

HelpingMinds respectfully acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet and pay our respects to Elders, past and present and emerging.



# THE C WORD

## Carers are crucial





# TIMELINE

WA Carers Recognition Act

2004

Mental Health Act WA requires carer involvement in mental health services;  
National Mental Health Commission review recommends increased carer engagement

2014

2010  
Triangle of Care Guide  
(to build carer engagement)  
launched in UK

2016  
Practical Guide released to support services to engage with carers

HelpingMinds Practical Guide Project commences

2017



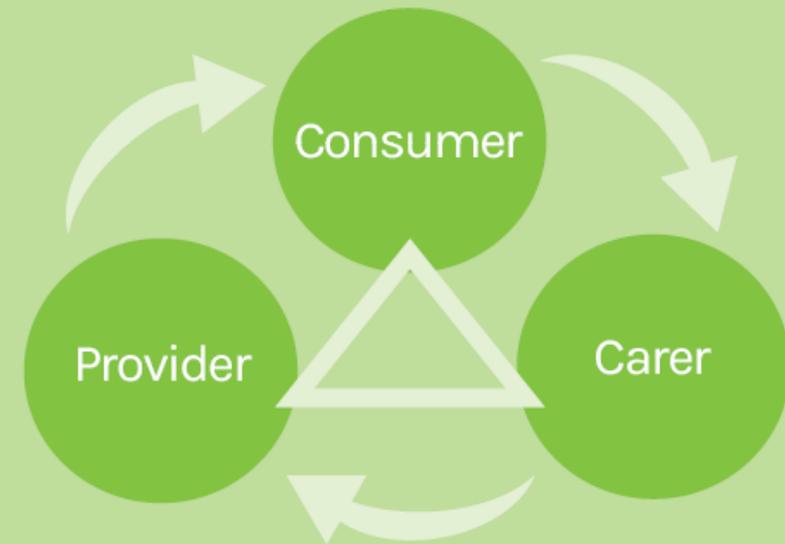
# A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR WORKING WITH CARERS OF PEOPLE WITH A MENTAL ILLNESS

# TRANSITION TO TRIANGLE OF CARE

Typical individual treatment model



Triangle of Care model



# Why engage with carers



**It is proven that carer engagement:**

- Improves the mental state for the consumer
- Decreases the risk of relapse and hospital re-admission
- Leads to a better quality of life
- Allows ongoing daily support to build wellness and recovery

# Collaboration



- 4 inpatient and 4 community mental health services over 5 months
- We sought collaboration with every level of management
- Staff were nominated as ‘Carer Champions’
- We employed consumers and carers as consultants

# Co-designed Ideas



*“We know from research that co-designed ideas are more likely to build support for cultural change” (Larkin, Boden and Newton, 2015).*

- HelpingMinds worked with staff, management, 11 consumers and carers in developing resources and strategies.
- This co-design approach mirrors the partnership concept of the triangle of care

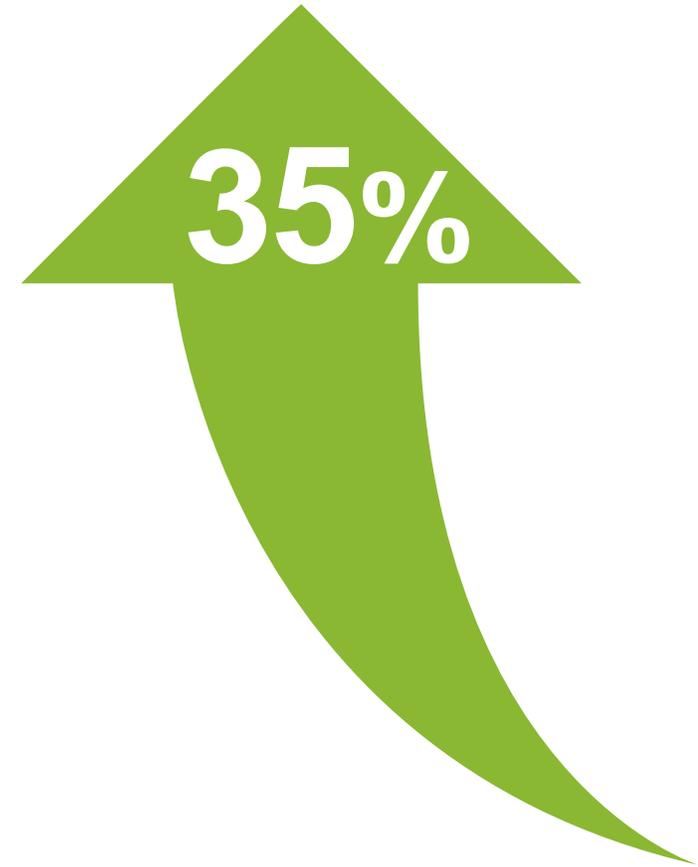
# Cultural Change



At the end of the Practical Guide project, more clinical staff reported improvements in engagement across the 6 carer engagement standards.

