



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

Frequently Asked Questions - Infrastructure agencies

Who is the Chief Psychiatrist and what is their role?

- The Chief Psychiatrist is an independent statutory officer under the *Mental Health Act 2014* of Western Australia responsible for overseeing the treatment and care of voluntary and involuntary patients.
- Key responsibilities include:
 - Publishing standards for the treatment and care provided by mental health services
 - Recommending whether hospitals should be authorised under the MHA.
- The Chief Psychiatrist is supported by the Office of the Chief Psychiatrist (OCP), including a dedicated Authorisation Team.

What is the role of the OCP in mental health infrastructure project?

- Under the MHA, a hospital must be formally authorised if it intends to admit involuntary patients.
- The Chief Psychiatrist will only recommend authorisation where the service meets the requirements of the *Chief Psychiatrist's Standard for the Authorisation of Hospitals under the Mental Health Act 2014*.
- Authorisation applies to the service as a whole, including the physical environment, infrastructure, operational systems and Model of Care.
- Final authorisation assessment, including a site visit by the Chief Psychiatrist, occurs once construction is completed, the facility is furnished, and the service is operationally ready to admit patients.
- Early and ongoing engagement with the OCP Authorisation Team is strongly recommended to minimise redesigns, delays and non-compliance risks, and increases the likelihood of successful authorisation.



Who are the OCP Authorisation Team and how do they support us?

- The OCP's Authorisation Team includes expertise across the Chief Psychiatrist's Standard including clinical, legal, project and executive-level decision-making.
- The OCP's Authorisation Team supports services throughout planning, design, construction and operational commissioning to help projects align with the Chief Psychiatrist's Standard and authorisation requirements. Support includes:
 - Providing advice and guidance on the Standard and authorisation pathway
 - Reviewing key documents and designs at defined checkpoints
 - Participating in user groups, project meetings and workshops (as requested)
 - Undertaking site visits and responding to project queries
 - Supporting services to progressively align with the authorisation requirements throughout the project lifecycle.

What are the key changes for design in the new Standard?

- A dedicated Design and Build section (2.1–2.4) is included in the Standard
- Design is driven by the Model of Care, ensuring the physical environment reflects how care is delivered and supports recovery, dignity, privacy and safety
- Stronger integration between design and operations ensures design supports clinical workflows and service delivery in practice
- Greater emphasis on therapeutic environments ensures spaces support engagement and care, not just function
- Clear overarching design principles apply across all areas, including:
 - therapeutic environments
 - privacy, dignity and personal safety
 - cultural safety
 - inclusivity and accessibility
 - adaptability and flexibility of space



- Clearer expectations for safety and functionality, including:
 - physical safety features (e.g. line of sight, fixtures, furniture and equipment)
 - communication and emergency response systems
 - least restrictive practice
- Defined functional zones and room requirements within an authorised service.

What does this mean in practice for our project?

- Design must be informed by the Model of Care, which should be available early and guide all decisions.
- Design decisions must reflect the requirements of the Standard, including safety, therapeutic intent and how spaces will be used in practice.
- Genuine consultation must inform design, including:
 - clinical experts
 - operational staff
 - lived experience
- Ensure alignment between design and operations through the Functional Brief and all stages of design development
- All project consultants (e.g. architects, designers, builders) should be familiar with and apply the Standard

Who has responsibility for authorisation?

While the Chief Psychiatrist assesses the service and recommends authorisation, the HSP is responsible for leading and overseeing authorisation of the service as a whole (not solely the building), ensuring the Standard is met at the Chief Psychiatrist's final assessment.

However, infrastructure delivery agencies have important responsibilities within the authorisation pathway, including:

- Ensuring design aligns with the Standard, particularly Sections 2.1–2.4
- Engaging with the OCP early and throughout design and build
- Keeping the OCP informed of key updates and milestones



- Providing designs at key checkpoints for OCP review
- Supporting OCP engagement activities, including site visits and design discussions

Note: Some of these activities may be coordinated through the HSP project team depending on governance arrangements and the delivery model (e.g. alliance, design and construct).

What do we need to do next?

- Review the Standard, Advisory and Authorisation Master Checklist to understand requirements
- Collaborate with the HSP project team to support alignment with the authorisation requirements and incorporate into planning.
- Ensure all design and build stakeholders are familiar with the Standard
- Incorporate OCP engagement including site visits and checkpoints into project timelines.