



Communities
& Justice

NSW Carers Strategy Conversation Toolkit

GROUP FACILITATION GUIDE





BACKGROUND

The NSW Government is developing a whole of government strategy to better recognise and support people who take on a caring role.

Anyone can take on a caring role, and many people don't see themselves as carers – they are just caring for someone close to them. The NSW Government refers to people who provide ongoing unpaid support to someone who needs help with their day-to-day living as carers. This includes someone who needs help due to disability, mental illness, dementia, a long-term health condition, terminal illness, drug and alcohol dependency, or someone who is frail because they are older.

The next **NSW Carers Strategy** will include practical innovative solutions that meet the needs and aspirations of carers in NSW, building off the strengths and achievements of the first **NSW Carers Strategy 2014-2019**. It will also focus more closely on carer groups that have specific needs and challenges.

The first carers strategy was developed with input from carers and stakeholders through a consultation process over many months. In developing the next carers strategy, the NSW Government wants to listen to and understand the needs of carers again.

We will be consulting with a wide range of carers and stakeholders including peak bodies and advocates, service providers, government agencies and the private sector. We want carers and stakeholders to have as many opportunities as possible to share their experiences and voice their opinions on the strategy throughout this consultation process.

The conversation kit is one way for carers and interested people to be part of the consultation process. It is a tool to help you to facilitate local conversations with other interested people around carer's needs and experiences.

Other consultation opportunities you may want to participate in over the next 6 months:

- **Workshops** – a small number of face to face workshops held across NSW in August/September and December 2019 to identify priority areas and co-design solutions. See our website for updates.
- **Written submissions** – for interested individuals or organisations to submit their views on what our priorities and actions should be.
- **Have your say** – online survey to be launched towards the end of the co-design process to test and prioritise the most important actions to be included in the strategy with the broader population.

We want to hear from as many people as possible. By contributing your insights and experiences, you can help inform the priorities of the new strategy and ensure that is relevant and practical for carers and the people who support them. For more information go to the Carers Strategy <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/inclusion/carers/nsw-carers-strategy>

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CONVERSATION KIT & HOW TO USE IT

This guide has been designed to make it easy for you to run a local conversation about how we can best support carers and improve carer recognition.

Local conversations are a way to bring together a small number of interested people to talk, listen and share your insights and views in a comfortable and informal setting. The information that comes out of your discussion will be used to help shape the new carers strategy.

Anyone can host a discussion. All you need to do is bring together a group of people who are willing to share and discuss ideas. You may be a group of carers, a community organisation or service provider interested in contributing to our consultation process. You might want to build this conversation into an existing group you are part of, part of your team meeting or cross agency meeting.

If you have more than one point of view you would like to share, such as if you have a

personal caring experience you would also like to share, we invite you to also complete the *NSW Carers Strategy – carer survey*.

The information provided will only be used in collated form with no individual feedback able to be identified.

If you have any questions about the survey, please contact the Carers Team at carerstr@facs.nsw.gov.au

Submitting responses:

Please send your responses and any questions to carerstr@facs.nsw.gov.au

Submit responses by 31 October 2019.



Tips for hosting a conversation

Before you facilitate your conversation think through and plan your approach. Here are some tips to help you:



Organise the conversation event. Think about when and where you will hold it, and who you will invite. Make sure your venue space is big enough for all attendees to contribute comfortably.



Establish an open and respectful environment, by setting some simple rules at the start of your conversation. This will help participants feel they can express their views freely.



Guide the conversation, including asking the discussion questions from page 7 and encouraging everyone to participate.



You **may** want to use resources to help you facilitate – such as a white board, butchers paper or breakout in smaller groups.



Ensure you have allocated enough time for all the members of the group to have an in-depth exploration of the questions.



Record and submit the key points, including different perspectives raised by participants.

Guiding the conversation

The questions in this kit are to help guide your conversation. You may want to tailor the way the questions are asked to suit your audience - to make them more conversational or using language/terminology that the group is more comfortable with.

You may want to tailor your conversation to spend longer focusing on the issues most relevant to the group. For example, if you are holding a discussion with service providers, they may want to focus on questions 3.6 and 3.7 about access to carer services and supports.

Recording and submitting the conversation

Please capture the key points in your conversation and submit it – so we can include it in our co-design process.

Think about how you will capture the key points – you could ask someone else to help you by writing down the key points, or encourage participants to write things down themselves, e.g. on butcher's paper or sticky notes. You could take pictures of your butcher's paper and transcribe it later. Whatever method you use to record the conversation, you don't need to write down every word. Summarising the key ideas in dot points makes it quicker and easier to confirm what you heard, and to submit the information.

