

# Mental Health Carer, Family & Friends Guide

## Central Coast



**Health**  
Central Coast  
Local Health District

# Acknowledgements

Central Coast Local Health District is committed to partnering with carers. This resource was co-designed with mental health carers in partnership with our community provider for the NSW Family and Carer Mental Health Program.



## Disclaimer

The information included in this resource is not a replacement for seeking professional advice or support. It is current as at February 2022.

# Information for Carers, Family Members & Friends

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*“It can be a scary and confusing time when someone is first admitted. My advice is to ask questions and take the support you are offered.” (Carer)*

# Carer Support & Information

*“Getting support for me was the best thing I did.  
I just wish I did it sooner.” (Carer)*

Family members, carers and friends can access a range of services. These services provide specialised carer support, information and education.

## Family and Carer Mental Health Program

The Family and Carer Mental Health Program provides free individual support, information and education for carers supporting someone with a mental health concern. It also holds regular carer support groups.

**Call 4320 1855 Monday to Friday or email [fmhinfo@uniting.org](mailto:fmhinfo@uniting.org)**

## Carer Retreat at Gosford Hospital

A quiet, comfortable, home-like place where Carers are welcome to take a break from their caring responsibilities to relax, unwind and access information to support their role. The Carer Retreat provides access to business facilities such as computer, printer, scanning, laminating, free Wi-Fi and internet access for Carers. The staff are available to assist Carers to navigate the service maze, run weekly wellness programs and regular educational classes in response to Carer requests.

**Open Monday to Friday (except public holidays) 9am – 4.30pm 91 Holden Street, Gosford. Call 4320 5556.**



## **Consumer & Carer Engagement Coordinator**

At Central Coast Mental Health Service the Consumer & Carer Engagement Coordinator can support you to navigate the mental health service and connect you with other carer support services and information.

**To speak with the Coordinator call 4320 2952 or ask a staff member to connect you.**



### **Mental Health Carers NSW**

The peak body for mental health carers in NSW, MHCN represents the interests of mental health carers in NSW.

They provide training and education to empower carers to become mental health advocates and to assist them in their caring roles along with providing phone counselling and support.

Call **1300 554 660**

[www.mentalhealthcarersnsw.org](http://www.mentalhealthcarersnsw.org)



### **Carer Gateway**

Provides practical information and advice to help you get the services and support you need including free counselling services.

[www.carergateway.gov.au](http://www.carergateway.gov.au)



# What to expect when someone needs mental health care

Our Mental Health Centres are a safe place for people to get care and treatment that supports mental health recovery.

## The Assessment Process

The person will be assessed by a psychiatrist, who is a mental health doctor. The psychiatrist is part of a mental health team that also includes Nurses, Psychologists, Occupational Therapists, Social Workers, Peer Workers and Aboriginal Health Workers.

The psychiatrist and the mental health team will ask the person questions to find out what is happening. They will also speak with you. It is important that you share any information you have about the person's mental health leading up to this time.

The psychiatrist will decide on the safest and most appropriate care and treatment. They will do this based on their assessment of the person and the information they have received.

If you are unsure what is happening, talk to the psychiatrist or another member of the mental health team.

### **It's important to let the psychiatrist or staff member know:**

- If you need an interpreter
- If there are children or older people living with the family
- If you are worried about the person's safety, your safety or others' safety
- If you want to be part of the care planning and reviews

The psychiatrist will decide on the safest and most appropriate care and treatment for the person based on their assessment and the information they have been provided.

## The Admission Process

If the psychiatrist has decided to admit the person to one of the mental health units they will be admitted as a voluntary patient or involuntary patient.

A voluntary patient is a person who has chosen to be admitted to a mental health facility and the psychiatrist is satisfied that the person is likely to benefit from inpatient care and treatment in a mental health facility.

An involuntary patient is someone who is required to stay in a mental health facility. This is often referred to as being scheduled under the Mental Health Act 2007 (NSW). This may mean the patient is being admitted against their wishes. See **page 14** for more information about the Mental Health Act 2002 (NSW).





