

## Tool 5

# Mental Health Services

People experiencing mental illness who are receiving treatment in a specialist mental health ward will be accommodated in same gender. The co-location of male and female patients in the same bay in general wards resulting in 'mixed gender accommodation', will only occur in an exceptional situation, and at the discretion of the Bed Manager or delegate.

A sexual safety assessment must be undertaken. Refer to sexual safety in Mental Health Services Policy Guideline (currently under development).

If same gender accommodation cannot be provided in the short term, **patients/consumers, families and carers must be informed in the Emergency Department or Day of Surgery Admission, prior to the admission** in the room/ward or bays. Patients/consumers must also be informed of what steps are being undertaken to address the situation and must be informed of the bathroom options.

Every effort must be made to provide patients with same gender accommodation.

All patients should be provided with the [Respecting your privacy and dignity with patient centred care principles](#) consumer information booklet (Same Gender Accommodation Tool 8: Appendix 1), and it should be discussed with staff.

Refer to SA Health [Guide to Same Gender Accommodation](#) (Tool 1) - key principles on page 2.

Patient preference must be sought, respected and recorded in their case notes.

Staff will ensure that patients', families' and their carers' privacy and dignity is maintained at all times whilst in hospital.

Patients who object or do not wish to co-locate in a mixed gender accommodation or are distressed should be reassured by staff. Where necessary staff may contact the Consumer Adviser and ensure that every effort will be made to accommodate them in a bed or ward / bay with patients of the same gender within **24 hours of admission**. Refer to Local Health Network procedures.

All incidents and consumer feedback (complaints) where same gender accommodation is not available must be recorded into the Safety Learning System Incident Management and Consumer Feedback module – see SA Health [How to report an incident or complaint on inability to provide same gender accommodation](#) (Tool 7).

Patients, parents, guardians, families and carers must be informed of why the co-location (mixed gender accommodation) has occurred, the steps taken to address the situation and the plan of when this will be resolved and by whom.

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## For more information

**Safety and Quality Unit**

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[www.sahealth.sa.gov.au](http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au)

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