

**Mental Health Carers NSW**

# Recruitment Kit Policy Officer

**2023**



**Mental Health  
Carers NSW**



Mental Health Carers Advocacy Network  
Enabling Carer Experience and Changing Care Outcomes



# About MHCN + Our Vision & Mission

**MHCN is the peak body for mental health carers in NSW. Founded as ARAFMI in 1974 by Margaret Lukes, a social worker; she believed there needed to be more support for families, friends and carers of people living with a mental illness.**

Mental health carers are people who support friends, partners, members of their family, kinship groups or communities, when they experience mental illness.

Mental Health Carers NSW Inc. is the peak body in NSW for mental health carers, advocating for a vision of safe and competent mental health services and systems that recognise and respect carers as partners in care planning and delivery, to achieve recovery.

MHCN's Mission is to support, empower, capacity build, and advocate with mental health carers to ensure their voices and experiences are heard.





## 1. JOB ADVERTISEMENT

### Mental Health Carers NSW Policy Officer – Full Time

Are you passionate about mental health reform and ensuring people's voices are heard for systemic change? Do you have experience in systemic policy and advocacy work? Do you get excited about policy development, research, holding consultations, and delivering co-design activities?

We are excited to announce that we are seeking a full time Policy Officer!

The Policy Officer role will work to help MHCN's policy and advocacy work to capture the authentic voice of people with experience of serious and persistent mental distress and of their carers, family, friends and kin and fairly and effectively represent their views, experience and needs in systemic advocacy.

The Policy Officer will report to the Policy Manager and will work as part of MHCN's Policy and Advocacy Team (PAT).

These tasks and activities will be undertaken either as part of MHCN's core program of systemic advocacy under its role as peak body for mental health carers, or as part of the Disability Advocacy Futures Program (DAFP) that MHCN has been funded to deliver.

#### What we are looking for:

- Demonstrated research skills including literature reviews, proposals, reports, and mixed research methods (e.g., survey design, interviews, focus groups) including use of lived experience.
- Demonstrated computer skills in MS Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint), MS Teams, Outlook; ZOOM and other relevant survey, research or database skills.
- Capacity to develop and maintain effective relationships with key stakeholders and to provide high quality and timely policy advice on issues affecting carers and other vulnerable groups.
- High level of oral communication skills and the ability to communicate with a wide audience.
- Demonstrated ability to work independently to meet work plan targets within designated timelines and manage competing priorities and collaborate and contribute as an effective member of a team.

Please see the position description on page 5 for all the selection criteria.

#### Benefits of working with MHCN

- **A full-time fixed-term position to 30 June 2024, with possibility of extension and a competitive salary:**



- Social, Community, Home Care & Disability Services Award Level 4 Pay Point 1 – Level 4 Pay Point 4, plus Super & Option of Salary Packaging to increase take home pay.
- **Additional days-off**, above the Award leave, (between Christmas and New Year's Day).
- **Flexible working arrangements** such as flexible start/ finish times and working from home options.
- **A workplace wellbeing program** including membership of Uprise Wellbeing and EAP services and regular wellbeing events.
- Work for a **peak-body organisation** with a systemic approach to raising the voice of carers to create change.
- Opportunity to work at **Collective Purpose**, a modern workspace shared by four likeminded community managed organisations in a city-location.
- **Welcoming and inclusive culture** encouraging diversity and equal opportunity.

MHCN is an equal opportunity employer and encourages applications from all qualified applicants and strongly encourages applications from people with diverse backgrounds including First Nations people, LGBTQIA+ people, culturally and linguistically diverse people, people living with disabilities and people with a lived experience of or caring for someone living with a mental health condition and/or psychosocial disability.