# Standard 1

Carers and the essential role they play are identified at first contact, or as soon as possible thereafter.



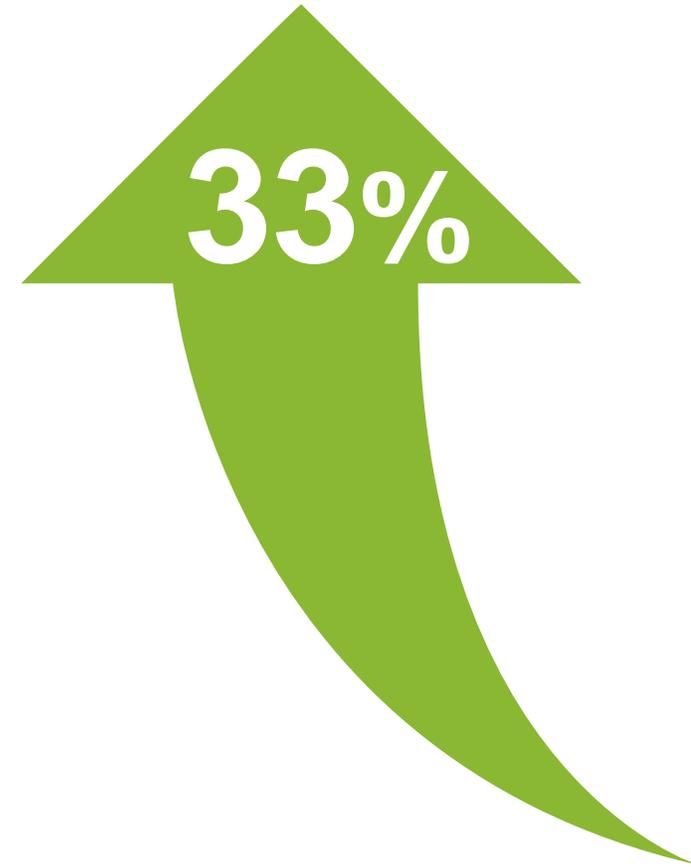
# Standard 2

Staff are carer aware and trained in carer engagement strategies.



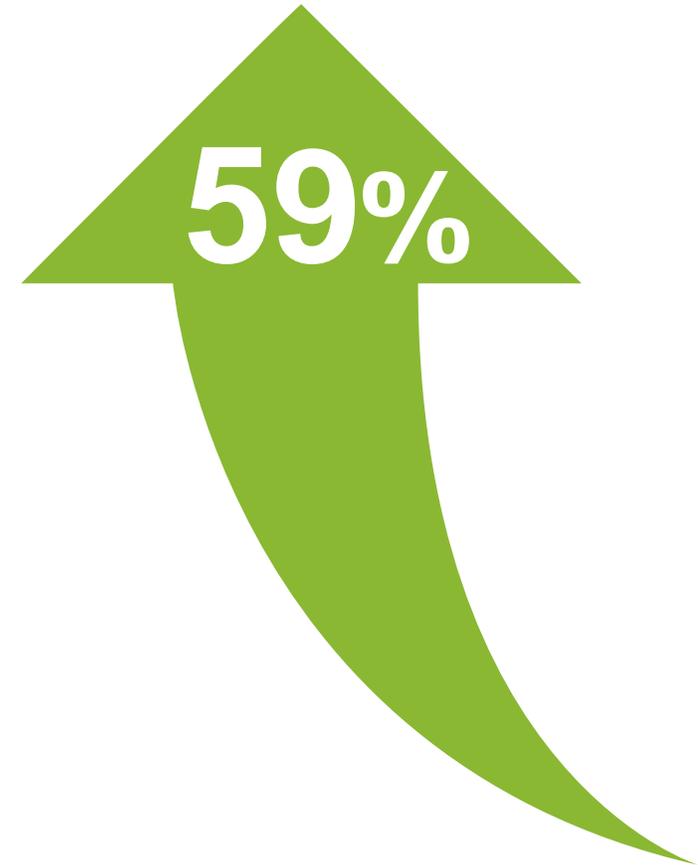
# Standard 3

Policy and practice protocols regarding confidentiality and sharing of information are in place.



