

# SESLHD POLICY COVER SHEET



**Health**  
South Eastern Sydney  
Local Health District

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<b>FUNCTIONAL GROUP(S)</b>	Critical Care and Emergency Medicine
<b>KEY TERMS</b>	Volunteers, Emergency Department
<b>SUMMARY</b>	This policy outlines the roles and responsibilities of volunteers and their managers within the Emergency Department.

## **COMPLIANCE WITH THIS DOCUMENT IS MANDATORY**

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**1. POLICY STATEMENT**

This document has been written to support [NSW Ministry of Health Policy - PD2011\\_033 Volunteers - Engaging, Supporting and Managing Volunteers](#). The Volunteer in Emergency Department (VED) Program has been developed to manage volunteers in the Emergency Department (ED) and outline a code of practice.

Volunteers have an important role in enhancing patient and carers experiences in the ED. The VED Program is aimed at easing emotional distress and anxiety experienced by patients and their family and friends in an ED, through providing practical support, comfort and/or supervision for patients.

The program assists with communication between patients, their family and hospital staff. Volunteers do not provide clinical care or carry out any duties otherwise performed by hospital staff. The program also aims to strengthen community ties to the ED.

**2. AIMS**

This document aims to outline the Volunteer in Emergency Department (VED) Program. It will provide information on the role and responsibilities of SESLHD Emergency Departments, Volunteer Coordinators / Managers and Volunteers in the VED Program.

**3. TARGET AUDIENCE**

Emergency Department Volunteers  
Volunteer Co-ordinators / Managers  
Emergency Department Staff

**4. RESPONSIBILITIES****Employers will:**

- Ensure that volunteer's rights are upheld and engaged in accordance with equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and anti-discrimination legislation
- Provide volunteers a healthy and safe environment
- Ensure volunteers are adequately covered by insurance
- Ensure volunteers do not fill positions previously held by paid workers and do not do the work of paid staff during industrial disputes
- Provide volunteers with the same respect and dignity as paid workers
- Reimburse volunteers for any out-of-pocket expense incurred on behalf of the hospital in direct relation to undertaking their role
- Provide volunteers with sufficient training to do the volunteer role.

**Volunteers will:**

- Abide by the hospitals policy and procedures
- Not undertake any task that is not outlined in the position description and this document
- Maintain privacy and confidentiality on all matters.

**Volunteers in the Emergency Department****SESLHDPD/264****5. DEFINITIONS**

Volunteer – is a person who performs a service of one's own free will and to do that charitable or helpful work without pay or remuneration.

**6. VOLUNTEERS ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Volunteers must not undertake any task that is not authorised by the ED Registered Nurse, Nurse Unit Manager or Team Coordinator on shift. The following is a list of key responsibilities and activities that VEDs may be able to perform whilst on duty.

Work according to the Volunteers in the Emergency Department policy and other hospital business rules, policies and procedures.

To maintain the cognitive and physical functioning of patients in the ED including:

- Interacts with patients in a therapeutic manner that provides reorientation and is appropriately cognitively stimulating
- Mobilises with patients in a safe manner (*only where VEDs are accredited / trained and have been directed by ASET staff and/or ED nursing staff*)
- Assists patients with drinking and eating (*only where VEDs are accredited / trained and have been directed by ASET staff and/or ED nursing staff*)

To improve the quality of care of patients and relatives/carers by providing additional care, company and attention including:

- Provides reassurance, distraction through conversation and use of aids such as magazines, books, pencils or hand massage
- Assistance with glasses and hearing aids
- Notify staff when a patient has toileting or pain needs
- Provide practical and emotional support to patients during the waiting period, and if requested, during assessment and treatment.

To improve the overall patient/carer experience whilst attending the ED including:

- Greet patients/visitors and gauge their knowledge of how an ED functions
- Guide and orientate patients/visitors to and within the ED and provide direction or non-medical escort to other areas of the hospital
- Provide information such as the ED Brochure or play a *Welcome to the Emergency Department* Educational DVD in appropriate language for patients and their families
- Offer comfort to patients/visitors as appropriate according to cultural considerations
- Assist with caring for children, to allow parents/patients to concentrate on receiving attention
- Liaise between patients and staff as requested to communicate non-clinical information
- Assist with arranging telephone calls and taxis for patients/visitors as requested by ED nurse.

To support the ED clinical staff in their regular duties, including:

- Be prepared to undergo additional training and work as a volunteer in the aged care falls prevention and feeding programs (*only where VEDs are accredited / trained and have been directed by ASET staff and or ED nursing staff*)
- Assist in promoting Standard Precautions in the ED i.e. offering masks, hand rub, tissues for appropriate patients
- Assist with restocking supplies in clinical areas in the ED as directed by nursing staff
- Other duties as directed which are consistent with the position description.

