Justice Health and
Forensic Mental Health Network

NSW GOVERNMENT

Justice Health NSW Policy

Health Information Resources for Consumers

Issue Date: 04 May 2023

Together for
Healthier Tomorrows

Health Information Resources for Consumers

Policy Number 2.066

Policy Function Leadership & Management

Issue Date 04 May 2023

Next Review Date 04 May 2026

Risk Rating High

Summary This policy informs Justice Health NSW staff on the development and review of health information for consumers, their families and carers.

Responsible Officer Director, Nursing Midwifery and Clinical Governance

Applies to
☒ Administration Centres
☒ Community Sites and programs
☒ Health Centres - Adult Correctional Centres or Police Cells
☒ Health Centres - Youth Justice Centres
☒ Long Bay Hospital
☒ Forensic Hospital

CM Reference POLJH/2066

Change summary
- Name change to reflect policy content
- Update of hyperlinks and documents
- Approval process change
- Added considerations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers

Authorised by Chair, Policy Steering Committee

Revision History

#	Issue Date	Number and Name	Change Summary
4	May 2023	2.066 Health Information Resources for Consumers	• Name change to reflect policy content • Update of hyperlinks and documents • Approval process change • Added considerations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers
3	June 2019	2.066 Health Literacy for Written Health Information	• Updated template and style • Refined wording • Updated links

			• Updated with additional points re media consent
2	March 2018	2.066 Health Literacy for Written Health Information	• Procedure and consultation process update • Updated flowchart • Improved list of related documents
1	October 2016	2.066 Health Literacy	• New policy

PRINT WARNING

Printed copies of this document, or parts thereof, must not be relied on as a current reference document.

Always refer to the electronic copy for the latest version.

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1. Preface

Provision of health information is central to the overall safety, quality, rehabilitation and recovery of each consumer's experience. Providing clear and easy to use information to consumers is central to this policy. This policy refers to the readability of written health information and accessibility of other digital information formats provided to consumers accessing Justice Health NSW services, and ensures the information:

- Is clear, concise, relevant, accurate and written in plain English or easy English.
- Complies with National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards. In particular Standard 2: 'Partnering with Consumers', which aims to implement systems to support partnering with consumers and other stakeholder partners in improving the safety and quality of care.
- Justice Health NSW Consumer Focus and Quality Officer should be contacted for further advice and information on readability and health literacy by emailing [redacted]

2. Policy Content

2.1 Mandatory Requirements

- Consumers from the proposed target audience must be consulted on any development or review of health information resources including but not limited to fact sheets, brochures, guides, posters, videos or other innovative format designed and intended for the consumer (patients, families and carers) population. Where possible, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be involved in the consumer consultation process.
- All Justice Health NSW developed consumer health information must be written in plain English, as per the guidelines in section 3.2 of this Policy and targeted to the intended audience.

2.2 Implementation - Roles and Responsibilities

Chief Executive is responsible for:

- Ensuring an effective system is in place for all health information provided to consumers.

Executive Directors are responsible for:

- Ensuring that appropriate considerations are made regarding readability and accessibility of health information for the Justice Health NSW patient population.
- Approving consumer health information resources.

Director Clinical and Corporate Governance is responsible for:

- Ensuring policies and procedures are in place that integrate appropriate readability and accessibility of health information for consumers.

Justice Health NSW staff involved in the development of health information resources for consumers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that health information provided to consumers is clear, concise, relevant, accurate and written in everyday language as per the *Patient Written Health Information Readability Check*.

- Ensuring that all consumer health information resources developed by Justice Health NSW are contained in the *Patient Health Resources section of the Intranet* and the *Justice Health Information Portal*. This will be ensured via correspondence with the Consumer Focus and Quality Officer.
- Ensuring that all consumer health information resources are focus tested as per the *Consumer Information Feedback Tool* and *Consumer Response Log*.

Consumer Focus and Quality Officer is responsible for:

- Conducting a review of the readability of the information with consideration of literacy strengths, needs and preferences of consumers; and relaying this information back to all relevant stakeholders.
- Uploading approved consumer health information on the *Patient Health Resources* section on Justice Health NSW Intranet page.
- Checking that consumer input/feedback at development and review stages has been conducted.
- Reporting on any new or updated written health information for consumers at the Health Promotion Leadership Group meeting.
- Tabling Justice Health NSW Patient Health Resources at committees and other meetings where appropriate.

All staff are responsible for:

- Compliance with the requirements for the development, review, and approval of consumer health information resources as set out in this policy.

Application of Justice Health NSW Policies in Privately Operated Centres:

In applying Justice Health NSW policies, Private Operators should translate the policy requirements in their settings while upholding Justice Health NSW policy principles. If a local document is developed to support Justice Health NSW policy implementation, private operators must clearly brand their documents and must not use Justice Health NSW branding. If a private operator is unable to meet Justice Health NSW policy requirements or principles, the issue must be escalated in accordance with policy 2.012 *Communicating with Private Correctional Health Centre Operators*.