MHCN encourages applicants to request reasonable adjustments to facilitate the recruitment process. MHCN will consider reasonable adjustments requests to facilitate employment of the right candidate. For further information or discussion, please contact Laura Knight at [MHCNadmin@mentalhealthcarersnsw.org](mailto:MHCNadmin@mentalhealthcarersnsw.org)

### Interested?

Please read the application guidelines in the Recruitment Process and send your completed application via email (resume and responses to the selection criteria) to Laura Knight, Business and Organisation Support Services Manager at:

[MHCNadmin@mentalhealthcarersnsw.org](mailto:MHCNadmin@mentalhealthcarersnsw.org)

## 2. RECRUITMENT PROCESS

### Application Process:

- Applications are to be submitted by email to Laura Knight, Business and Organisation Support Services Manager at [MHCNadmin@mentalhealthcarersnsw.org](mailto:MHCNadmin@mentalhealthcarersnsw.org)
- The closing date for applications is **11.59pm, Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2023**.
- Late applications will not be considered.
- Applications must include **a current resume, and a statement addressing all Essential Selection Criteria**. Desirable Criteria should only be answered where it enhances the application. Selection Criteria are found in the Position description in Section 4.



- Applications **will not progress** to an interview if all the selection criteria are not addressed or if we receive incomplete applications.
- All applications will be acknowledged that they have been received by email.

#### Selection Process:

- Selected applicants will be invited to attend an interview and will be given at least one week's notice of the time and date.
- Interviewees will be sent the interview questions at least 1 day prior to the interview.
- Interviews will be conducted online via ZOOM or in person and will last 45 minutes – 1 hour.
- All interviewees will be asked the same set of questions, although the panel reserves the right to include set tasks to complete as part of the interview process and/or to ask additional clarifying questions if necessary.
- Applicants who proceed to the interview round may be asked to submit a piece of writing that demonstrates their ability to write, demonstrating critical thinking, research and/or analytical skills.
- The panel will rank eligible applicants in order of preference.
- The panel will check references as provided by the selected applicants.
- The successful applicant will be offered the position. If they decline, the position will be offered to the next ranked person.
- All unsuccessful applicants will be notified via email as soon as possible after the recruitment process is completed.
- Applications and questions can be addressed to [MHCNadmin@mentalhealthcarersnsw.org](mailto:MHCNadmin@mentalhealthcarersnsw.org)

This role requires evidence of the following checks/clearances:

- National Criminal History Record Check in accordance with the Disability Inclusion Act 2014.
- Primary COVID19 vaccination shots 1 & 2.
- Eligibility to work and live in NSW, Australia.
- Education or Skill Qualifications (if requested), that were used as part of their application or a requirement of the role.

Evidence of the above checks must be provided by the successful applicant prior to or within a specified period of the role starting. Employment is conditional upon satisfactory completion of these requirements.

### 3. ORGANISATION PROFILE

#### Mental Health Carers NSW INC (MHCN)

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Type of organisation:	Non-government organisation, registered charity, PBI status, DGR status, founded in 1974
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Funding sources:	Mental Health Branch of the NSW Ministry of Health, NSW Mental Health Commission, Department of Justice and Communities, donations, and bequests
Geographical focus:	NSW
Issue focus:	Systemic advocacy, policy and capacity development for families, carers and friends supporting someone with a lived experience of mental illness in NSW.
Industry focus:	Systemic advocacy, policy, Information, health promotion, capacity development, peer support, networking.

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#### Contact details:

Address:	Building C, Suite 2.02, 33 Saunders St, Pyrmont NSW 2009
Telephone:	02 9332 0777
Email:	<a href="mailto:MHCNadmin@mentalhealthcarersnsw.org">MHCNadmin@mentalhealthcarersnsw.org</a>
Website:	<a href="http://www.mentalhealthcarersnsw.org">www.mentalhealthcarersnsw.org</a>

#### Mental Health Carers NSW Inc (MHCN)

Arafmi was founded in 1974 as the 'Association of Relatives and Friends of the Mentally Ill' and renamed to 'Mental Health Carers Arafmi NSW Inc.', commencing trading as Mental Health Carers Arafmi NSW (**MHCN**) in 2016 to align with our national body Mental Health Carers Australia and recovery-oriented language.