# Visiting someone in the mental health inpatient unit

The Central Coast Mental Health Service values the role of family and carers in supporting people through their recovery journey. We encourage you to stay connected with the person you care for while they are recovering in the mental health inpatient unit.

## For current visiting hours contact the mental health inpatient unit.

If you need to visit outside normal visiting hours please speak with a staff member to arrange a suitable time.

### The inpatient unit phone numbers are:

<b>Gosford Mental Health Unit</b>	 <b>4320 2727</b>
<b>Wyong Mental Health Unit</b>	 <b>4394 7818</b>
<b>Older People's Mental Health Unit (Miri Miri)</b>	 <b>4394 7832</b>
<b>Psychiatric Emergency Care Centre (PECC)</b>	 <b>4394 8200</b>

## Is there anything I need to be aware of when visiting?

For the safety of our patients, visitors and staff we do have some rules and restrictions. A staff member will explain these to you when you visit the person you care for.

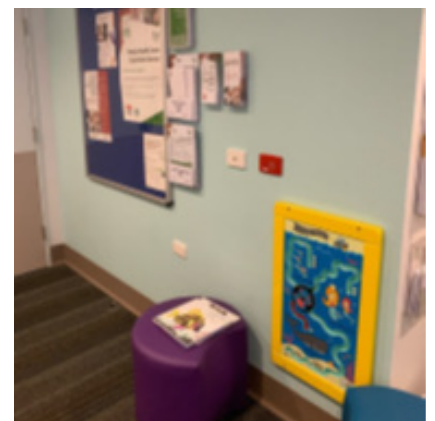
## Can children visit the Unit?

Yes. We have a family and carer visiting room at Gosford Mental Health Inpatient Unit and Wyong Mental Health Inpatient Unit that are available for visitors to use. This includes families and children.

Ask a staff member about using the family and carer visiting room.

## Can I call the person I care about while they are in the mental health inpatient unit?

Yes. Speak to a staff member about the best way to do this.



# Parking at our hospitals



## Gosford Hospital

There are two multistorey car parks at Gosford Hospital.

### **P1 multistorey car park – Hospital Road (North) via Racecourse Road**

The P1 multistorey car park is located on Hospital Road, with entry via Racecourse Road.

- The height restriction in P1 is 1.85 metres.
- Parking ticket validation / payments machines are located on Level 1 and Level 4.

### **P2 multistorey car park – Showground Road**

The P2 multistorey car park is located off Showground Road. Public parking is available on the lower levels.

- The height restriction in P2 is 2.2 metres.
- Accessible parking spaces are provided on all levels of the multistorey car park.
- There is a 10 minute drop off/pick up zone out the front of the car park.
- To access the hospital, take the lift to level 6 and follow the signs to the Main Entry.

## **Concessions for parking**

**Car parking concession rates are available for patients and their carers if you:**

- Are visiting the person you care for more than twice a week.
- Have an eligible concession card.
- Are experiencing financial hardship.

To access car park concession rates speak with the inpatient unit Social Worker or call the Carer Support Unit on **4320 5556** to get a Long Term Concession or Financial Hardship authorisation form.

**Eligible concession cards include:**

- RMS issued Mobility Parking Scheme permit
- Pensioner Concession Card
- Gold Veterans Affairs Card
- Health Care Card



## How to claim a concession rate?

Present your parking ticket, photo identification and concession card or authorised Long Term Concession or Financial Hardship form to one of the following validation points:

**P1 Secure Parking Office, Level 4, Monday to Friday 6am – 6pm**

**Hospital Main Entrance, Level 4 Patient Enquiries, 7am – 8pm**

**What are the concession rates?**

- 0 to 3 hours - Free
- More than 3 hours - \$5.60
- 3 day ticket - \$11.30
- 7 day ticket - \$22.60

**The Mental Health Unit is located across the courtyard from the main entrance to the hospital.**











# The Gosford Hospital site map

The car parks and mental health unit have been highlighted.



