

---

# Carer availability

---

**Important note: This is an archived metadata standard from the AIHW Knowledgebase. For current metadata standards and related information please access METeOR, the AIHW's Metadata Online Registry at <http://meteor.aihw.gov.au>**

## *Identifying and Definitional Attributes*

Data Dictionary: NCSDD

Knowledgebase ID: 000552 Version number: 1

Metadata type: DATA ELEMENT

Registration Authority: NCSIMG

Admin status: SUPERSEDED

Authority:

Effective date: 01-SEP-03

**Definition:** Whether someone, such as a family member, friend or neighbour, has been identified as providing regular and sustained care and assistance to the person requiring care. Carers include those people who receive a pension or benefit for their caring role but does not include paid or volunteer carers organised by formal services.

**Context:** Personal and social support:

Recent years have witnessed a growing recognition of the critical role that informal support networks play in caring for frail older people and people with disabilities within the community. Not only are informal carers responsible for maintaining people with often high levels of functional dependence within the community, but the absence of an informal carer is a significant risk factor contributing to institutionalisation.

Increasing interest in the needs of carers and the role they play has prompted greater interest in collecting more reliable and detailed information about carers and the relationship between informal care and the provision of and need for formal services.

---

## *Relational and Representational Attributes*

Datatype: Numeric

Representational form: CODE

Representation layout: N

Minimum Size: 1

Maximum Size: 1

Data Domain: 0 Has no carer  
1 Has a carer

**Guide For Use:** This data element is purely descriptive of a client's circumstances. It is not intended to reflect whether the carer is considered by the service provider to be capable of undertaking the caring role. In line with this, the expressed views of the client and/or their carer should be used as the basis for determining whether the client is recorded as having a carer or not.

A carer is someone who provides a significant amount of care and/or assistance to the person on a regular and sustained basis. Excluded from the definition of carers are paid workers or volunteers organised by formal services (including paid staff in funded group houses).

When asking a client about the availability of a carer, it is important for agencies to recognise that a carer does not always live with the person for whom they care. That is, a person providing significant care and assistance to the client does not have to live with the client in order to be called a carer.

The availability of a carer should also be distinguished from living with someone else. Although in many instances a co-resident will also be a carer, this is not necessarily the case. The data element Living arrangement is designed to record information about person(s) with whom the client may live.

**Collection Methods:** Agencies may collect this item at the beginning of each service episode and also assess this information at subsequent assessments or re-assessments.

Some agencies may record this information historically so that they can track changes over time. Historical recording refers to the practice of maintaining a record of changes over time where each change is accompanied by the appropriate date.

**Related metadata:** relates to the data element Carer co-residency version 1  
relates to the data element Informal carer version 2  
has been superseded by Int. NCSDD & NHDD Informal carer availability version 4

---

### *Administrative Attributes*

Source Document: HACC Data Dictionary Version 1.0, 1998

Source Organisation: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

---

**Comments:** There is inconsistency between this definition of 'Carer availability' and the ABS definition of 'Principal carer', 1993 Disability, Ageing and Carers Survey and 'Primary carer' used in the 1998 survey. The ABS definitions require that the carer has or will provide care for a certain amount of time and that they provide certain types of care. This may not be appropriate for community services agencies

---

wishing to obtain information about a person's carer regardless of the amount of time that care is for or the types of care provided. Information such as the amount of time for which care is provided can of course be collected separately but, if it is not needed, it would place a burden on service providers.

### *Data Element Links*

#### *Information Model Entities linked to this Data Element*

NCSIM Carer role

#### *Data Agreements which include this Data Element*

---