This section states the responsibilities of all staff for implementation of the policy (from frontline to Chief Executive if applicable). Furthermore, Policy Documents that provide instructions to staff must also capture WHS roles and responsibilities. This section allows all staff to clearly understand the requirements of the policy as it applies to them and what they must/should do as a result of the requirements.

2.3 Procedural Content

Appendix 1 Flowchart for Development of Written Consumer Health Information Resources provides a quick reference guide that staff should refer to throughout the process of developing consumer information resources.

2.3.1 Request to develop a Consumer Health Information Resource

Prior to developing any written consumer information, the author must:

- Conduct an internal and/or external search for any consumer information within the subject area that is currently available, and determine if suitable for use, either in whole or part. Justice Health NSW Health Promotion Leadership Group may assist with this information. This should include consultation with consumers to determine if there is interest in the proposed resource.
- Obtain line manager approval regarding the need for a new or revised consumer health information resource.
- Consult with the Consumer Focus and Quality Officer. Email: [redacted]

2.3.2 Development of Consumer Health Information Resource

Plain English and Easy English documents are appropriate for most circumstances.

When developing written consumer health information resources, authors should consider the following strategies to ensure quality and accuracy:

- Conduct literature reviews or other research and evaluation. Generally, resources should be no more than 3-5 years old.
- New resources are reviewed by a subject matter expert within the relevant directorate.
- Engage consumers in development and focus testing to ensure the intended message is received and understood.
- For resources targeted at or frequently used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, consideration should be given to cultural needs; such as use of culturally safe and inclusive language and imagery to depict information. Use of pictures should be used to describe information where possible. Staff developing resources should consult with an Aboriginal Health Manager or clinician for further advice.
- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) patients, including d/Deaf consumers, consideration should be given to specific cultural and linguistic needs; such as use of culturally safe language and imagery to depict information.
- Refer to the *Justice Health NSW branding guide* for instructions on appropriate branding of resources.
- Consult with the Consumer Focus and Quality Officer. Email: [redacted]

2.3.3 Translations

- Justice Health NSW is responsible for ensuring appropriate health information is available for all consumers, including people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who may not speak English, or speak English as a second language.
- All translations must be completed by a qualified translator. The Consumer Focus and Quality Officer can provide you with details of experienced translation agencies that will provide you with a quote.

- Translation apps and other online translation services are not approved to provide accurate translations of health information. Therefore they are not approved for use until otherwise advised.

2.3.4 Consultation Process

Consumers must be consulted on any development or review of resources:

- Engaging consumers in the development of health information supports patient-centred care and assists in ensuring the message is understood as intended.
- Prior to developing a first draft, authors should have determined the need for the resource with consumers likely to use or receive the written information, and consult thereafter through individual or group focus testing via the *Consumer Information Feedback Tool* and *Consumer Response Log*.
- Any suggested changes from consumers should be taken into consideration. The author must forward the suggested final draft of the written consumer health information to the Consumer Focus and Quality Officer, along with the completed *Consumer Information Feedback Tool* and *Consumer Response Log*..
- The Consumer Focus and Quality Officer will conduct the *Patient Written Health Information Readability Check* and provide recommendations back to the author. The Consumer Focus and Quality Officer will table the approved resource at Justice Health NSW Health Promotion Leadership Group meeting.

2.3.5 Approval Process

The author is responsible for ensuring approval is obtained by their line manager and relevant consultation with clinical streams and consumers has occurred. The author is responsible for informing the Consumer Focus and Quality Officer when this has been completed.

3. Definitions

Readability

Refers to how easy or difficult it is too read a particular text using the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level scale, see Appendix 2.

Health information resource

Information in the form of a fact sheet, brochure, wallet card, poster, video, sound clip, artwork, mural, playing cards or other innovative format designed and intended for the consumer population.

Consumers

Patients, their families and carers exposed to health services who have had personal experiences in the health and disability system.

Must

Indicates a mandatory action to be complied with.

