

# Effective and Efficient Utilisation of Agency Nurses / Midwives Policy Directive

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**Government  
of South Australia**

SA Health

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# Effective and efficient utilisation of Agency Nurses / Midwives Policy Directive

## 1. Policy Statement

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This directive aims to ensure consistent strategies are implemented across SA Health sites to ensure the effective and efficient utilisation of SA Health staff and minimise the use of agency nursing and midwifery staff.

SA Health should only use agency nursing and midwifery staff for unexpected absences (e.g. personal carers leave, compassionate leave or exceptional circumstances (i.e. major critical event)) or an unexpected increase in clinical demand.

To assist with implementation of the policy directive an approved [SA Health Agency Nursing and Midwifery Panel](#) has been established.

The principles of this directive are to ensure the effective and efficient utilisation of agency nurses and midwives. It is recommended that this is achieved through:

1. Establishment of streamlined human resource practices that promote the flexible management of the recruitment and retention of nurses and midwives to SA Health;
2. The establishment of nursing and midwifery casual staffing pools across health services;
3. Development of consistent procedures in relation to nurse and midwifery agency staff utilisation; and
4. Ensuring that consistent procedures in relation to patients who require specialising, chaperoning and/or guarding are developed.

## 2. Roles and Responsibilities

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This directive applies to all SA Health services that utilise agency nursing and midwifery staff (agency staff). The panel provides agency Registered Nurses, Registered Midwives, Registered Nurse / Midwife, Registered Nurse (Mental Health), Enrolled Nurses, Enrolled Nurses (Mental Health). Personal care workers are not included in the panel arrangement.

### 2.1 Chief Executive, SA Health is responsible for:

- Ensuring there is a consistent approach to the management of nursing and midwifery agency staff.

### 2.2 Executive Director, Operational Service Improvement and Demand Management

- Monitor and evaluate implementation of the *Effective & Efficient Utilisation of Agency Nurses/Midwives Policy Directive*.

### 2.3 Chief Executive Officers will:

- Collaborate with the Department for Health and Ageing to determine a strategic response to ensure the usage of agency staff is kept to a minimum
- Review reports/evaluations undertaken by health services in relation to agency usage and the implementation strategies to minimise usage.
- Ensure the health service has implemented systems in accordance with this directive
- Have the authority to grant exemptions for [section 4.2](#)

- Ensure senior managers have a sound understanding of the importance of effective and efficient utilisation of agency staff.
- Ensure usage of agency staff is monitored and evaluated across all levels.
- Provide reports to the Department for Health and Ageing as required on the effective and efficient usage of agency staff, strategies implemented to ensure usage is kept to a minimum and sites where exemptions have been granted.

**2.4 Executive Directors, Directors of Nursing and Midwifery and other senior managers (including Nursing and Midwifery Directors) will:**

- Provide leadership in relation to implementation of this directive;
- Develop, implement, and monitor local protocols that support employees and other persons providing health services on behalf of SA Health to successfully achieve the principles outlined in this directive;
- Manage organisational change through the use of local change champions and other mechanisms where necessary, e.g. in establishing a casual pool;
- Monitor and review the utilisation of agency staff and report to appropriate Executive Director, and/or Chief Executive Officer;
- Provide timely feedback to Agencies regarding any performance concerns.

**3. All SA Health employees will:**

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- Adhere to the principles and aims of this directive, and ensure they operate in accordance with its associated guidelines.

**4. Policy Requirements**

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**4.1 Efficient and Effective usage of SA Health Staff**

- Recruitment processes are streamlined to enable the efficient and effective employment practices of nurses and midwives;
- Flexible working arrangements and job rotation are supported following assessment of the needs of the individual and the service requirements;
- Consistent practice in providing care to patients requiring specialising, chaperoning and /or minding is implemented;
- Training and education programs are implemented to support staff having the right skills and knowledge to effectively undertake required duties;
- Transition to Professional Practice Programs to ensure a sustainable workforce; and
- Casual pools are to be adequately staffed and managed to support rostering across health sites.