Throughout the conversation kit you will see that you are asked to select the top 3 responses from the group. This is to ensure that the group prioritises what is the most relevant to the group.

You may find that the group raises additional points that are beyond the scope of the questions in this guide. If you think these points are important, we encourage you to capture them and indicate in your submitted response that they are additional feedback.

Wrapping it up

It is good to provide a brief summary of the key issues raised at the end of the conversation. Explain that you will submit the key points from the conversation electronically for consideration as part of the consultation process to inform the co-design of the new carers strategy, which is expected to be released in late 2020. Offer to send a copy of the submission to all participants. Remind participants that the information you have captured will only be used in collated form with no individual feedback able to be identified.

At the end of the conversation, take the time to thank all participants for their contributions to the conversation. Remind participants to not discuss personal or confidential information outside the room without the permission of the person who shared it.

When writing up the key points, please include a brief description of the number and type of people who participated in the conversation.



QUESTIONS

3.1

Are you completing this as

(Please select one option):

- An existing carers group
- A carer – completing with a group of carers
- A service provider that assists carers – completing with a group of carers
- A service provider that assists carers – completing with colleagues or non-carer stakeholders (e.g. team meeting)
- Other – please specify.

3.2

What is working well for carers?

(Please select the group's top 3 responses)

- Knowing what help is available and where to find it
- Respite
- Counselling
- Health services (including mental health)
- Practical home support
- Education and training
- Employment
- Housing
- Financial situation
- Peer supports
- Carer to Carer support
- Social supports
- Planning for the future
- Other – please specify.

3.3

What is not working well for carers?

(Please select the group's top 3 responses)

- Knowing what help is available and where to find it
- Respite
- Counselling
- Health services (including mental health)
- Practical home support
- Education and training
- Employment
- Housing
- Financial situation
- Peer supports
- Carer to Carer support
- Social supports
- Planning for the future
- Other – please specify.

CARER RECOGNITION

In our previous strategy, carers told us it is important that they are recognised, respected and valued for their contribution to the community, both socially and economically. This includes acknowledgement of their knowledge, skills and experience by (but not limited to) employers and service professionals. It also includes understanding and respect by friends, family, colleagues and the general community.

3.4

A proposed priority of the new strategy is that *carers and caring are recognised, respected and valued*? Who are carers recognised, respected and valued by:

(Please select the group's response)

- Your community
 - In your workplace
 - By service providers (e.g. health professionals)
 - By care workers
 - In the media
 - Other - please specify.
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INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

We know from our previous strategy that carers want to be able to easily access information when they need it – information about services, resolving problems and getting support for themselves.

3.5

How can the carers strategy help improve carer access to information?

(Please select the group's top 3 responses):

- More information on where to go to find the information (websites, services)
 - Increase use of technology (apps, websites) to help you find supports locally
 - Improve information for carers in places carers frequently visit
 - Streamline information on the types of services and how to access them
 - More information about how to best support the people you care for
 - Make information more accessible for carers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and carers with disability
 - Carer peer support programs
 - Building awareness through schools for young carers
 - Other - please specify.
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ACCESS TO SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

The Carers NSW 2018 Carer Survey found that the number of carers who reported accessing support services was quite low. Respite and online forums were used most frequently, while counselling was the least frequently used carer support type. Most carers wanted more access to respite, support groups and counselling than they were currently accessing.

3.6

Why do you think carers may not access services and supports they need:

(Please select the group's top 3 responses and why below):

- May not be aware of carer supports because they don't identify as a carer
 - Do not have the time or energy
 - Services are not available in the area carers live
 - Too difficult to navigate the system
 - Services have long waitlists
 - Not aware of how to access it
 - Cannot afford the service
 - Services are not culturally safe/ appropriate
 - Not able to get to the service (because it's too far away or lack of transport)
 - Other - please specify.
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3.7

Do you have an example of a carer service or initiative that works really well to support carers?

Please include the name of the service/ initiative, where it is delivered, if it's for particular groups of carers and any relevant information we can follow up (e.g. contact people, website etc.)

CARER HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Carers spend much of their time ensuring the person they care for has their health and wellbeing needs met. Carers often don't have the time, energy or opportunity to take care of themselves because they are busy caring for someone else. Consequently their own health and wellbeing is impacted.

3.8

What would help carers to take care of their health and wellbeing needs?

(Please select the group's top 3 responses):

- More information about services and supports available to carers in their area for health and wellbeing
 - Increase education and support for carers on the importance of self-care
 - Respite and practical support so you can take the time to have your health and wellbeing needs assessed and addressed
 - Opportunities to take a break and socialise
 - More resources (i.e. financial)
 - More financial support
 - Other - please specify.
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THANK YOU

Thank you for your involvement in our consultation process to shape the next carers strategy.

