments

- Department of Family and Community Services
- Department of Health
- Department of Education and Communities
- Attorney General and Justice

### Other bodies

- Local Councils that provide services directed at carers or persons being cared for by carers
- Health Care Complaints Commission
- NSW Ombudsman
- Local Health Districts
- Lifetime Care and Support Authority
- Motor Accidents Authority
- Workcover Authority

These additional obligations mean human service agencies also need to:

- report on compliance with the Act in their Annual Report – staff should use the Annual Reporting Template as a guide.
- make sure all members of staff actively reflect the principles of the NSW Carers Charter (found at Schedule 1 of the Act) in their daily work.

### Further reading and other resources

- *Carers (Recognition) Act 2010*
- Implementation guidelines for public sector agencies

### Other fact sheets in this series

- Who are carers?
- Guide to the NSW *Carers (Recognition) Act 2010*
- Guide for public sector managers

### More information and resources

NSW Health

**Web:** [www.health.nsw.gov.au/carers](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/carers)

**Email:** [Carers@moh.health.nsw.gov.au](mailto: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](http://www.facs.nsw.gov.au) | **Email:** [nswcarersact@facs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:nswcarersact@facs.nsw.gov.au)