

Being a contact person

Voluntary assisted dying

After making an administration decision, a person accessing voluntary assisted dying needs to appoint a contact person.

The voluntary assisted dying substance cannot be prescribed by the coordinating doctor until a contact person has been appointed.

The contact person has an important role. **You should think carefully about whether you believe you will be able to manage the extra responsibilities in the days prior to and after the person dies.**

Eligibility

To be a contact person you must:

- be 18 years or older
- agree to act as the contact person.

You can be someone the person trusts to take on the role, including a:

- family member
- friend
- partner or spouse
- carer
- healthcare worker involved in their care.

Appointment

To be appointed as a contact person:

- you must fill in the *Contact Person Appointment Form* with the person accessing voluntary assisted dying
- the person must give the completed form to their coordinating doctor.

The *How to fill in the contact person appointment form* resource explains how to complete the Contact Person Appointment Form. The person's coordinating doctor may give this to you.

The person's coordinating doctor will give the completed form to the Review Board. This provides the Review Board with your contact details and nominates you as the contact person.

Role of a contact person

The person accessing voluntary assisted dying will appoint a contact person after they have been assessed as eligible, and have made an administration decision.

Your role as a contact person is different based on whether the person makes a self-administration or practitioner administration decision:

- **self-administration:** is when the person chooses to administer the substance themselves
- **practitioner administration:** is when the person chooses to have their administering doctor or nurse administer them the substance.

You don't need to be present during substance administration.

Note: There are other statutory roles you may act in or be appointed to including an enduring power of attorney, statutory health attorney, or general power of attorney.

The contact person role is different to these roles. It has distinct responsibilities.

MORE INFORMATION

health.qld.gov.au/vad



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Self-administration

For a self-administration decision as a contact person you must:

- if there is any unused or remaining substance, give it to an authorised disposer (pharmacist) **as soon as possible within 14 days** (see *Return of the voluntary assisted dying substance* on the next page)
- tell the coordinating doctor when the person has died
- if asked, provide information to the Voluntary Assisted Dying Review Board (the Review Board).

Return of the voluntary assisted dying substance

The voluntary assisted dying substance **MUST** be safely returned to a pharmacist if the person:

- revokes their self-administration decision by:
 - deciding they no longer want to take the voluntary assisted dying substance
 - changing their mind and wanting to consider if a doctor or nurse will administer a voluntary assisted dying substance
- self-administers the voluntary assisted dying substance and there is some unused or remaining
- dies from another cause, before taking any voluntary assisted dying substance.

The Review Board will provide information about how to return a voluntary assisted dying substance and the support services available to help you.

If you do not receive this information from the Review Board after you are appointed as contact person, please advise the person's coordinating doctor or the Queensland Voluntary Assisted Dying (QVAD) Support and Pharmacy Service.

Other considerations

- There is no time limit on how long the person accessing voluntary assisted dying may have the substance for.
- If you are unsure if a person has changed their mind about self-administration you should contact their coordinating doctor.
- In most cases, once a person has administered the substance, there will not be any unused or remaining. If there is no unused or remaining substance you can throw the packaging in the bin, as stated in the information provided to you by QVAD Support and Pharmacy Service.

Telling the person's coordinating doctor that the person has died

You must tell the person's coordinating doctor if the person dies from administering the voluntary assisted dying substance or from some other cause. This is your legal responsibility. You must inform the coordinating doctor within two business days of you becoming aware of the person's death.

When you are appointed as a contact person, the coordinating doctor will tell you how to contact them. This could be through a phone call or text message.

It is the legal responsibility of the contact person to return any unused or remaining voluntary assisted dying substance to a pharmacy. The pharmacy will ensure the substance is safely disposed of.

This MUST be done as soon as possible, and in all circumstances within 14 days after the day:

- the person dies (if there is any unused or remaining substance), OR
- the person revokes their self-administration decision.

If the substance is not returned, significant financial penalties may apply.