## Gosford Hospital

-  Emergency Department
-  Parking
-  Accessible Parking
-  Courtesy Bus Stop
-  Pedestrian Footpath
-  Bus Stop
-  No smoking on hospital grounds
-  Information Main Reception



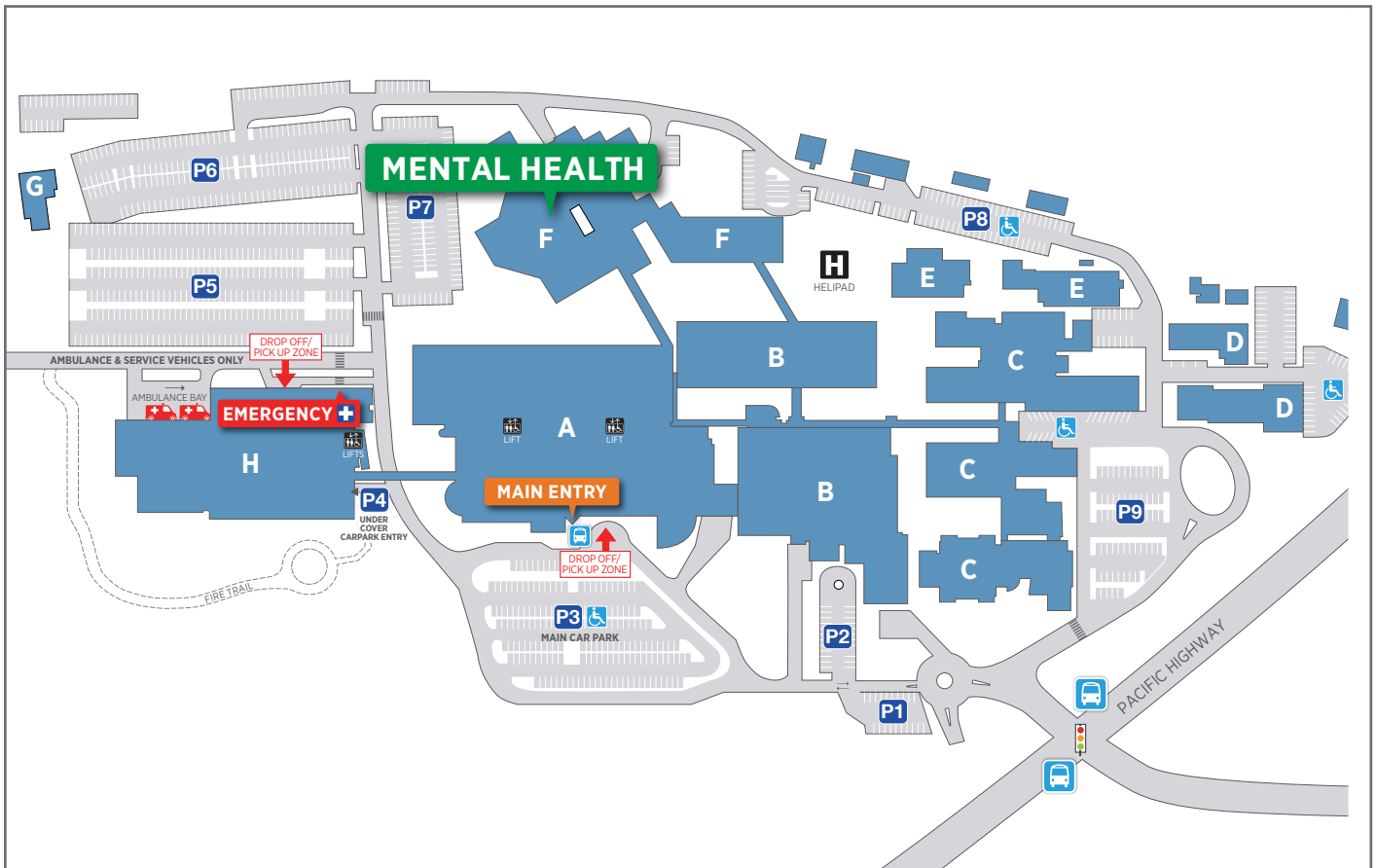
# Wyong Hospital

Public parking is available in the car park at the front of the main entrance.






