



Chief Psychiatrist's Standard for the Authorisation of Hospitals under the *Mental Health Act 2014*

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the key changes in the new Standard?

The new Standard represents a shift to a more integrated, Model of Care-driven framework, strengthening alignment between clinical care, operations, design and infrastructure

Key changes include:

- A restructured and more usable framework – consolidates six standards into three core areas (Model of Care, Design and Build, and Specialist Services), with clear subsections outlining overarching principles, development requirements and detailed requirements
- Design driven by the Model of Care – ensures the physical environment reflects how care is delivered and supports recovery, dignity, privacy and safety
- Stronger emphasis on rights and lived experience – embeds clear expectations for upholding patient and support person rights, cultural safety and meaningful lived experience involvement, including recognition and integration of peer support workers
- More flexible, systems-focused operational requirements – shifts away from prescribing specific policies and instead focuses on systems, governance and workforce capability to support safe and effective care
- Clearer design expectations – provides more detailed requirements for safety and functionality while allowing flexibility based on the patient cohort and service model
- Defined functional zones and room requirements – establishes clear expectations for key spaces within an authorised service, including when dedicated rooms are required versus flexible or shared spaces
- Stronger guidance supporting least restrictive practice – clarifies what spaces are required, how they are used and how they relate to one another
- Increased recognition of specialist services – acknowledges that different cohorts require tailored models of care, with additional complexities across care delivery, environments and partnerships



What has changed in the authorisation process?

The Authorisation Advisory introduces a clearer and more consistent authorisation pathway, supported by:

- Defined project checkpoints across planning, design, build and commissioning
- Earlier and ongoing engagement with the OCP
- Reduced documentation requirements for final submission
- Introduction of the Authorisation Master Checklist
- Stronger alignment with WA health infrastructure and commissioning processes

How were lived experience perspectives incorporated?

The Standard and supporting documents were developed in close collaboration with the Chief Psychiatrist's Lived Experience Advisory Group and informed by consultation with other mental health peak bodies.

Lived Experience expertise provides a foundational contribution to the content, language and overall approach.

This strengthens the focus on:

- Patient rights, dignity and safety.
- Moving beyond a 'tick box' approach to demonstrating principles in practice.
- Recovery-oriented, therapeutic and trauma informed environments.
- Relational and procedural safety.
- Universal access, communication accessibility and culturally safe design principles.
- Meaningful lived experience involvement throughout planning, design, service delivery and authorisation processes.
- Recognition and integration of Peer Workers as valued members of multidisciplinary teams, supported by appropriate supervision and governance.



What was the consultation process?

A comprehensive, sector-wide consultation process was undertaken to inform the development of the Standard.

This included:

- Close collaboration with the Chief Psychiatrist's Lived Experience Advisory Group
- Engagement with clinicians, executive leaders, infrastructure delivery agencies, lived experience agencies, licensing and regulatory bodies, mental health peak bodies and government partners

The Standard also draws on:

- Five years of lessons from mental health capital projects, including operational experience, implementation challenges and post-occupancy feedback
- Relevant national and international research and evidence in therapeutic, trauma-informed and recovery-oriented design

What if my feedback or suggested changes were not included?

The Standard focuses on mandatory minimum requirements required for authorisation under the *Mental Health Act 2014*.

Additional guidance, clarification and best practice recommendations will be provided in a supporting Guideline, currently in development.

Will there be further guidance?

Yes.

A supporting Guideline is currently in development and will provide:

- Additional detail and practical context
- Best practice examples
- Clarification of key requirements
- Guidance to support implementation



How does this align with WA Health infrastructure processes?

The authorisation pathway and Standard have been designed to align with:

- WA Health infrastructure planning and delivery frameworks
- Contemporary mental health service planning approaches

The OCP works closely with the Department of Health Infrastructure team and project stakeholders to support alignment throughout project delivery. Consultation with infrastructure delivery agencies continues as part of this process.

What support is available?

The OCP Authorisation Team is available to support services and includes expertise across the Chief Psychiatrist's Standard, including clinical, legal, project and executive level decision making.

The team provides advice, clarification and guidance on the Standard and Authorisation pathway.

Early and ongoing engagement is encouraged throughout planning, design and commissioning for services under development.

A Change Management Strategy is in place to support the transition to the new Standard, ensuring that both existing authorised services and services with mental health capital infrastructure projects underway are supported throughout the transition.

When will the Standard be reviewed again?

The Standard will be formally reviewed on a periodic basis to ensure it remains current and aligned with emerging evidence, operational experience and contemporary practice.

However, the Standard is intended to be responsive and will be updated as needed to reflect new research, sector feedback and lessons learned from implementation. Where updates occur, relevant services and stakeholders will be advised.

What if I have feedback or concerns about the Standard?

Feedback, questions or concerns about the Standard are welcome at any time and considered as part of future updates and refinements to the Standard and supporting materials.

For all queries or feedback, or for all authorisation and mental health infrastructure queries, please contact the OCP Authorisation Team: authorisations@ocp.wa.gov.au.