As the peak body for mental health carers in NSW, **MHCN** represents the interests of mental health carers to the NSW Ministry of Health, and provides information, capacity development and systemic advocacy on behalf of mental health carers.

**MHCN** regularly consults with carers across NSW to gain information on their opinions and experiences with the mental health system. **MHCN** uses the information gained in these consultations to provide feedback on policies and services on behalf of carers to NSW Health and to other health services and policy makers.

By influencing changes in policy, legislation, and service provision, **MHCN** aims to make a positive difference to the mental health system for carers and through the **MHCAN** to empower carers to become champions for change, sharing their lived experience to promote mental health reform in NSW.

MHCN developed the Mental Health Carer Advocacy Network (**MHCAN**) to broaden its engagement with mental health carers in its advocacy and to assist roll out of the NSW Mental Health Commission's Lived Experience Framework (LEF). MHCN regularly meets with carers across NSW online through MHCAN Network meetings. MHCN uses the understanding gained in these meetings, of carer experience with the mental health



system, and information from specific consultations, to provide feedback on behalf of carers about policies and services to NSW Health and to other health policy makers and services.

In October 2022, MHCN was awarded the tender for Department of Communities and Justice Disability Advocacy Futures Program (DAFP) for psychosocial disability systemic advocacy. MHCN will deliver systemic advocacy through this project that includes liaising with Individual Advocacy Providers, stakeholders, government, and non-government decision-makers, and DCJ to improve understanding of the unique issues faced by people with psychosocial disability to enhance access to state funded, non-health, government services.

#### 4. POSITION DESCRIPTION

**Policy Officer**  
**Position Description**  
**March 2023**

<b>Organisation:</b>	<b>Mental Health Carers NSW Inc (MHCN)</b>
<b>Title:</b>	Policy Officer
<b>Employment type:</b>	Full time 5 day per week, 38 hours per week.
<b>Salary:</b>	SCHADS Level 4 Pay Point 1 – Pay Point 4
<b>Duration:</b>	ASAP 2023 to 30th June 2024, with possibility of extension
<b>Location:</b>	Hybrid – WFH and in office as needed Building C, Suite 2.02, 33 Saunders St, Pyrmont NSW 2009
<b>Report to:</b>	Policy Manager
<b>Direct Reports</b>	Carer Peer Participation Support Worker, Volunteers (as relevant)

#### About MHCN

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With its core functions funded by the Mental Health Branch of NSW Health, **MHCN** is the peak body for mental health carers in NSW, (carers of those who experience serious and persistent episodic mental distress or psychosocial disability). **MHCN** represents the interests of mental health carers to the NSW Ministry of Health, and provides information, capacity development and systemic advocacy on behalf of mental health carers.

**MHCN** developed the Mental Health Carer Advocacy Network (**MHCAN**) to broaden its engagement with mental health carers in its advocacy and to assist roll out of the NSW Mental Health Commission's Lived Experience Framework (**LEF**). **MHCN** regularly meets with carers across NSW online through **MHCAN** Network meetings. **MHCN** uses the



understanding gained in these meetings, of carer experience with the mental health system, and information from specific consultations, to provide feedback on behalf of carers about policies and services to NSW Health and to other health policy makers and services.

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### **Role Description**

The Policy Officer role will work to help MHCN's policy and advocacy work to capture the authentic voice of people with experience of serious and persistent mental distress and of their carers, family, friends and kin and fairly and effectively represent their views, experience and needs in systemic advocacy.

The Policy Officer will report to the Policy Manager and will work as part of MHCN's Policy and Advocacy Team (PAT).

These tasks and activities will be undertaken either as part of MHCN's core program of systemic advocacy under its role as peak body for mental health carers, or as part of the Disability Advocacy Futures Program (DAFP) that MHCN has been funded to deliver.

