



Response to the DRAFT Crisis Stabilisation Centre Model of Care

Carers SA

Carers SA is the peak advocacy body for Carers in South Australia and actively works to raise the voice of Carers across government, health systems, businesses and communities, to inform and influence policy, services and systems to recognise and improve the ability and capacity of Carers in their role and for appropriate and meaningful support and services for Carers. Our purpose is to address the challenges for current and future Carers so they can care for others. Carers SA also delivers the federally funded Carer Gateway in South Australia which provides services and support to unpaid Carers.

Carers are people who provide unpaid care and support to family members and friends who have a disability, have living or lived experience of mental illness, chronic condition, terminal illness, an alcohol or other drug issue or who are frail aged. Carers are an integral part of Australia's health system and are the foundation of our aged, disability, palliative and community care systems

In responding to the Crisis Stabilisation Centre Model of Care, Carers SA highlights the responsibility of SA Health Services to partner with carers to enable and support carers within the public healthcare system to assist carers to feel empowered and recognised for their individual needs and requirements of the role they perform in alignment with the following key documents

- [*SA Health Policy Directive Partnering with Carers 2023*](#)
- [*National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards*](#) (in particular Standard 1 Partnering with Consumers)
- [*Carers Recognition Act*](#)
- [*SA Carers Charter*](#)
- [*SA Health Consumer, Carer and Community Engagement Strategic Framework*](#)
- [*SA Health Consumer, Carers and Community Feedback and Complaints Management Strategic Framework.*](#)

Carers SA provides the following feedback

Consistent Language

Recommendation 1: Consistent language inclusive of Carers is reflected across the Philosophy of Care to the Crisis Stabilisation Centre Model of Care as separate.

Carers SA notes the inclusion of Carers in the *Philosophy of Care* and the importance of supporting Carers and recognises Carers and their role as Partners in Care within health services and systems. It is noted however that the language is not consistent in the Model of Care and at times refers solely to *family*. It is important to be aware that not all family are Carers, and not all Carers are family members.

Unique role of Carers

Recommendation 2: Recognition and acknowledge of the unique role of Carers as a partner in care and ensure the role and needs of Carers is clearly articulated in the Model of Care as part of the responsibility of the health service.

Carers SA supports the principle that the person with lived and living experience of mental health challenges is the central decision-maker in all decisions relating to the Crisis Stabilisation Centre Model of Care, reflecting a person-centred care.

Whilst acknowledging that many if not most people with lived and living experience of mental illness have or need the support of a Carer, all Carers need support with access to relevant and clear information and practical tasks and to assist them to care for the person.

This may include:

- comprehensive information and understanding about the person's mental illness including recognising early signs of crisis
- understanding of the person's treatment orders and supporting their human and legal rights
- understanding their own rights as a Carer and their role as a Partner in Care
- planning for and supporting the person after crisis
- providing a safe environment
- supporting the person's recovery journey
- where to access supports and resources
- practice tasks where the Carer may be required to support the person with managing medications, activities of daily living, assisting with finances etc.

- Helping the Carer communicate with health care professionals and navigating mental health services and systems to support the person they care for
- Accessing mental health crisis and emergency services and supports

This would ensure compliance with the directive of Carers as Partners in Care within SA health services, the SA Carer Recognition Act 2005 and its Carers Charter. It would further address the unique needs of the Carer and their own wellbeing during a Crisis Stabilisation, in order to maintain a caring role, are not acknowledged within that proposed model. It would further act to strengthen the credibility of the positive commitments that are currently stated in the document:

- *We have been able to develop a clear Model of Care for our new Crisis Stabilisation Centre that outlines our commitment to work in partnership with the community, families, carers, supporters, staff, and stakeholders*
- *We have developed this Model of Care to provide an easy-to-understand overview of the service – for community members, staff, families, carers, and supporters, as well as other service providers.*

Clarify Role of Carers

Recommendation 3: Inclusion of a statement in the Model of Care Key Elements that clarifies the role of Carers as partners in care and the responsibility of health services to address the support needs of Carers as part of the Model of Care.

As an example

‘Carers will be recognised for their own experience, contribution and knowledge and can expect to be involved in the development of a care or after crisis care plan which takes their own wellbeing and capacity to provide care into account and information about and referral to specialist carer support services where appropriate.’

