



## The nursing team: clinical and support roles guidance note

### 1. Purpose

This guidance note provides guidance to registered nurses, enrolled nurses, assistants in nursing and employers about the distribution of nursing and non-nursing activities to the nursing team and support staff.<sup>1</sup>

### 2. Definition

**Direct care** refers to nursing interventions that require personal contact with patients or clients.

### 3. Context

Nursing work is carried out by a team comprising nurses, assistants in nursing and support workers. This team must be led by a registered nurse whose role is to assess, plan, and evaluate all nursing practice and guide its implementation. In guiding its implementation, the lead registered nurse should delegate work to team members as outlined here.

### 4. Guidance

#### Direct care

1. **Registered nurses** are accountable for all direct care. This includes:
  - planning nursing practice
  - implementing and delegating nursing practice to achieve the best possible outcome for the person or group of people in their care
  - providing continuity of care
  - evaluating nursing practice outcomes and instituting new interventions as needed
  - supporting people to be active participants in their health and achieve their health goals
  - implementing research to advance nursing practice.
2. **Enrolled nurses and assistants** in nursing help registered nurses by providing the aspects of direct care that are delegated to them by the registered nurse. These aspects must be within the limits of their education, training, experience and scope of practice.
3. At all times, enrolled nurses and assistants in nursing must work:
  - within a nursing care plan developed by a registered nurse
  - under the supervision (direct or indirect) of a registered nurse.

#### Housekeeping and cleaning

4. **Domestic staff** are responsible for housekeeping and cleaning activities.
5. In the absence of domestic staff, nurses should ensure the immediate care environment is clean and safe.

---

<sup>1</sup> Assistant in nursing refers to all care workers however titled.



6. In closed practice environments such as operating suites and procedure areas, nurses may clean any technical equipment in use if this is specified in the health services policies.

### Supply and stocktake

7. **Support staff** are responsible for stocktaking and maintaining supplies. This includes washing, mending, ironing and delivering linen; and ordering stationery, food and other routinely used items.

### Food service

8. **Nursing staff** are responsible for ensuring the people in their care maintain an optimal nutritional state. It is their role to ensure the food supplied is appropriate to the person's dietary requirements or limitations; help people in their care with eating and drinking; and record the amount of food they consume or reject.
9. **Catering and other support** staff are responsible for all other food service activities such as preparing and delivering meals and refreshments and collecting and washing trays and utensils.

### Messenger and transport services

10. **Support staff** are responsible for all messenger and transport services such as:
  - delivering specimens, request slips, and memos or bulletins
  - collecting records and transporting equipment
  - obtaining and transferring laboratory results and reports.
11. When people receiving care need transport, **nursing staff** may accompany them if their acuity requires it and this is specified in the health services policies.

### Clerical duties

12. **Nurses** are responsible for clerical duties associated with recording information related to direct nursing care. This includes care records and progress notes. It also includes e-prescribing and the e-administration of medicine or e-diagnostic procedures when this is within their scope of their practice.
13. **Support staff** are responsible for all other clerical duties at the direction of nursing staff. This includes completing business records such as bed occupancy reports; filing, posting or recording entries in the patient/resident notes (other than nursing records); answering phones; and arranging routine appointments with clinics or private doctors.

### Employer responsibilities

14. **Employers** are responsible for ensuring the health service has enough appropriate support staff to enable nurses to meet their direct care responsibilities.

### Learn more

For more detailed information, please read:

- the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia *Guide to delegation decisions*<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> The Guide to delegation decisions is in the NMBA *Decision-making framework for nursing and midwifery*, p 9. Available at <https://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Codes-Guidelines-Statements/Frameworks.aspx>.



- the ANMF position statements: *Role of assistants in nursing* and *Delegating personal care work*
- the ANMF guidance note: *Delegation by nurses and midwives*.

### Guidance note management

Document type: Guidance note	Review process: Federal Secretary every three years
Title: The nursing team: clinical and support roles	Next review: November 2024
Endorsed: November 2023	