

COMMUNICATION PARTNER CODE OF CONDUCT



Government
of South Australia

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PURPOSE

The Communication Partner Code of Conduct (the code) details the foundational behaviours required to provide communication assistance to persons with complex communication needs who are involved in the justice system.

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SCOPE

- a. The code applies to all communication partners as defined under section 4 of the *Evidence Act 1929* (SA).
- b. It is a requirement that the agency or individual procuring the services of a communication partner ensures that the communication partner reviews and signs the code prior to undertaking work.

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ELIGIBILITY

- a. The following class of persons are approved by the Attorney-General to perform the role of communication partner in South Australia:
 - i. speech pathologists with certified practising speech pathologist membership of Speech Pathology Australia;
 - ii. registered occupational therapists;
 - iii. psychologists with general registration status with the Psychology Board of Australia;
 - iv. developmental educators with full membership of Developmental Educators Australia Incorporated; and
 - v. social workers with a membership status with the Australian Association of Social Workers.

- b. In addition to holding the relevant qualifications, the professional must have a minimum of five years' relevant experience working with people with complex communication needs and must have agreed in writing to comply with the code.

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OPERATIONS

- a. A communication partner is deemed to be a communication specialist. The primary responsibility of the communication partner is to assess a suspect's or witness' communication needs so as to impartially facilitate communication by and with the suspect or witness.
- b. Communication partners must:
 - i. Have a clear and comprehensive understanding of the responsibilities and duties of their role within the South Australian justice system;
 - ii. Only undertake work they are competent to perform by reason of their training, qualifications and experience. If it becomes apparent in the course of a matter that expertise beyond their competence is required, the communication partner must make this known to the procuring agency or individual;
 - iii. Operate in an impartial and neutral manner throughout their engagement so as to be without bias in favour of or against any person including but not limited to the person with complex communication needs, the party who has engaged or is remunerating the communication partner, or any other party to or person involved in the interview or legal proceeding;
 - iv. Immediately report any potential or actual conflicts of interest to the procuring agency or individual;
 - v. Have a clear understanding of the confidentiality obligations of the engagement.

Procuring agency:

Communication partner name:

Communication partner signature:

Date:
