

SA Health

# Policy

## Agency Nurse and Midwife Utilisation

INFORMAL COPY WHEN PRINTED

Version 3.0

Approval date: 10 July 2024

PDS Reference No: D0231



Government  
of South Australia

SA Health

## 1. Name of Policy

Agency Nurse and Midwife Utilisation

## 2. Policy statement

This policy provides the mandatory requirements for the implementation of consistent strategies across SA Health sites to support the effective and efficient utilisation of SA Health staff and minimise the use of agency nursing and midwifery staff.

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

## 3. Applicability

This policy applies to all employees and contracted staff of SA Health; that is all employees and contracted staff of the Department for Health and Wellbeing (DHW), Local Health Networks (LHNs) including state-wide services aligned with those Networks and SA Ambulance Service (SAAS).

## 4. Policy principles

SA Health's approach to effective and efficient utilisation of agency nurses / midwives is underpinned by the following principles:

- > We will ensure that the required staffing is available to meet patient needs across the SA Health system and meets the minimum staffing requirements as set out in the Nursing/Midwifery (South Australian) Public Sector Enterprise Agreement 2022.
- > We seek to ensure efficient utilisation of staffing resources across the SA Health system.
- > We attempt to minimise the use of agency nursing or midwifery staffing where operationally possible.

## 5. Policy requirements

- > DHW, LHNs and SAAS must only use agency nursing and midwifery staff where it is operationally necessary (such as due to unexpected absences or increases in clinical demand), to ensure safe patient care or to meet minimum staffing requirements.
- > DHW, LHNs and SAAS must minimise use of agency nursing and midwifery staff. Consideration must be given to establishing:
  - Streamlined human resource practices for the flexible management of the recruitment and retention of nurses and midwives to SA Health
  - Nursing and midwifery casual staffing pools across health services
  - Implementation of consistent procedures in relation to:
    - nurse and midwifery agency staff utilisation, and
    - patients who require specialising, chaperoning and/or guarding.
- > When engaging nursing or midwifery agency staff, DHW, LHNs and SAAS must:
  - Ensure an approved Agency Nursing & Midwifery arrangement for employing agency staff is utilised.
  - Ensure nursing or midwifery agency staff are not booked in advance and/or placed on a roster, except where this is approved by the relevant Chief Executive Officer.

- Where possible, provide sufficient notice to allow agency staff to replace the full specified shift. When agency staff are required to supplement existing staff levels for a specific need, contracted time periods must be minimised.
  - Agency shifts must be kept to a minimum to cover night duty except where otherwise approved by the Chief Executive Officer and may be cancelled after three hours where not required.

## 6. Mandatory related documents

- > [\*Nursing/Midwifery \(South Australian Public Sector\) Enterprise Agreement 2022\*](#)
- > [\*SA Health \(Health Care Act\) Human Resources Manual\*](#) October 2016

## 7. Supporting information

- > [\*Casual employment in nursing, midwifery and care work\*](#). Australian and Nursing Midwifery Federation Position Statement 2019
- > Agency Nursing & Midwifery & Carer Panel (SAH 2019-1277) [\*Agency Nursing & Midwifery & Carer Panel Buyers Guide V1.3\*](#)

## 8. Definitions

- > **Agency Nursing & Midwifery Panel:** means a contract for the provision of temporary Nursing and Midwifery and Carer agency staff. The staff categories covered by this contract are Registered Nurses and/or Registered Midwives, Enrolled Nurses, Assistants in Nursing (AIN) and Patient Care Assistants (PCA)
- > **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 nursing and midwifery 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 employed to a casual pool differ from agency nurses and midwives in that they only work within a designated Local Health Network and are employed by the health service.
- > **Statewide services:** includes Statewide Clinical Support Services, Prison Health, SA Dental Service, BreastScreen SA and any other state-wide services that fall under the governance of the Local Health Networks.

## 9. Compliance

This policy is binding on those to whom it applies or relates. Implementation at a local level may be subject to audit/assessment. The Domain Custodian must work towards the establishment of systems which demonstrate compliance with this policy, in accordance with the requirements of the [\*Risk Management, Integrated Compliance and Internal Audit Policy\*](#).

Any instance of non-compliance with this policy must be reported to the Domain Custodian for the Services, Planning and Programs Policy Domain and the Domain Custodian for the Risk, Compliance and Audit Policy Domain.

## 10. Document ownership

Policy owner: Domain Custodian for the Services, Planning and Programs Policy Domain

Title: Agency Nurse and Midwife Utilisation Policy

Objective reference number: A5792700

Review date: 10/07/2029

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## 11. Document history

Version	Date approved	Approved by	Amendment notes
1.0	19/06/2011	Portfolio Executive	Original Portfolio Executive approved version
2.0	01/09/2017	Executive Director, OSIDM	Formally reviewed in line with 1–5-year scheduled timeline for review, with only minor changes to original version
3.0	10/07/2024	Deputy Chief Executive, Clinical Systems Support and Improvement	Reviewed in line with the SA Health Policy Framework with only minor changes to original content. Renamed Agency Nurse and Midwife Utilisation Policy

## 12. Appendices

Nil