

Policy and Procedure

Consumer Identification Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to give clear direction to SWSPHN staff, commissioned services and providers on the correct consumer identification process and its application to their work.

Policy

By adopting a systematic approach to consumer identification, SWSPHN maintains consumer safety and confidentiality, while allowing health care providers to focus their attention on the appropriate provision of clinical care or support services.

Applicability

- SWSPHN commissioned services and providers.
- SWSPHN centralised intake.

Associated documents

Legislation and best practice guidelines:

- Healthcare Identifiers Act 2010
- Healthcare Identifiers Regulations 2020
- Standards for general practice RACGP (5th Edition) 2017.

Internal policies and documents:

- Commissioning Framework
- Procurement Manual
- Contract Compliance Policy and Procedure
- Clinical Governance Framework
- Mental Health Clinical Governance Manual
- Data Governance Framework

Roles and responsibilities

Policy owner	Ensure that this policy document is published and implemented, progress is monitored and that it is reviewed according to the document control schedule outlined in the policy.
Executive sponsor	Provide advice to the Policy Owner, approve the final document and present it to the Clinical Council or Senior staff meeting for approval.

Executive and Management

- Support and oversight of program staff in the implementation and compliance with the policy.
- Ensuring regular opportunities for upskilling PHN staff to ensure they are aware of policy and procedure updates around consumer identification.
- Ensuring inclusion of consumer identification within program materials e.g. referral forms and contract documents.
- Ensuring inclusion of consumer identification requirements within contract requirements of commissioned providers.

SWSPHN Staff

Ensuring consumer identification processes are built into program design.

SWSPHN Commissioned Providers

- Providing consumers with adequate information to obtain informed consent; ensuring records of consumer identification are kept in consumer health records.
- Maintaining clearly outlined consumer identification policies and procedures with new service recipients, consistent with contract requirements.

Procedure

- Any commissioned service provider should use at least three approved identifiers for each consumer encounter or activity.
- The consumer should be asked to state their name, date of birth and address.
- It is not appropriate for staff to volunteer consumer identifier information and then ask consumer to confirm it.
- If one of these identifiers cannot be used, staff should ask the consumer to identify their gender.
- Staff need to be encouraged to report errors in consumer identification processes so these events can be analysed and steps introduced to reduce the risk of a recurrence and harm occurring to other consumers.
- When communicating with other health professionals regarding the care of a consumer, in the absence of a unique consumer identifier, the use of at least 3 approved consumer identifiers is also required.

First face to face contact with consumer:

- SWSPHN commissioned service providers should ask the consumer to provide 3 identifiers i.e. ask to state their name, date of birth and address.
- Once the identity of the consumer is confirmed, it must be noted in the clinical notes on the consumer file. (Errors can occur if consumers are nervous, over obliging, hearing impaired or have difficulty understanding the language)

Telephone and electronic identification:

- On initial phone contact, SWSPHN commissioned service providers and centralised intake staff should check the name of the person they are speaking to is the name on the referral.
- If the consumer requests to speak to another person on their behalf, their name and what relationship they have with the consumer should be noted in the consumer's file.

Text messaging and email:

- Text reminders for appointments are sent to the primary mobile phone number on consumer file.
- Text messaging is used only when consumer has requested this contact.
- Email to consumer is only used for reply to an email already received from consumer.

Definitions

Word/Term	Definition
Approved Consumer Identifiers	Those items of information accepted for use in consumer identification. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ consumer name (family and given names) ○ date of birth ○ gender (as identified by the consumer themselves) ○ address ○ consumer record number, where it exists. <i>*A Medicare number is not an approved identifier</i>
Unique Consumer Identifiers	The Australian Digital Health Agency has developed a system of unique consumer identifiers for consumers, individual health care providers and organisations. These identifiers facilitate the accurate and secure transfer of consumer health information.
Commissioned Services	Services provided to a client by a third party on behalf of SWSPHN.

Document control

Policy review every (choose most applicable) 1 year 2 years 3 years

Version	Date Commenced	Policy Owner	Change Description	Review Date	Authorising Executive
V1.0	March 2016	Health Programs Manager	New Policy	March 2019	Clinical Director
V2.0	February 2018	Commissioning Manager	Policy Review	February 2021	Director of Planning and Performance
V3.0	February 2021	Commissioning Manager	Policy Review	February 2024	Director of Planning and Performance
V3.1	December 2021	Commissioning Manager	Minor Review – Insertion of Data Governance Framework	December 2024	Director of Planning and Performance
V4.0	March 2025	Commissioning Manager	Policy Review	March 2028	Director of Planning and Performance

This Policy and/ Procedure will remain in effect until replaced.