



volunteers in health and aged care services¹

Volunteers provide unpaid work in many health and aged care settings.

Volunteering is a personally enriching experience which allows individuals to use their existing skills and knowledge and to develop new skills and knowledge through community participation.

The contribution of volunteers brings significant benefits to the community and can enhance the delivery of health and aged care services by complementing the work of paid staff.

Volunteers in health and aged care services may assist across a range of areas, for example: transport services; canteen/kiosk assistance; gardening; hair and cosmetic care; musical events; general office assistance; and mobile library services.

It is the position of the Australian Nursing Federation that:

1. The use of volunteers to provide unpaid work must not displace or replace the work of paid staff or adversely affect the career opportunities of paid staff.
2. Unpaid work must not be required as a pre-condition for paid employment.
3. Organisations considering using volunteers must:
 - evaluate the role to be performed within the overall strategic plan of the organisation;
 - carefully assess the specific tasks to be performed by the volunteers;
 - evaluate the skills and/or knowledge volunteers can provide;
 - consider the costs and benefits involved in using volunteers;
 - consult extensively with paid staff, relevant unions and volunteers;
 - ensure that appropriate resources are committed to the implementation of volunteer services;
 - ensure the workplace safety of volunteers;
 - ensure that volunteers have appropriate identification, including a uniform if required;
 - ensure that legislative requirements for volunteer services are met, for example criminal record checks for those working with children and older people; and
 - in consultation with the relevant union, develop comprehensive policies and guidelines, which include a *Code of Conduct for Volunteers*, and

**anf position
statement**

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which address issues such as recruitment and selection processes, accountabilities and resourcing to provide a framework for the effective management of volunteer services.

4. Volunteers in health and aged care services have a right to:
 - appropriate recognition;
 - fair and equitable treatment and a safe place of work;
 - effective orientation and training;
 - information about: the organisation in which they are volunteering; any relevant legislation affecting their activities; and their rights and responsibilities and supervision requirements.
5. In the interests of patient safety, volunteers must not deliver nursing or midwifery care, although they may have a role in providing support to patients/clients.
6. The relevant ANF state or territory Branch must be consulted when new services using volunteers are planned, or when existing services are significantly altered.
7. A trial of any new services or altered existing services using volunteers must occur. The criteria for evaluation of such trial must be set before commencement of the trial and must involve the relevant ANF State or Territory Branch.

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Please refer to other relevant policies, such as: Role boundaries in the provision of nursing care; and Nursing care.

¹ This policy does not refer to carers who provide support for a family member or friend.