## Accessible parking

Accessible parking spaces for people with disabilities are located outside the main entrance and at the entrance to the Mental Health Centre.

**The Mental Health Unit is located at the back of the main hospital in Block F.**



## Wyong Hospital

-  Emergency Department
-  Parking
-  Accessible Parking
-  Bus Stop
-  No smoking on hospital grounds

# Supporting someone on leave from the mental health inpatient unit

During a patient's recovery they are likely to have leave from the Mental Health Inpatient Unit.

Planned leave plays an important part in a person's recovery. It does this by slowly re-introducing the person to everyday activities in their life.

The doctor will decide on the type of leave and how long the leave will be. They will also decide if the leave will be during the day or overnight. The doctor will make these decisions in partnership with the carer and patient.

The doctor or a staff member will provide you with written information about the leave plan.

## Types of Leave

There are different types of leave that the doctor will consider for the person.

### Supervised Leave

This is leave in the company of the carer, family member or friend..

### Unsupervised Leave

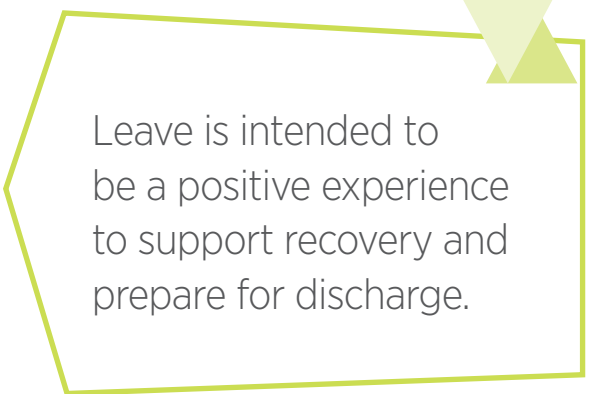
This is when the person goes on leave alone.

## Suggestions for Carers

- It is important that you share any views or concerns you have about taking the person on leave. The doctor is the best person to talk to about this.
- **Talk to the doctor or a staff member about the amount of supervision the person will need while they are on leave.**
- Make sure you have the direct contact number for the ward that the person is returning to.
- Talk to the doctor or staff member about what to do if the person you are caring for becomes unwell while on leave.

## Sometimes things don't go to plan during leave

- You can call the mental health inpatient unit at any time if you have concerns or questions.
- The person on leave can return to the mental health inpatient unit at any time.
- If the situation is life threatening, **call 000 (Triple Zero)** straight away. Ask for an ambulance, police or both. Keep yourself safe and reassure the person that help is coming.



Leave is intended to be a positive experience to support recovery and prepare for discharge.

Use the checklist below as a guide to ensure you have the information you need to support the persons leave.

Leave Checklist	
What time does leave start?	
What time does the person need to be back on the inpatient unit?	
What is the contact number for the inpatient unit?	
What to do if things don't go to plan?	
How much supervision does the person need?	
What medication does the person need to take?	
What is the crisis plan if difficulties arise during leave?	
How to manage any risks?	

When the person returns from leave it's important to let the staff know how you think it went.

# Information about the NSW Mental Health Act (2007)

If a person requires mental health care in a public mental health service they may be admitted under the NSW Mental Health Act (2007).

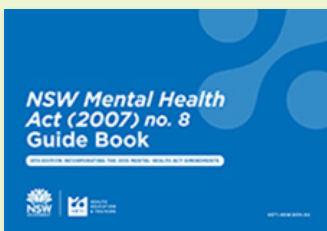
This is often referred to as being 'scheduled'.