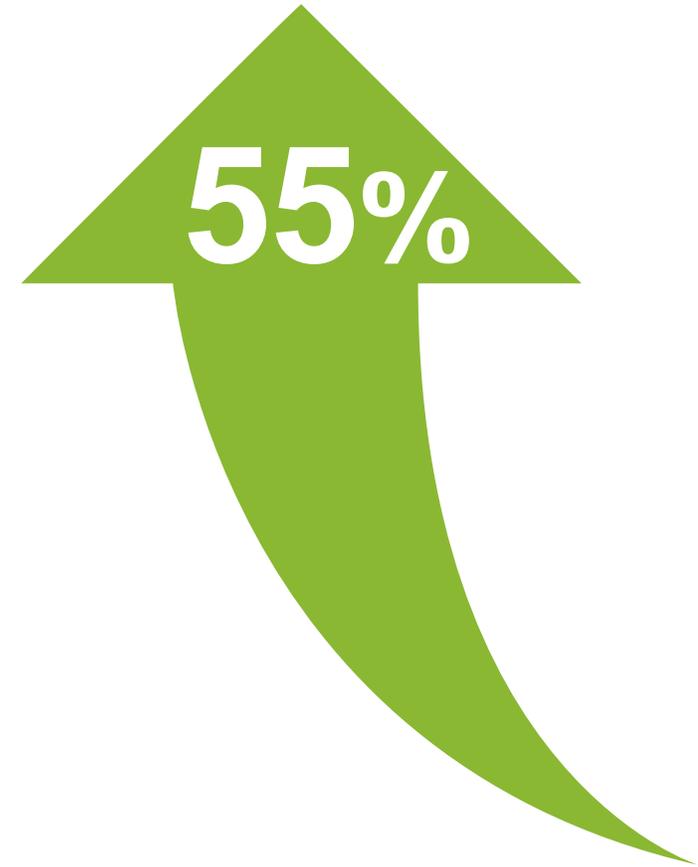
# Standard 4

Defined staff positions are allocated for carers in all service settings.



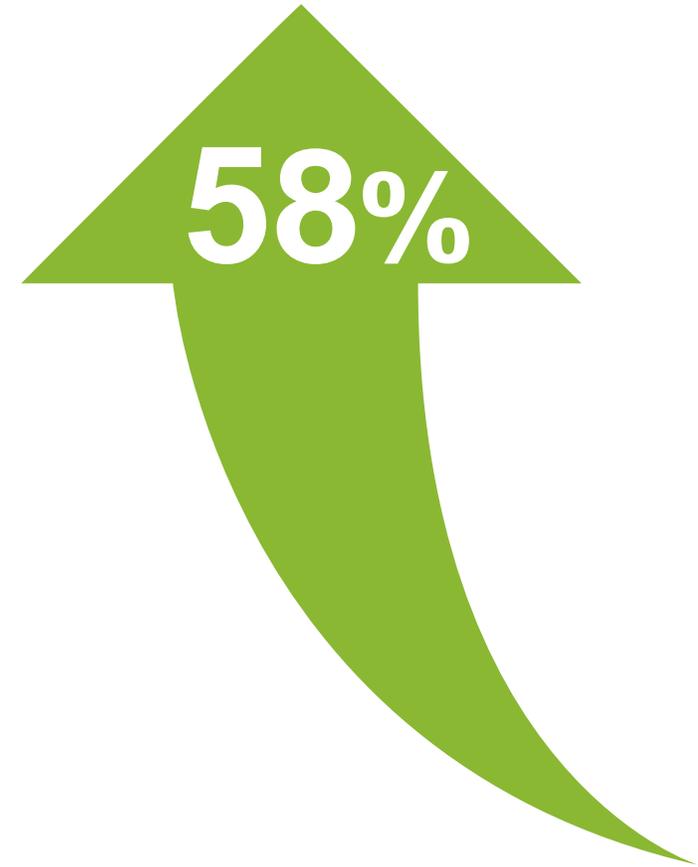
# Standard 5

A carer introduction to the service and staff is available, with a relevant range of information across the care settings.



# Standard 6

A range of carer support services is available.



# Challenges



- Need enough time for change management processes within services
- Helpful to work with carer champions who are in decision-making roles as well as carer champions who are clinicians
- Staff with high workloads can struggle to take on new initiatives

# Challenges



- Individualised focus on the consumer rather than seeing the consumer within their social system
- Some staff identify that working with carers is not core business

# Collateral



- Welcome letter to carer
- Carer engagement checklist
- Conversations about consent – clinicians guide
- Checklist of useful questions for consumers and carers
- Use of e-learning modules

# Future Considerations



- Take a regional approach
- Work with existing consumer and carer engagement processes
- Challenge cultural norms of mental health practice

# Find out more

[helpingminds.org.au/health-professionals](http://helpingminds.org.au/health-professionals)