**4.2 In the event that agency staff are required, health services are to ensure that:**

- The approved [Agency Nursing & Midwifery Panel](#) arrangement for employing agency staff is utilised. LHN can use either or both of the panellists to supply their requirement.
- The panel provides agency nursing / midwifery staff for metropolitan, regional and remote health services.
- Agency staff are not booked in advance and/or placed on a roster, except where [authorised exemption](#) has been granted (See Section 2.3)
- Agency staff are only to be contracted for short shift lengths no more than six hours duration during the day (in normal circumstances). Agency shifts should be kept to a minimum to cover night duty and may be cancelled after 3 hours where not required, except where [authorised exemption](#) has been granted under Section 2.3.

## 5. Implementation & Monitoring











### 5.1 Monitoring and reporting

- A consistent and robust methodology for the monitoring of the agreed indicators and trends in agency use shall implemented
- Monitoring and review of staff personal carers leave is implemented.
- Roster deficits are monitored, evaluated and strategies implemented to minimise future unfilled shifts
- Report as required to the Department for Health and Ageing through each Health Network Performance Meeting on the usage of agency staff.

### 5.2 Compliance with this Directive will be monitored through:

- Analysis of utilisation and expenditure on agency staff
- Vacancy Reports
- Health site progression of the Six Guiding Principles to Ensure the Effective and Efficient Utilisation of Agency Nurses/ Midwives Framework for Implementation.

## 6. National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards

									
<a href="#">National Standard 1</a>	<a href="#">National Standard 2</a>	<a href="#">National Standard 3</a>	<a href="#">National Standard 4</a>	<a href="#">National Standard 5</a>	<a href="#">National Standard 6</a>	<a href="#">National Standard 7</a>	<a href="#">National Standard 8</a>	<a href="#">National Standard 9</a>	<a href="#">National Standard 10</a>
<a href="#">Governance for Safety and Quality in Health Care</a>	<a href="#">Partnering with Consumers</a>	<a href="#">Preventing &amp; Controlling Healthcare associated infections</a>	<a href="#">Medication Safety</a>	<a href="#">Patient Identification &amp; Procedure Matching</a>	<a href="#">Clinical Handover</a>	<a href="#">Blood and Blood Products</a>	<a href="#">Preventing &amp; Managing Pressure Injuries</a>	<a href="#">Recognising &amp; Responding to Clinical Deterioration</a>	<a href="#">Preventing Falls &amp; Harm from Falls</a>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## 7. Definitions

- **Agency Nursing & Midwifery Panel** means - a contract for the provision of temporary Nursing and Midwifery agency staff. The staff categories covered by this contract are Registered Nurses, Registered Midwives, Registered Nurse / Midwife, Registered Nurse (Mental Health), Enrolled Nurses, Enrolled Nurses (Mental Health).
- **Agency Staff** –means a nurse/midwife employed from a professional body in the field of nursing agency who has been appointed to a panel from which SA health will procure services as required.
- **Health Service** - means local health networks which are incorporated hospitals under the *Health Care Act 2008*.
- **Nurse and Midwife Casual Pools** - means a nurse casual pool administered by health services. Nurses and Midwives belonging to casual pools are paid at casual rates and enable flexible rostering of casual staff.  
Nurse and Midwives staff differ from agency nurses in that they only work within a designated Local Health Network are employed by the health service.

## 8. Associated Policy Directives / Policy Guidelines and Resources

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[Casual employment in Nursing and Midwifery](#). Australian and Nursing Midwifery Federation Position Statement 2016

[Agency Nursing & Midwifery Panel \(2013-9856\)](#), Buyers Guide, Version 1.0, Category Manager, Agency Nursing & Midwifery Panel, Strategic Procurement

[Nursing / Midwifery \(South Australian Public Sector\) Enterprise Agreement 2016](#)

[SA Health \(Health Care Act\) Human Resources Manual](#) October 2016

## 9. Document Ownership & History

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**Document developed by:** Operational Service Improvement and Demand Management, Transforming Health  
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Does this policy amend or update an existing policy? **Y V1.0**  
Does this policy replace another policy with a different title? **N**  
If so, which policy (title)?

Approval Date	Version	Who approved New/Revised Version	Reason for Change
01/09/2017	V2.0	Lyn Dean, Executive Director, OSIDM	Formally reviewed in line with 1-5 year scheduled timeline for review, with only minor changes to original version.
19/06/2011	V1.0	Portfolio Executive	Original Portfolio Executive approved version.