

Deteriorating Customer Policy & Process

About this policy

HomeMade recognises the importance of identifying and responding to customer deterioration effectively and in a timely manner. This policy applies to all staff and contractors involved in the care and service delivery to customers.

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Introduction / Background

Early identification of deterioration in a customer's condition will support timely intervention and provision of appropriate care and services.

Customer deterioration may be:

- Rapid as a result of an acute episode such as sepsis
- Long term because of a chronic illness and related comorbidities.

Regardless of the deterioration trajectory, prompt and effective intervention is needed to ensure choice, dignity and appropriate care and services are provided to the customer.

Policy Statements

HomeMade is committed to ensuring customers whose conditions deteriorate are treated with dignity and respect and are given choices about their care and services pathways.

All customers will receive appropriate and timely recognition of changes in their condition, especially deterioration, and support to access care and services that provide them with an appropriate, effective individualised approach that is underpinned by the right to respect, dignity, choice, and freedom from pain.

Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
All staff	• Complete annual mandatory training in the management of unexpected deterioration
Support Specialists	• Collaborate with Onboarding Partners, Support Partners and Clinical Nurses to monitor customer wellbeing and identify early signs of deterioration. • Follow the Clinical Escalation Process when deterioration is observed or reported. • Document all observations and actions taken in the customer's records accurately and promptly.
Onboarding Partners	• Engage with customers during the initial virtual assessment, paying close attention to any changes in their health, behaviour, or condition. • Escalate according to the Clinical Escalation Process if necessary. • Document all observations and actions taken in the customer's records accurately and promptly.
Support Partners	• Engage with customers during virtual assessment reviews,

Role	Responsibility
	paying close attention to any changes in their health, behaviour, or condition. • Escalate according to the Clinical Escalation Process if necessary. • Document all observations and actions taken in the customer's records accurately and promptly.
Clinical Nurses	• Maintain a high level of clinical expertise to assess and recognise subtle signs of deterioration. • Collaborate with Support Specialists, Onboarding Partners and Support Partners to review assessments, reports, and customer self-reports to identify signs of and correctly respond to customer deterioration. • Respond effectively to clinical escalations and provide guidance on support plan adjustments and referrals.
Leadership team	• Oversee the implementation of and adherence to policies and procedures related to recognising and responding to a deteriorating customer. • Oversee the conduct of audits and investigations of incidents and monitoring of clinical indicators to ensure compliance and identify areas for improvement.
General Manager/Approved Provider Delegate/ (GM)/ Board	• Accountable to fulfil all legislative and regulatory requirements related to effectively recognising and responding to the deterioration of a customer. • Provide the necessary resources and support to ensure effective recognition of and response to deteriorating customers.

All staff are required to carry out their duties in accordance with their job descriptions, with the knowledge and skills attained as part of their profession or any qualifications, and in accordance with any applicable codes of conduct, practice or standards expected by HomeMade. Staff are expected to adhere to the Code of Conduct for Aged Care, engage with customers appropriately and respectfully, and to maintain professional boundaries.

Staff who are subject to professional standards (e.g., medical, nursing, and allied health professionals), will have a higher threshold of professional training and qualifications, knowledge and skills, and scope of practice, and hence a higher threshold of conduct expected.

Deteriorating customer and The Aged Care Quality Standards

Standard	Requirements
1 Consumer dignity and choice	(3) (a) (b) (c) (d) (e) (f)
2 Ongoing assessment and planning with consumers	(3) (a) (b) (c) (d) (e) (f)
3 Assessment and planning	(3) (a) (b) (c) (d) (e)
7 Human resources	(3) (a) (b) (c) (d) (e) (f)
8 Organisational governance	(3) (a) (b) (c i, ii, iv, v vi) (d i, iii)

Legislative / Compliance obligations

Aged Care Quality Standards 2019

Aged Care Act 1997 (Cth)

Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission, Rules 2018

Code of Conduct for Aged Care

Charter of Aged Care Rights 2019

Guardianship and Administration Act 2000 (QLD)

Powers of Attorney Act 1998 (QLD)

Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 1966 (NSW)

Associated Documents

Clinical Governance Framework

Key Signs of Deterioration

- Changes to vital signs (blood pressure, temperature, pulse rate and circulation, respiratory rate, O2 Saturation and breathing)
- Changes in the Level of Consciousness, Cognition or Behaviours
- Changes in the level of Pain
- Change in Blood Glucose Level
- Changes in Diet and Fluid Intake, Weight, and Swallowing
- Changes in Skin Integrity and/or Wound status
- Changes in Mobility and Physical status
- Changes in Urinary Output and Continence
- Indicators of Vulnerability
- Family/Staff Concerns