## What is the Mental Health Act?

The Mental Health Act (2007) is legislation that governs the care and treatment for people who experience a mental illness or mental disorder. It protects their rights while making sure they receive appropriate care.

The NSW Mental Health Act (2007) is a law that provides specific rules for providing care and treatment to people in NSW who experience a mental illness or a mental disorder.

## You can find detailed information about the NSW Mental Health Act (2007) at the links below



### The NSW Mental Health Act (2007) Guide Book

Provides up to date information about the Mental Health Act.

Find it at:

[www.health.nsw.gov.au/mentalhealth/resources/pages/mhact-guidebook-2007.aspx](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/mentalhealth/resources/pages/mhact-guidebook-2007.aspx)



### Mental Health Review Tribunal

An independent body that makes decisions about the Mental Health Act and people who have been 'scheduled' to a mental health inpatient unit.

Information can be found at:

[www.mhrt.nsw.gov.au/the-tribunal](http://www.mhrt.nsw.gov.au/the-tribunal)



### The Health Education and Training Institute

Offers a range of videos, podcasts and factsheets about the Mental Health act.

Information can be found at:

[www.heti.nsw.gov.au/education-and-training/courses-and-programs/nsw-mental-health-act-2007](http://www.heti.nsw.gov.au/education-and-training/courses-and-programs/nsw-mental-health-act-2007)

# Key definitions in the Mental Health Act

**Mentally ill person:** someone who has a mental illness and, because of that illness, there are reasonable grounds for believing the person requires care and treatment in a mental health facility in order to protect them and/or others from serious harm.

Serious harm is not defined in the Mental Health Act 2007 but the term can include, (but is not limited to):

- Physical harm
- Financial harm
- Self-harm and suicide
- Harm to reputation or relationships
- Neglect of self or others (including children)

**Mentally disordered person:** someone whose behaviour is so irrational there are reasonable grounds for believing the person requires care and treatment in a mental health facility to protect them and/or others from serious **physical** harm.

**Designated Carer:** someone who has a close and personal relationship with the consumer and is interested in their welfare, but does not necessarily provide day to day support. Nominated by the consumer or identified by treating clinicians.

Two designated carers can be nominated. The nomination form should be completed during admission to the mental health facility.

**Principal Care Provider:** the main person who is responsible for providing day to day support and care to the consumer, but is not employed to do so. Often this person will also be one of the two designated carers.

Treating clinicians identify the principal carer provider. This means that if the person mainly responsible for providing support and care is not nominated as a designated carer, they can still receive information.

The consumer can exclude people from being given information about them. Those excluded cannot be nominated as a Designated Carer or Principal Care Provider.

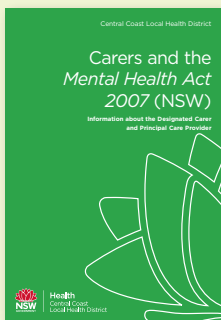
Designated Carers and Principle Care Providers have the right to information about the person they care for. This includes if the person is:

- Admitted to a mental health unit.
- Absent from the mental health unit without permission or fails to return from leave.
- Being considered for a Community Treatment Order or an existing order is being varied.
- Given medication (the type and dosage).
- Being considered for Electro Convulsive Therapy (ECT).
- Being transferred between mental health facilities.



# Your Rights

Knowing your rights is important. It helps you understand what you can expect when you access services with or on behalf of the person you care for.



## Carers and The Mental Health Act 2002 (NSW)

Carers have rights under the Mental Health Act. Find more information about your rights in this booklet. It is available in the reception areas of the mental health inpatient units.



## Your Healthcare Rights



You can read more about your healthcare rights charter by scanning this QR code with your smart phone or visiting the website at [www.safetyandquality.gov.au/consumers/working-your-healthcare-provider/australian-charter-healthcare-rights](http://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/consumers/working-your-healthcare-provider/australian-charter-healthcare-rights)



## Official Visitors Program

Official visitors are appointed by the NSW Minister for Health to visit mental health facilities in NSW. They are independent of the health system. They aim to safeguard standards of treatment and care, and advocate for the rights and dignity of people being treated under the NSW Mental Health Act 2007.