### **Duties and Responsibilities:**

#### **Policy and Advocacy Activities and Stakeholder Relations**

##### **The Policy Officer will be responsible for:**

- Being the secretariate for the DAFP Network meetings and Mental Health Carer Advocacy Network meetings:
  1. Oversee agendas, taking minutes, action follow-up, meeting administration as appropriate and as directed.
- Completing policy and advocacy work arising from DAFP Network meetings and Mental Health Carer Advocacy Network meetings, as directed.
- Representing MHCN at relevant external meetings as delegated:
  1. E.g.: represent views and experiences of mental health carers.
  2. E.g.: If organising; oversee chairing, minute taking & filing & meeting administration.
- Capturing the 'lived experience' issues for the development of the DAFP Psychosocial Disability Advocacy Platform and/or MHCN Mental Health Carer Advocacy Platform.
  1. E.g.: meeting transcription, analysis of video/audio recordings, notes of chats from meetings, consultations or interviews, collection and analysis of survey results, social media records or any other reasonable source.





- Meet with key mental health carer stakeholders and communicate with them (through discussion, position papers, survey's, social media etc.), for the purpose of evidence collection to inform policy and advocacy work.
- Developing positions around psychosocial disability issues and/or mental health carer issues; and undertaking consequential policy work towards the ongoing advocacy, implementation, and review of the relevant platform.
- Providing policy analysis and advice based on relevant carer and/or consumer experiences to external stakeholders and for external policy processes.

### Research & Reporting

- Undertake relevant research projects including preparing, researching, and writing submissions, correspondence and reports from relevant policy research or consultations, for internal use or external advocacy.
- Support research, consultations and other relevant policy and advocacy activities with carers run by external organisations by jointly promoting with the Stakeholder Engagement and Capacity Development team.
- Provide regular feedback to PAT, prepare reports and feedback for PAT reporting and relevant funding bodies reporting.

### Co-Designing & co-delivering advocacy through capacity building & development

- Co-design and/or co-review, implement and review MHCN's processes, resources, etc., with other policy staff, carers, and stakeholders as appropriate.
- Promote MHCN's co-designed processes for the trauma-informed conduct of meetings, discussions and evidence collection, in stakeholder meetings and their practical application by participants.

### Coordination & Administration:

- Coordinate, with the Administration Officer, the scheduling, logistics and secretariat duties for meetings and consultations such as setting up Zoom, confirming dates, venues, agendas, meeting papers, invitations, etc.
- Prepare promotional information or presentations on policy and advocacy activities for MHCN's weekly e-news, and other determined MHCN media and internal or external forums.

### Staff & Volunteer Supervision:

- Supervise the work of the Carer Peer Participation Support Worker or volunteers, where they report to the role.
- Ensure, through liaison with the Business and Organisation Support Services Team (BOSS Team) the appropriate selection of staff or volunteers and their ongoing performance, physical and psychological health, safety and wellbeing, where they report to the role.



- Ensure, through liaison with the BOSS Team, that anyone directly reporting to the role understands and adheres to MHCN's policies and processes.

### General

- Report to the Policy Manager for regular 1:1 meetings.
- Agree up to 5 KPIs to be reported against quarterly.
- Agree to 2 professional development targets to be reported on annually.
- Attend regular team meetings with other staff members and teams, as needed.
- Deliver all communications in accordance with MHCN identified best practice in style guides etc., and use inclusive, mental health appropriate and accessible language.
- Act in accordance with the principles of carer and consumer empowerment and inclusion.
- Act in accordance with MHCN's policies and procedures.
- Act in accordance with CP's policies and procedures, including work, health, and safety, when in the office.
- Act in accordance with the Disability Services Act 1993, Anti-Discrimination Act, and the Privacy Act 2012.

### Essential Selection Criteria:

#### Required Skills/Experience

- Demonstrated research skills including literature reviews, proposals, reports, and mixed research methods (e.g., survey design, interviews, focus groups) including use of lived experience.
- Demonstrated computer skills:
  1. e.g., MS Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint), MS Teams, Outlook and Zoom etc.
  2. e.g., other relevant survey, research or database skills.

