

Attendant carers in public hospitals pilot project

The Attendant Care Pilot allowed ACC clients with SCI to take their support workers into the public hospital with them.



Having their own support worker in hospital, who is an expert in providing their care, greatly reduced the anxiety of people with SCI. This may make them more likely to seek early medical treatment.

“the support workers are more familiar with me, know the routine and they care. The level of care is better from a support worker ”

SCI Participant



Contingency plans were used by the care agencies to outline the role of the support worker in hospital.

These were not seen by all parties involved in the client's care. This could lead to miscommunication or confusion about roles and possible secondary complications.



We talked to 25 people to gather the perspectives of clients, their support workers, care agency staff and DHB employees about their experience perspective of the pilot.

There was overwhelming support for the Attendant Care Pilot from all participants.

What are some considerations moving forward?

- Clear guidelines for allowing support worker in hospital.
- Identifying how this would work for clients from rural areas.
- Accounting for family members who are employed as carers and/or provide a mixture of paid and unpaid care.
- Making sure there is a balance between having support workers with a client, and the responsibility of the DHB/hospital to provide a safe environment and appropriate equipment.
- Easy identification in the medical notes of a client's SCI-specific needs: 'care passport' or equivalent.

The orientation process introducing the support worker to the ward is an important part of maintaining health and safety obligations. However, it did not appear to be occurring consistently during the pilot.

This research was commissioned and funded by the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC). The content and conclusions in this summary do not necessarily represent the official position of ACC or represent ACC policy



Having a support worker in hospital with the person with SCI reduces the demand on nursing staff who do not have the time and may lack specialist SCI Knowledge to manage SCI cares.

“there are things you don't do because you don't have the time, or lack awareness of dealing with patients with a spinal cord injury, and that's where we need the caregivers”

DHB Participant



Support workers did not feel disadvantaged, if their hours were reduced and they were able to get other work. However, support workers who did overnight shifts had no provision of sleeping areas, resulting in them being unfit to work the higher paying day shift the next day.