Consumers, carers, family members and staff can contact the Official Visitors and they will listen to your concerns and help you resolve them.

Call **1800 208 218**

[www.officialvisitorsmh.nsw.gov.au](http://www.officialvisitorsmh.nsw.gov.au)



# Feedback, Compliments & Concerns



## Your Feedback Is Important

You can use the Mental Health Carer Experience Survey (CES) to give feedback about your experience with this mental health service.

This is a state wide survey. Your feedback will be used in the development, planning, delivery and evaluation of NSW mental health services.

You can get a paper copy and reply paid envelope from mental health reception areas. Or you can scan the QR code below to complete the survey on your smartphone.

**Select the unit where you have had the most contact:**



**Gosford Mental Health Unit**



**Wyong Mental Health Unit**



**Older People's Mental Health Unit (Miri Miri)**



**Psychiatric Emergency Care Centre (PECC)**



## Feedback or Concerns

If you have concerns about the care you or your family member have received, please speak to the Nursing Unit Manager.

If you don't feel comfortable talking to the Nursing Unit Manager, or you are unhappy with the action taken, you can contact the

**Consumer Feedback Department on 4320 3920 or email [CCLHD-Feedback@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:CCLHD-Feedback@health.nsw.gov.au)**

# Helpful Information & Resources

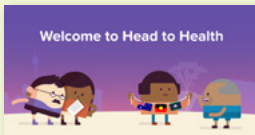


## Lifeline

Lifeline provides support for people in crisis. No judgement. No conditions. No agenda. Just a human connection to help people get through their difficult times.

Call **13 11 14**

[www.lifelinedirect.org.au/centralcoast/](http://www.lifelinedirect.org.au/centralcoast/)



## Head to Health

An Australian Government site with a range of mental health resources including online programs, fact sheets, videos, and online forums about mental health.

You can access the information at [www.headtohealth.gov.au](http://www.headtohealth.gov.au)



## Beyond Blue

Provide free resources about depression, anxiety and other related issues. The website also has a directory to help people find health professionals in their local area who can help to diagnose, treat and manage depression and/or anxiety.

Call **1300 22 4636**

[www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)



## SANE Australia

Provides information on mental illness, diagnosis and treatments. **SANE** also has online carer forums, which are communities for people affected by mental illness. They're safe, anonymous and moderated 24/7 by mental health professionals.

For more information you can call **1800 187 263**

You can access the website and connect with other carers at

[www.sane.org](http://www.sane.org)

## Cultural Support



### Interpreter Services

We provide a free interpreter service for people who have limited English or who are hearing impaired.

**Please ask our staff if you need an interpreter and they will arrange this for you.**



### Transcultural Mental Health Centre

A state-wide service with an extensive range of mental health information and resources available in different languages.

Contact the service on **9912 3850**, Monday to Friday.

You can access the information at

[www.dhi.health.nsw.gov.au/tmhc](http://www.dhi.health.nsw.gov.au/tmhc)

## Aboriginal Health Services



### Aboriginal Mental Health Team

The Aboriginal Mental Health Team is available for consumers, their carers and kinship groups.

To contact this team call **4320 2952** or ask a staff member to connect you.



### Nunyara

Nunyara is the Aboriginal Health Service that supports the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. To contact this service call **4320 2698** or ask a staff member to connect you.

## Gender Diverse Support



Gender identity is how you perceive your gender, how you show this to others, and how you want others to treat you. To speak to the Diversity & Inclusion Manager ask a staff member to connect you.











## Mental Health Line - 1800 011 511

Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, the Mental Health Line links people with the Central Coast Mental Health Service. If you or someone you know needs help with a mental health problem, call **1800 011 511**