Process description

#	Descriptor/action required	Accountability
1	Identification of customer deterioration HomeMade detects customer deterioration through a number of mechanisms: • As self-reported by customers and their chosen representatives • As a component of the Customer Needs Assessment • Identifying risk factors following our <i>High Impact, High Prevalence Risk Policy and Procedure</i> • Analysis of individual customer incident data, including patterns of near misses, as per our <i>Incidents Management Policy and Process</i> • Clinical reviews of customer files • Health and Wellbeing notes submitted by support workers operating via the Mable platform. • Completion of validated assessment tools	All staff

#	Descriptor/action required	Accountability
	- Customers identified as underspending or overspending their Home Care Package funds - Reports and assessments from health professionals - Health summaries from General Practitioners - Aged Care Assessment reviews conducted by Aged Care Assessment Teams	
2	Escalation for Advice, Support and Management Actions <i>Initial Assessment:</i> Upon identification of potential deterioration, the staff member will work within their scope to conduct an initial assessment to determine the severity and urgency of the situation. <i>Clinical Escalation:</i> If the situation warrants further attention, the staff member will follow the Clinical Escalation Process to consult with a clinical team member, accessing their expertise in assessing the customer's condition. <i>Support Plan Adjustment:</i> Based on assessment and consultation, the customer's support plan may be reviewed and adjusted as necessary to accommodate the changes in their condition. This may involve modifying services, engaging additional support, or coordinating with external service providers. <i>Referral to External Services:</i> If the customer's deteriorating condition requires specialised care beyond our scope of services, we will partner with the customer to facilitate referrals to appropriate service providers in alignment with the customer's needs and preferences. All customers are provided the opportunity to discuss their end of life care and directives and to seek further information on end of life care	All staff
3	Staff to escalate to Emergency Services by phoning 000, where required in a medical emergency or situation requiring an emergency services response.	All staff

#	Descriptor/action required	Accountability
4	Adherence to Legislative and Regulatory Requirements Accountable to fulfil all legislative and regulatory requirements related to the deterioration of the customer.	All staff HomeMade Board

Continuous Improvement

HomeMade monitors and reviews its performance in recognising and responding to the needs of a deteriorating customer as part of the Clinical Governance Committee and in accordance with the *Clinical Governance Framework* and the *High Impact, High Risk Prevalence Policy and Process*.

HomeMade is committed to continuously improving its approach to identifying and responding to customer deterioration. As part of our Clinical Governance Framework, individual cases and customer data flows through all levels of the organisation, with a view to identifying continuous improvement initiatives. For more information on specific initiatives relating to customer deterioration, refer to the *Continuous Improvement Plan*.

Glossary

Customer deterioration

- Deterioration refers to the process of worsening or declining in wellbeing, condition, or health.

Substitute Decision Maker(s)/Family/Staff Concerns

If any concerns about a decline in the wellbeing of a customer are expressed by the Substitute Decision Maker(s), family members, neighbours or staff these must be taken seriously and an assessment for deterioration carried out.

Delegation

A delegation relationship exists when one member of the multidisciplinary health care team delegates aspects of care, which they are competent to perform and which would normally perform themselves, to another member of the health care team from a different discipline, or to a less experienced member of the same discipline.

Scope of Practice

Scope of Practice describes the professional activities a regulated health practitioner is permitted to undertake in line with their professional licence. Scope of Practice is limited to the specific education, experience, and demonstrated competence.

Evidence Base

Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (2019) Aged Care Quality Standards and Guidance Material

Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (2019) Charter of Aged Care Rights (under User Rights Principles 2019)

Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (2019) Glossary of Terms

Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (2019) Language Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission Glossary Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission Rules

Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (2022) Quality and Safety in Home Services – 5 Key Areas of Risk – Version 1.0

Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (2022) Aged Care Quality Bulletin #45 – September 2022. Recognising the signs of sepsis early can save lives.

Anchor Excellence Fact Sheets (2020)

Anchor Excellence High Impact Risk Assessment–Elders (HiRA-E) (2020)

Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care (2023) Home Care Packages Program Operational Manual: A Guide for Home Care Providers

Australian Health Practitioners Registration Agency (2016) Registered Nurse Standards for Nursing Practice

Australian Health Practitioners Registration Agency (2016) Registered Nurse Standards for Nursing Practice Fact Sheet

Australian Health Practitioners Registration Agency (2018) Nursing and Midwifery Board Code of Conduct

Australian Health Practitioners Registration Agency (2018) Nursing and Midwifery Board Code of Conduct

Australian Health Practitioners Registration Agency (2020) Decision-making framework summary Nursing

Australian Health Practitioners Registration Agency & International Council of Nurses (2018) Nursing and Midwifery Board Code of Ethics for Nurses

My Aged Care (2023) Home Care Packages Program Manual for Care Recipients

Pharmacy Board of Australia (2014) Code of Conduct for Pharmacists

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) Aged Care Clinical Guide (Silver Book) 5th edition Part A Pain

User Rights Principles (2014) Part 3 Home Care, Part 4 Flexible Care

Various State medication and poisons legislation and regulation

Document Control

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