#### Required Qualities and Competencies

- Capacity to develop and maintain effective relationships with key stakeholders and to provide high quality and timely policy advice:
  1. about issues affecting carers in the mental health sector and their impact on lived experience

***and:***

  2. about issues affecting other vulnerable groups and their impact on lived experience.
- High level of oral communication skills and the ability to communicate with a wide audience.
- Demonstrated ability to:
  1. work independently to meet work plan targets within designated timelines and manage competing priorities.



2. collaborate and contribute as an effective member of a team.

**Desirable Criteria:**

- Knowledge of government structures and policy frameworks.
- Lived experience of serious and persistent mental distress and/or caring for someone with such experience.
- Relevant qualifications.

Conditions of employment are as detailed in the Social, Community, Home Care & Disability Services Award (SCHADS), [a copy of which is available online here.](#)



# What do we do at MHCN?

We have developed a range of activities, programs and events for mental health carers, families and friends at MHCN.

## Mental Health Carer Advocacy Network

The Mental Health Carer Advocacy Network connects mental health carers, families, friends, and the sector through events, activities, training, and resources. MHCN uses these activities to understand what people are passionate about, what their needs are, and to promote their voices to improve mental health services.

### More info + sign up for free here:

<https://www.mentalhealthcarersnsw.org/get-involved/mental-health-carer-advocacy-network/>

## Peak Speaks Webinar Series

This is our free monthly online webinar series on a range of topics with different organisations, of interest to mental health carers.

### For more info + to sign up:

Contact MHCN at  
[mhcnadmin@mentalhealthcarersnsw.org](mailto:mhcnadmin@mentalhealthcarersnsw.org)

## Training and Education Program

We currently have 8 different courses including Navigating Carer Support Systems, Healthy Boundaries, The Caring Journey + more.

### For more info + to register:


<https://www.mentalhealthcarersnsw.org/learn/training-and-education/>

## Carer Connections Meetings

Our meetings are run by our Carer Peer Network Facilitator and are an opportunity for carers to connect with each other, have a chat and talk about what is happening in the local community.

### More info + to register:

contact Carer Peer Network Facilitator, Douglas Holmes,  
[douglas.holmes@mentalhealthcarersnsw.org](mailto:douglas.holmes@mentalhealthcarersnsw.org),  
or ring our office on 02 9332 0777.



Empowering Carers for Mental Health

Mental Health Carers NSW



1300 554 660

# Our Policy and Advocacy Work

As the peak body, MHCN works with and for mental health in carers NSW. We represent the voices and lived experience of carers which help us to advocate systemically for mental health reform.

As a peak body, MHCN provides a strong voice for mental health carers, families, and friends to influence public and institutional policies and systems, such as:



Conduct research and develop policy and advice to government and sector that is supported by aggregated and diverse experience.



Advocacy and representation to government and decision makers.



Distributing information within the sector and community.



Sector and stakeholder consultation to understand on the ground knowledge and experiences.



Sector capacity building to support better service delivery and community organisations.

Some of the ways we do this is we regularly consult with NSW Health, the NSW Mental Health Commission, and other community managed organisations to advocate for the carer agenda and push for lived experience in service design and reform.

We hold consultations and focus groups with carers to provide feedback and advice around key policy areas or projects that impact mental health carers and their loved ones in NSW.

We also established our Policy Advisory Committee, where we regularly meet with mental health carers to provide guidance around important policy issues that affect carers.

# Our Team





## Check out our website + socials!



[www.mentalhealthcarersnsw.org](http://www.mentalhealthcarersnsw.org)



[mentalhealthcarers/](https://www.facebook.com/mentalhealthcarers/)



[@mentalhealthcarersnsw](https://www.instagram.com/mentalhealthcarersnsw)



[@mhcarersnsw](https://twitter.com/mhcarersnsw)

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