A staff member from QVAD Support and Pharmacy Service may contact you within the 14-day period to remind you about your responsibility to return the voluntary assisted dying substance.

MORE INFORMATION

health.qld.gov.au/vad

Practitioner administration

Telling the person's coordinating doctor that the person has died

You must tell the person's coordinating doctor if the person dies from a cause other than administering the substance. You must inform the coordinating doctor within two business days of becoming aware of the person's death.

When you are appointed as a contact person, the coordinating doctor will tell you how to contact them to notify them of the person's death. This could be through a phone call or text message.

Provide information to the Review Board

The Review Board reviews each completed voluntary assisted dying case to ensure compliance with the Act.

The Review Board can contact you at any time after the person's death for more information. For example, to ask about your experience in being a contact person, feedback to improve the process, or asking for information about the return of the voluntary assisted dying substance.

Change of contact person

You can change your mind and withdraw from your role as a contact person at any time.

You must tell the person you have changed your mind, but you do not have to tell them why.

The person accessing voluntary assisted dying can also change their mind on whether they want you to be their contact person. If they change their mind, they must tell you.

You do not need to fill in any forms to stop being a contact person.

Legal protections

There are protections in the Act for people who assist a person accessing voluntary assisted dying. This means that you will not be breaking any laws in Queensland by carrying out your responsibilities as a contact person.

Support

You do not need to do this on your own. Help is available.

When someone is dying or has died it can be a very stressful time. Grief is different for everyone. There is no right way to feel when experiencing loss or helping someone through the voluntary assisted dying process. Grief can be complex, and it can also start before someone dies.

If grief or your involvement supporting someone through the voluntary assisted dying process is affecting your physical or mental wellbeing, you might consider speaking to your doctor or other healthcare worker (for example, a psychologist). Asking for help is okay. Different people will need and want different levels of support.

Queensland Voluntary Assisted Dying Support and Pharmacy Service (QVAD SPS)

QVAD Support and Pharmacy Service is a statewide service that supports the delivery of voluntary assisted dying across Queensland.

QVAD Support and Pharmacy Service ensures all eligible Queenslanders seeking access to voluntary assisted dying, and those involved in their care, receive compassionate, professional, safe, and timely support.

You can contact QVAD Support and Pharmacy Service if you have any questions about:

- voluntary assisted dying
- your role as the contact person
- your responsibilities about returning any unused or remaining voluntary assisted dying substance.

QVAD Support and Pharmacy Service

- **Phone: 1800 431 371**
Monday to Friday, 8:30am – 4pm
(excluding public holidays)
- **Email: QVADSupport@health.qld.gov.au**

Additional resources available to help you:

- [When someone dies: A practical guide for family and friends](#)
- [During sad news and sorry business: information and practical ideas for First Nations peoples about things to do before and after an adult passes away in Queensland](#)

Support services

Contact one of the helplines below for support and counselling:

24/7 crisis services

- Mental Health Access Line: 1300 64 22 55 (24/7)
- [Lifeline](#): 13 11 14 (24/7 – phone, text, online)
- [Suicide Call Back Service](#): 1300 659 467 (24/7 – phone and online)

Services

- [Beyond Blue](#): 1300 22 4636 (24/7 – phone, online)
- Griefline: 1300 845 745 (6am to midnight AEST, 7 days a week)
- Queensland Transcultural Mental Health Centre: 3317 1234 or 1800 188 189 (outside Brisbane) or 1300 64 22 55 (24/7)
- World Wellness Group (multicultural support): 1300 079 020
- 13YARN (13 92 76) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- For more information and support visit: www.qld.gov.au/health/mental-health/help-lines.



Help in your language

For help reading this information:

- Multicultural Connect Line free hotline number: 1300 079 020
- Interpreter Service (Help with English): 13 QGOV (13 74 68) and ask for an interpreter
- Translating and Interpreting Service: 13 14 50

MORE INFORMATION

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