Carers need health services to have an understanding of, and provide support to, assist Carers to manage and maintain their own wellbeing. They may also need help managing their own stress, emotional distress, physical and socioeconomic stress of caring, all of which may be heightened during crisis stabilisation for the person they care for. Carers also require a safe environment.

Carers SA notes following statement in the Model of Care key elements

- *The Crisis Stabilisation Centre team will provide a holistic approach to wellbeing, to support guests with the right care and engagement opportunities at the right time depending on their stage of wellbeing. The team will also work with carers,*

families, and supporters to assist them in their understanding of the journey towards wellbeing in a centre where “kindness is the currency”.

This statement indicates that Carers can expect discussions and collaborations around understanding the journey towards wellbeing with a focus on the person receiving care. However, whilst the model identifies the requirement for the health service to engage with Carers, it lacks distinct action/s to specifically support and meet the needs of the Carer.

Whilst the document includes the statement “*Support will also be available to family carers and supporters as required*”, it does not go far enough to clarify to staff or Carers, what such supports might be required and should be provided within the Model. Failing to articulate this clearly in the Model of Care may result in staff being unclear of their responsibility to address Carers needs and lack of clarity about their role in doing so.

Carer Support Services

Recommendation 4: Carer Support Services become a separate heading under Key Services Provided by the Crisis Stabilisation Centre.

Recommendation 5: Inclusion of Carers, in addition to families in the Key Services under Mental and Social Welfare Check-ins and Personalised Carer. I.e. Collaborative care planning, including Safety Planning, with guests, Carers, their families, and healthcare teams

Carers SA notes the Key Services to include Peer and Carer Support Services and supports the statement *Support provided with a mental and social wellbeing focus, aiming to be hopeful and empowering.*

Peer support and providing an ongoing caring role as a Carer are distinct and operate at different levels of involvement. Recognising the unique role of Carers and services for Carers will aid in further clarifying and addressing the needs of Carers.

Carer Relationship

Recommendation 6: Removing the term ‘loved ones’ to indicate the person receiving care so as not to imply all caring relationships are based on personal and/or family relationships.

Carers SA notes the intermittent use of the term “*loved ones*” in the Model of Care. It is important to recognise that It is important to recognise that the status ‘loved one’ does not always apply to the care relationship and as not all Carers find themselves in caring

roles by choice but by expectations or cultural practices. Carers SA therefore recommends avoiding the term ‘loved ones’ as a matter of principle to avoid undue assumptions about relationships being founded in emotional connection within a relationship.

Alternative examples could include

- The person/people they care for
- Person receiving care
- person being supported
- person experiencing a crisis
- person accessing crisis care

Service Commitment

Recommendation 7: inclusion under Service Commitments to Families, Carers and Supporters

Carers SA commends and supports the inclusion of statements of Service Commitment in the Model of Care but recommends additional inclusion of commitments to Carers wellbeing and inclusion and recommends the following:

The Model of Care recognises Carers as having a unique role as Partners in Care as outlined in the principles of the SA Health Partnering with Carers Policy 2023 and the Carers Recognition Act 2005 which requires the state government to be aware of carers' needs and provide services that reflect the Act and principles of the Carers Charter.

- *The wellbeing of Carers will be taken into account in the centre's practices. The inclusion of a statement such as reflected in the SA Partnering with Carers policy could read as follows*
 - a. *We support carers both in their caring role and in maintaining their own health and wellbeing and*
 - b. *We ensure services are flexible to the individual circumstances and needs of carers and the people they care for.*

Right to give feedback and/or make a complaint

Recommendation 8: Inclusion of a statement of the right to give feedback and/or make a complaint under the Service Commitments to families, Carers and Supporters

Carers SA notes the absence of support for people using the service and family, Carers and supporters to give feedback or make a complaint. Whilst it is recognised that the

right to do so is outlined in the *SA Health Consumer, Carers and Community Feedback and Complaints Management Strategic Framework*, it is important to ensure that all Models of Care recognise and actively facilitate the rights of people to do so.

Consistent with the Framework and as an example:

- *Feedback and complaints systems are inclusive of all Guests families, Carers and supported and recognises that all people have the right to give feedback and/or make a complaint. Mechanisms are in place to actively facilitate this process in a way that ensures the person feels safe, comfortable and able to do so.*

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