Report any concerns or issues to the Registered Nurse, ASET Nurse, Nurse Unit Manager/ Team Coordinator, Triage Nurse or Clinical Initiatives Nurse.

**Not all listed activities are available at all facilities. It is at the discretion of the facility as to which activities the VEDs are able to participate in. Volunteers should check with the hospital Volunteer Manager as to which activities are available in the current VED program.**

It is not appropriate for VEDs to do any of the following duties:

- Involve themselves in the aspect of a patient’s care which includes:
  - assisting patients in any physical way including moving or lifting patients in bed or perform bed to chair transfers where nursing/medical assistance is required
  - voicing an opinion on a clinical issue to the patient, staff or visitor
  - providing or assisting in the provision of first aid or any other clinical procedure
  - providing a referral to a service (not limited to medical)
  - acting as an interpreter
  - completing documentation on any patients or family member’s behalf.
- Offer to drive or actually driving a patient or visitor anywhere
- Offer use of their own private mobile phone to patients or visitors
- Offer or accepting money to/from patients or visitors
- Empty bed pans or clean up after a patient (i.e. blood, vomit, excrete)
- Making patient beds
- Perform cleaning duties
- Transport patients by wheelchairs or any other mobilising equipment where the patient requires assistance or supervision from a nurse/doctor/allied health member of staff
- Accompany patients outside for any reason (i.e. smoking, moving a vehicle).

**7. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

Prior to applying for the VED program, the applicant should be informed that the ED clinical environment is high intensity with acutely unwell patients and may be challenging at times with patients and family from many differing cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

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To be eligible to be an ED volunteer, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Aged 18 years or over
- Be reliable and punctual
- Ability to show diplomacy and a calm manner
- Ability to maintain patient confidentiality
- A neutral attitude regarding culture, religion, ethnicity and age
- Ability to work as an individual while still recognising the role as part of a team of volunteers and health professionals
- An understanding of the role of the volunteer and its limitations
- Be physically fit enough to move around the ED environment for up to three (3) hours
- Be willing to adhere to all VED program and hospital policies
- Successfully complete background checks
- Agree to attend training sessions as required.

**8. RESOURCES AND HOSPITAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Each hospital involved with the VED Program will provide the necessary resources to enable the program to be delivered and maintained
- The Volunteer Co-ordinator/Manager at each facility will have overall responsibility for the ED volunteers.

**9. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION**

- All volunteers into the program will undergo a rigorous recruitment and selection process to ensure they are suitable for the program
- All volunteers will be appointed according to Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) principles and police record check and working with children checks are to be conducted prior to commencement
- All volunteers will be asked to sign an agreement form and a copy of their position description.

For further information refer to [NSW Ministry of Health Policy Directive PD2019\\_003 - Working with Children Checks and Other Police Checks](#).

**10. UNIFORM AND EQUIPMENT**

- Facilities should provide their volunteers with a prescribed uniform for them to wear while performing their duties
- Facilities should advise volunteers that they must comply with the uniform/dress code i.e. hair, nails and jewellery
- Volunteers should be advised to wear sturdy, closed-toe shoes for their comfort and safety
- Volunteers will need to be provided with an official hospital security identification badge, name badge and access card (providing access to ED and staff room)
- Volunteers should only wear the ID badge assigned to them and must return it when they leave the role
- Volunteers should be given access to a secure space (i.e. locker or locked room) to secure their personal belongings while undertaking their shift.

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For further information on the uniform policy refer to [NSW Ministry of Health PD2019\\_012 - Uniforms Policy](#).

**11. ORIENTATION AND TRAINING**

- All volunteers on the program will be provided with general hospital orientation and ED specific training into the program before commencement in their role to ensure they are able to navigate their way around the hospital and ED.
- Depending upon ED staff availability this may be before or during the volunteer’s first allocated shift. Orientation should generally involve volunteers being shown the following:
  - Layout of ED (waiting room, cubicles, staff room, toilets)
  - Location of protective and safety equipment (i.e. duress alarms, PPE)
  - Location and correct usage of fire alarms and extinguishers
  - Location of secure space for personal belongings (i.e. locker)
  - Location of program resources (pamphlets, magazines, books, pencils etc.)
- Volunteers have the right to be provided with a safe work environment, as part of their orientation to ED, volunteers should be educated on the following procedures/policies:
  - Hospital emergency procedures
  - Infection control practices
  - Work Health and Safety regulations
  - Personal duress alarms – training and education on their use.

