

Nursing staff

It is often difficult for patients, carers and families to identify the role of each type of nursing staff. The best advice is to raise your concerns with one of the nurses and expect to be redirected to the right person.

Nurse unit manager (NUM)

Every ward has a nurse unit manager (NUM). This person is responsible for all nursing staff on the ward and overall patient care. The NUM is the best person with which to raise any unresolved patient-related concerns or issues.

*"I got up my courage and asked to speak to the NUM.
She listened - and things did change."*

Nurse in-charge

There is always a nurse in-charge of patient care on the ward. Often this will be the NUM, sometimes it will be another senior nurse. Day-to-day concerns about your family member can be reported to this person.

Nurses (division 1)

Previously known as registered nurses or nursing sisters, division 1 nurses manage wound care, medications, injections and other complex nursing care, as well as more mainstream nursing duties.

Nurses (division 2)

Previously known as state enrolled nurses or nurses' aides, division 2 nurses tend to general nursing needs, including showering, feeding and repositioning.

Other staff

The ward clerk

Most wards have a ward clerk who sits behind the nurses' station and is responsible for the day-to-day administration on the ward. This involves filing, making appointments, answering the phone and taking enquiries. The ward clerk is often a good contact point for general information - e.g. about the hospital or how things work on the ward.

Services staff

Services staff are responsible for a range of duties including the delivery of meals, cleaning and vacuuming.

Volunteers

While almost all hospitals have volunteers their role can vary greatly. Volunteers often visit patients, arrange library books and accompany patients outdoors or to the cafeteria. Find out more about volunteers by asking the nursing staff or contacting the volunteer coordinator.

Patient representatives

Most public hospitals have patient representatives who respond to patient and family concerns that remain unresolved.

Patients, carers and families who are unhappy with the care provided, feel unheard, disregarded or who have been given ultimatums can contact the patient representative. Nursing staff can arrange this or you may phone the hospital to speak with them directly.



There are no negative consequences in doing so. This is how the hospital receives feedback on the service it provides. The patient representative will work with the ward staff to resolve the issues as far as possible.

Further information:

- ☒ [Medical staff in hospitals](#) - information sheet.
- ☒ [Allied health staff in hospitals](#) - information sheet.
- ☒ [The hospital ward - how it works day-to-day](#) - information sheet.
- ☒ [Your rights in the hospital setting](#) - information sheet.

Contact the [Commonwealth Carer Resource Centre](#) on 1800 242 636* if you would like the above information sheets to be sent to you - or to find out about other information sheets in this series.

*Free call except from mobile phones. Mobile calls at mobile rates.

We do our best to keep these links up to date, but the internet changes all the time. If you can no longer access any of the above resources, please go to our [Internet Troubleshooting Guide](#), or email us at website@carersvic.org.au