

Person (name)—family name, text X[X(39)]

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Person (name)—family name, text X[X(39)]

Identifying and definitional attributes

Metadata item type:	Data Element
Short name:	Family name
Synonymous names:	Family name
METEOR identifier:	270259
Registration status:	Health! , Superseded 04/05/2005 Community Services (retired) , Superseded 25/08/2005

Definition:

Data element attributes

Collection and usage attributes

Guide for use: The agency or establishment should record the client's full **family** name on their information systems.

National Community Services Data Dictionary specific:

In instances where there is uncertainty about which name to record for a person living in a remote Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community, Centrelink follows the practice of recording the Indigenous person's name as it is first provided to Centrelink. Or, where proof of identity is required, as the name is recorded on a majority of the higher point scoring documents that are produced as proof of identity.

Collection methods: This metadata item should be recorded for all clients.

Mixed case should be used.

Family name should be recorded in the format preferred by the person. The format should be the same as that written by the person on a (pre) registration form or in the same format as that printed on an identification card, such as Medicare card, to ensure consistent collection of name data.

It is acknowledged that some people use more than one family name (e.g. formal name, birth name, married/maiden name, tribal name) depending on the circumstances. Each name should be recorded against the appropriate Name type (see Comments).

A person is able to change his or her name by usage in all States and Territories of Australia with the exception of Western Australia, where a person may only change his or her name under the Change of Name Act. Care should be taken when recording a change of name for a minor. Ideally, the name recorded for the minor should be known to both of his/her parents, so the minor's records can be retrieved and continuity of care maintained, regardless of which parent accompanies the minor to the agency or establishment.

A person should generally be registered using their preferred name as it is more likely to be used in common usage and on subsequent visits to the agency or establishment. The person's preferred name may in fact be the name on their Medicare card. The Name type metadata item can be used to distinguish between the different types of names that may be used by the person. The following format may assist with data collection:

What is your family name? _____

Are you known by any other family names that you would like recorded? If so, what are they _____

Please indicate, for each name above, the 'type' of family name that is to be

recorded:

(a) Medicare card name (if different to preferred name).

(b) Alias (any other name that you are known by). Whenever a person informs the agency or establishment of a change of family name (e.g. following marriage or divorce), the former name should be recorded as an alias name. A full history of names should be retained. e.g. 'Mary Georgina Smith' informs the hospital that she has been married and changed her family name to 'Jones'. Record 'Jones' as her preferred family name and record 'Smith' as an alias name.

Hyphenated family names:

Sometimes persons with hyphenated family names use only one of the two hyphenated names. It is useful to record each of the hyphenated names as an alias. If the person has a hyphenated family name, e.g. 'Wilson-Phillips' record 'Wilson-Phillips' in the preferred family name field and record 'Wilson' and 'Phillips' separately as alias family names.

Punctuation:

If special characters form part of the family name they should be included, e.g. hyphenated names should be entered with a hyphen.

Examples:

- hyphen, e.g. Wilson-Phillips

Do not leave a space before or after a hyphen, i.e. between the last letter of 'Wilson' and the hyphen, nor a space between the hyphen and the first letter of 'Phillips'.

- apostrophe, e.g. O'Brien, D'Agostino

Do not leave a space before or after the apostrophe, i.e. between the 'O' and the apostrophe, nor a space between the apostrophe and 'Brien'.

- full stop, e.g. St. John, St. George

Do not leave a space before a full stop, i.e. between 'St' and the full stop. Do leave a space between the full stop and 'John'.

- space, e.g. van der Humm, Le Brun, Mc Donald

If the health care client has recorded their family name as more than one word, displaying spaces in between the words, record their family name in the same way leaving one space between each word.

Registered unnamed newborn babies:

When registering a newborn, use the mother's family name as the baby's family name unless instructed otherwise by the mother. Record unnamed babies under the newborn Name type.

Persons with only one name:

Some people do not have a family name and a given name, they have only one name by which they are known. If the person has only one name, record it in the 'Family name' field and leave the 'Given name' field blank.

Registering an unidentified health care client:

The default for unknown family name, should be unknown in all instances and the name recorded as an alias name. Don't create a 'fictitious' family name such as 'Doe' as this is an actual family name. When the person's name becomes known, record it as the preferred family name and do not overwrite the alias name of unknown.