**12. OCCUPATION SCREENING, ASSESSMENT AND VACCINATION AGAINST INFECIOUS DISEASES**

Volunteers should be offered assessment, screening and vaccination against infectious diseases in accordance with PD2011\_005. Volunteers should be referred to local Staff Health clinics for ongoing management as a Category A staff member. Health services are responsible for meeting the full cost of assessment, screening and vaccination of existing staff and for hospital volunteers.

For further information refer to [NSW Ministry of Health Policy Directive PD2022\\_030 - Occupational Assessment, Screening and Vaccination Against Specified Infectious Diseases](#).

**13. VOLUNTEER ROSTERING AND SHIFTS**

- The volunteer coordinator/manager will be responsible for rostering volunteers according to their availability and ED requirements.
- Shift times should be tailored to the needs of each ED, however the table below provides a guide to recommended shifts based on the attendance rate of your ED:
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	Low Volume	Medium Volume	High Volume
<i>Day</i>	<i>Hours (pm)</i>	<i>Hours (pm)</i>	<i>Hours (pm-am)</i>
Monday to Friday	12-3, 3-6pm	12-3, 3-6, 6-9pm	12-3, 3-6, 6-9, 9-12am
Saturday to Sunday	12-3, 3-6, 6-9pm	12-3, 3-6, 6-9pm	12-3, 3-6, 6-9, 9-12am

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- A log book is a useful way of tracking the comings and goings of volunteers. Volunteers can use the log book to:
  - sign in prior to commencing their shift
  - sign out upon finishing their shift
  - record the number of visitors the volunteer supported during their shift.
- A communication book is a useful monitoring tool whereby the volunteer coordinator/manager and volunteers can record information relating to:
  - any concern or issues that arise during the shift
  - availability/unavailability of volunteers
  - policy and procedural matters
  - any upcoming events.
- Volunteers should notify the volunteer coordinator/manager and/or ED NUM as soon as possible if they are unable to attend a rostered shift due to illness.

**14. SHIFT BREAKS**

- Volunteers should be encouraged to take a 10 minute break during their shift. In the event the waiting room (and/or cubicles) is relatively quiet, volunteers can use their own discretion in taking additional breaks
- Hospitals are not required to provide meals or meal vouchers for volunteers however they may do so at their own discretion.

**15. SICK LEAVE / HOLIDAYS**

- In the event that a volunteer is planning on taking an extended period of leave, it is important that the volunteer coordinator/manager are notified as soon as possible, so alternative roster requirements can be made
- Volunteers should notify the volunteer coordinator/manager and/or ED NUM as soon as possible if they are unable to attend a rostered shift due to illness and advise whether the illness is likely to result in a long-term absence from the program.

**16. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

- All volunteers on the program should have an initial three-month probationary period evaluation attended. The volunteer should meet with the volunteer coordinator/manager to discuss:
  - the satisfaction of the role for the volunteer
  - the performance of the volunteer in their role
  - any concerns the volunteer has with either the role or the program.
- A formal yearly evaluation meeting with the volunteer co-ordinator/manager should be undertaken as part of the performance monitoring of the program.

**17. VOLUNTEER FEEDBACK**

- Volunteers should be encouraged to provide feedback at anytime, either by phone, email or in person, to the volunteer coordinator/manager.
- A volunteer may resign from their position at anytime and for any reason. On exiting the program, it is often useful for volunteers to complete an exit feedback form (refer to Appendix 1).

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- The form gives the volunteers an opportunity to provide feedback about their experiences and to make suggestions on areas that could be improved.

**18. VOLUNTEER SUPPORT**

- Volunteers working in EDs may be exposed to unpleasant or stressful situations that have the potential to affect their emotional, mental or physical health and, as such they should be offered support and debriefing/counselling, provided free of charge by the local health district
- In the event that a volunteer is exposed to such a situation while performing their duties, they should be encouraged to debrief with the NUM or Team Coordinator as soon as possible
- If the NUM or Team Coordinator deems the initial debrief is not sufficient, then the volunteer should be referred to the volunteer coordinator/manager to organise counselling follow-up with the Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

**Internal Counsellors**

Randwick Campus	Phone: (02) 9382 3681 or 9382 6616
Sydney Hospital Campus	Phone: (02) 9382 3681
St George Hospital Campus	Phone: (02) 9113 2012
Sutherland Hospital Campus	Phone: (02) 9540 7577

**External EAP Counselling Service**

Mentor Services Phone: 1300 727 308 for appointments in Sydney CBD, and suburbs.  
After-hours telephone counselling (in situations of crisis): Phone: 1300 727 308

For further information refer to [NSW Ministry of Health Policy Directive PD2022\\_048 - Employee Assistance Programs.](#)

**19. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Victorian State Government – Volunteers in Victorian Emergency Departments Program Manual and Resources adapted for use. Available to download at:  
<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/publications/volunteers-in-victorian-emergency-departments-ved-program-manual-and-attachments>

**20. REFERENCES**

- Canberra Hospital (2011) Volunteers in the Emergency Department Program.
- [NSW Ministry of Health Policy Directive PD2011\\_033 - Volunteers - Engaging, Supporting and Managing Volunteers](#)
- [NSW Ministry of Health Policy Directive PD2019\\_003 - Working with Children Checks and Other Police Checks](#)
- [NSW Ministry of Health Policy Directive PD2019\\_012 - Uniforms Policy](#)
- [NSW Ministry of Health Policy Directive PD2022\\_030 - Occupational Assessment, Screening and Vaccination Against Specified Infectious Diseases](#)
- [NSW Ministry of Health Policy Directive PD2022\\_048 - Employee Assistance](#)



Programs

- Prince of Wales Hospital and Community Health Services (2012) ReViVE Aged Care Volunteer Program. Department of Geriatric Medicine, Clinical Business Rule.

**21. REVISION AND APPROVAL HISTORY**

Date	Revision No.	Author and Approval
Jul 2011	0	Paul Smollen, Clinical Stream Manager, Critical Care & Medicine. (Draft)
Jan 2013	1	Leanne Horvat, Clinical Stream Manager, Critical Care / Emergency & Medicine (Draft)
Apr 2013	1	Leanne Horvat, Clinical Stream Manager, Critical Care / Emergency & Medicine – approved at the Emergency Clinical Stream Committee Meeting on 18 April 2013.
Oct 2013	1	Submitted to CQC for approval
Nov 2013	1	Approved by CQC. Published in Nov 2013
December 2015	2	Document revised. Minor changes – hyperlinks updated. Content endorsed by Executive Sponsor and published. Review date December 2017
March 2018	3	Minor review approved by Executive Sponsor and submitted to Executive Services
March 2018	3	Processed by Executive Services prior to publishing.
May 2023	4	Minor review. Hyperlinks updated. Approved by Executive Sponsor.

**Appendix 1: *Volunteer exit feedback form***

Dear Volunteer

In order to improve the conditions of volunteering with <Insert Name> Hospital, all volunteers have the opportunity to provide feedback in relation to their volunteer experience.

We thank you for the time you have generously given to the hospital, through the provision of practical and emotional support to patients and/or their family and friends.

**Your personal details**

<b>Family name:</b>		<b>Given name:</b>	
<b>Department:</b>		<b>Volunteer ID:</b>	
<b>Position:</b>	Emergency Department Volunteer		
<b>Commencement date:</b>		<b>Exit Date:</b>	

**Reasons for leaving**

- Study
- Family reasons
- Professional reasons
- End of program
- Travel
- Health reasons
- Program failed to meet expectations
- Other (please state) \_\_\_\_\_

**Statements:** (Please tick one)

1= strongly agree; 5= strongly disagree

- 1. Recruitment and selection processes were clearly explained 1  2  3  4  5
- 2. Training provided was better than adequate 1  2  3  4  5
- 3. The information in the position description accurately reflects the duties expected to be performed in the role 1  2  3  4  5
- 4. Uniform and equipment provided was satisfactory 1  2  3  4  5
- 5. Rostering of shifts was well organised and communicated 1  2  3  4  5
- 6. Support and debriefing, if required, was readily accessible 1  2  3  4  5
- 7. Professional development opportunities were appropriate 1  2  3  4  5
- 8. Recognition was provided at, and on, appropriate occasions 1  2  3  4  5
- 9. Staff were supportive and I was made to feel part of the team 1  2  3  4  5

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Please tell us about the enjoyable and not so enjoyable parts of your volunteering experience.

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Do you have any suggestions as to how we could improve the program and/or volunteering experience?

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Would you recommend the program and hospital to others interested in volunteering?

Yes  No

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**Additional comments:** Please feel free to write any additional comments you have about the program, your volunteering experience or the hospital.

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**Volunteer has returned the following items:**

Uniform	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Security identification badge	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Access card	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Emergency codes card	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>

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**Volunteer:**

**Interviewer:**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Please return the completed form to either:**



**Manager Volunteer Services**

**St George / Sutherland Hospitals**

South Eastern Sydney Local Health District

Community Relations Department

The Sutherland Hospital, Locked Bag 21, Taren Point 2229



**Volunteer Liaison Manager**

**Prince of Wales and Sydney / Sydney Eye Hospitals**

South Eastern Sydney Local Health District

Executive Level 3 High St

Prince of Wales Hospital, Randwick NSW 2031