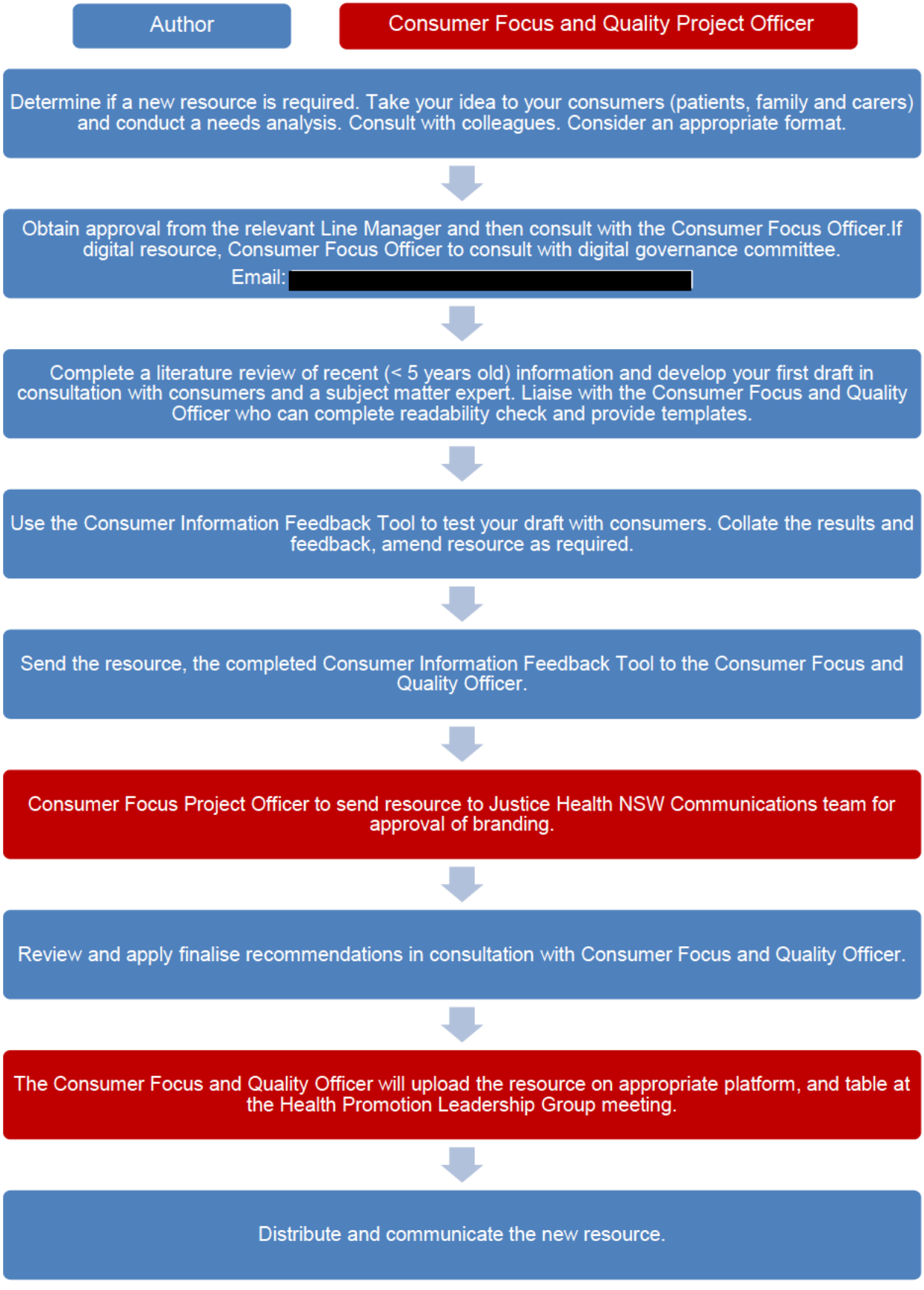
Should

Indicates a recommended action to be complied with unless there are sound reasons for taking a different course of action.

4. Related Documents

Legislations	
Justice Health NSW Policies, Guidelines and Procedures	2.012 *Communicating with Private Correctional Health Centre Operators* 2.018 *Media and External Communications* *Consumer Information Feedback Tool* *Consumer Response Log* *Patient Written Health Information Readability Check* *NSW Government Branding Guidelines* *Patient Information Portal* *Developing Consumer Resources* *2021 Health Literacy Study report and fact sheets*
Justice Health NSW Forms	
NSW Health Policy Directives and Guidelines	
Other documents and resources	

Appendix 1 – Flowchart for Development of Consumer Written Information Resources



Appendix 2 – Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Scale

Readability scores are sometimes shown as scores on a scale of 0–100, with 0 hardest to read and 100 easiest. This was Flesch's original approach to readability, based on word and sentence lengths. The scale of reading ease is inverse to the Flesch–Kincaid grade scores, so that lower scores represent the difficult end of the scale.

The Australian Government Style Manual recommends you write to a reading level – after the removal of proper names and titles – of Year 7 (age range 12 to 14 years).

The Sydney Health Literacy Lab Health Literacy Editor is a useful tool for checking and amending readability of text.

Score	School Level	Notes
90-100	5th grade	Very easy to read.
80-90	6th grade	Easy to read. Conversational English for consumers.
70-80	**7th grade**	**Fairly easy to read by age range 12 to 14 years. Goal for patient population.**
60-70	8th or 9th grade	Plain English. Easily understood by 13 – 15 year olds.
50-60	10th to 12th grade	Fairly difficult to read
30-50	College	Difficult to read
0-30	College graduate	Very difficult to read. Best understood by university graduates.