Registering health care clients from disaster sites:

Persons treated from disaster sites should be recorded under the alias Name Type. Local business rules should be developed for consistent recording of disaster site person details.

Care should be taken not to use identical dummy data (family name, given name, date of birth, sex) for two or more persons from a disaster site.

If the family name needs to be shortened:

If the length of the family name exceeds the length of the field, truncate the family name from the right (that is, dropping the final letters). Also, the last character of the name should be a hash (#) to identify that the name has been truncated.

Use of incomplete names or fictitious names:

Some health care facilities permit persons to use a pseudonym (fictitious or partial name) in lieu of their full or actual name. It is recommended that the person be asked to record both the pseudonym (Alias name) in addition to the person's Medicare card name.

Baby for [adoption](#):

The word adoption should not be used as the family name, given name or alias for a newborn baby. A newborn baby that is for adoption should be registered in the same way that other newborn babies are registered. However, if a baby born in the hospital is subsequently adopted, and is admitted for treatment as a child, the baby is registered under their adopted (current) name, and the record should not be linked to the birth record. This should be the current practice. Any old references to adoption in client registers (for names) should also be changed to unknown. Contact your State or Territory adoption information service for further information.

Prefixes:

Where a family name contains a prefix, such as one to indicate that the person is a widow, this must be entered as part of the 'Family name' field. When widowed, some Hungarian women add 'Ozvegy' (abbreviation is 'Ozy') before their married family name, e.g. 'Mrs Szabo' would become 'Mrs Ozy Szabo'. That is, 'Mrs Szabo' becomes an alias name and 'Mrs Ozy Szabo' becomes the preferred name.

Ethnic Names:

The Centrelink publication, Naming Systems for Ethnic Groups, provides the correct coding for ethnic names.

Misspelled family name:

If the person's family name has been misspelled in error, update the family name with the correct spelling and record the misspelled family name as an alias name. Recording misspelled names is important for filing documents that may be issued with previous versions of the person's name. Discretion should be used regarding the degree of recording that is maintained.

Often people use a variety of names, including legal names, married/maiden names, nicknames, assumed names, traditional names, etc. Even small differences in recording - such as the difference between MacIntosh and McIntosh - can make [record linkage](#) impossible. To minimise discrepancies in the recording and reporting of name information, agencies or establishments should ask the person for their full (formal) 'Given name' and 'Family name'. These may be different from the name that the person may prefer the agency or establishment workers to use in personal dealings. Agencies or establishments may choose to separately record the preferred names that the person wishes to be used by agency or establishment workers. In some cultures it is traditional to state the family name first. To overcome discrepancies in recording/reporting that may arise as a result of this practice, agencies or establishments should always ask the person to specify their first given name and their family name or surname separately. These should then be recorded as 'Given name' and 'Family name' as appropriate, regardless of the order in which they may be traditionally given.

Comments: National Community Services Data Dictionary specific:

Selected letters of the family name in combination with selected letters of the given name, date of birth and sex, may be used for record linkage for statistical purposes only.

Name type is a metadata item in Australian Standard AS5017—2002 Health care client identification (Standards Australia 2002) and in the National Health Data Dictionary, Version 12 (NHDC 2003). In both cases the Data domain refers to Code A Alias name; Code M Medicare card name; Code N Newborn name; and Code P Preferred name. A name type data element is being considered for inclusion in a future version of the National Community Services Data Dictionary.

Source and reference attributes

Submitting organisation: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
Standards Australia
National Health Data Committee
National Community Services Data Committee

Origin: Commonwealth Department of Health and Family Services 1998. Home and Community Care Data Dictionary Version 1.0. Canberra: DHFS Standards Australia 2002. Australian Standard AS5017-2002 Health Care Client Identification. Sydney: Standards Australia

Reference documents: AS4846 Health Care Provider Identification, 2004, Sydney: Standards Australia

Relational attributes

Related metadata references: Has been superseded by [Person \(name\)—family name, text X\[X\(39\)\] Community Services \(retired\)](#), Superseded 06/02/2012
[Health!](#), Superseded 05/10/2016
[Housing assistance](#), Standard 20/06/2005
[Tasmanian Health](#), Standard 01/09/2016

Implementation in Data Set Specifications: [Health care client identification](#)
[Health!](#), Superseded 04/05/2005