

Tool 1

Guide to Same Gender Accommodation

All patients/consumers, staying overnight in a South Australian public hospital are to be placed in same gender accommodation, use same gender accommodation facilities, and are not required to move through mixed gender areas to reach their own facilities (except when considered clinically appropriate).

Apart from areas listed under Exemptions below, when co-location (mixed gender accommodation) is required it should only **ever** be short-term temporary accommodation with the patient **relocated to same gender accommodation within 24 hours of admission to the ward.**

Patients/consumers, families and carers **must be informed** about 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.

This guide supports all health services and clinicians to ensure same gender accommodation is available by applying the patient centred care principles which includes respecting the patients values, preferences and expressed needs prior to their admission.

The privacy and dignity of all SA Health patients is maintained at all times, and patient centred care approaches incorporated into the provision of care including:

1. respect for patients values, preferences and expressed needs
2. coordination and integration of care
3. information, communication and education
4. physical comfort
5. emotional support and alleviation of fear and anxiety
6. involvement of family and friends
7. transition and continuity
8. access to care

Reference: [Picker Institute, Principles of Patient Centred Care](#)

Exemptions:

This guide does not include critical care environments where patients require very specialised or urgent / emergency care such as:

- Emergency Department (ED)
- Coronary Care Unit (CCU)
- Day Surgery Unit (DSU)
- Day Treatment / Procedural Area (eg Dialysis, Cancer Treatment)
- High Dependency Unit (HDU)
- Intensive Care Units (ICU)
- Recovery Unit
- SA Ambulance Service
- Children and Adolescent Units where clinical need, age and stage of development take precedence over providing same gender rooms or bays, and
- In placement of MRSA or VRE patients, where infection control principles take precedence over providing same gender rooms or bays.

100% of all patients who are staying overnight in a South Australian public hospital will be in a same gender room or bay within 24 hours (excluding exemptions above).



Key principles

The key principles reflect patient centred care and patient rights, as outlined in the Same Gender Accommodation Policy Directive.

Key principles	
Patient/consumer centred care Picker Institute, Principles of Patient Centred Care	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Respect for patients' values, preferences and expressed needs2. Coordination and integration of care3. Information, communication and education4. Physical comfort5. Emotional support and alleviation of fear and anxiety6. Involvement of family and friends7. Transition and continuity8. Access to care
Charter of Healthcare Rights SA Health, Charter of Health and Community Services Rights Policy Directive	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access – right to access health care and community services• Safety – right to be safe from abuse• Quality – right to high quality services• Respect – right to be treated with respect• Information – right to be informed• Participation – right to actively participate• Privacy – right to privacy and confidentiality• Comment – right to comment and/or complain

Prior to admission to the wards (eg Emergency Department and/or Day of Surgery Admissions) the Bed Manager (or delegate) and clinical staff will:

- undertake an assessment of the patients values, preferences, expressed needs and history ([Same Gender Accommodation Toolkit Assessment Checklist](#) – Tool 11: Appendix 4).
- ensure patients' are provided same gender accommodation
- provide and discuss the [Respecting your privacy and dignity with patient centred care principles](#) consumer information booklet to all admitted patients (Same Gender Accommodation Tool 8: Appendix 1) and
- adhere to the principles and aims of the SA Health [Same Gender Accommodation Policy Directive](#).

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

The Bed Manager (or delegate) will work with clinical staff to ensure that:

1. Shared bays are to contain patients of the same gender.
2. Male and female patients will be only co-located when:
 - there are no immediate options for bed allocation and it is discussed with the patient/consumer, family and/or carer and
 - considered not to be detrimental to the patient's wellbeing
 - optimal clinical care could be compromised
 - when intra ward transfers of existing patients to accommodate is not appropriate.

3. Every effort should be made to relocate patients to same gender accommodation within **24 hours of admission**.

All SA Health employees or persons who provide health care services on behalf of SA Health must adhere to the principles and standards described in the [Same Gender Accommodation Policy Directive and Toolkit](#).

1.1 Assessment

The Bed Manager (or delegate) will liaise with clinical staff and undertake an **assessment** of patient values, preferences, expressed needs and history.

Please refer to Same Gender Accommodation Toolkit Flow Chart – Tool 10: Appendix 3 and Same Gender Accommodation Assessment Checklist – Tool 11: Appendix 4.

Assessment	<p>Assessment includes actual, perceived and potential risk factors and consider :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gender • age • sexual orientation • cultural background and traditions • religious beliefs • disability • cognitive impairment • family situations and lifestyle • appropriateness of accommodation for patient with a history of mental illness • history of trauma • past experience and interactions with other or the health care system • patient vulnerabilities or any risks he/she may pose on others
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1.2 Inform

The Bed Manager (or delegate) will liaise with clinical staff who will inform patients/consumers, families and carers if same gender accommodation and bathrooms cannot be provided.

Patients/consumers, families and/or carers must be informed of what steps are being undertaken to address the situation and must be informed of the bathroom options available.

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).

1.3 Document

The Bed Manager (or delegate) will liaise with clinical staff to ensure **documentation** in the patient's case notes/medical records reflect the:

- discussions undertaken in relation to same gender accommodation not being available
- patient's consent to mixed gender accommodation for 24 hours only.

All incidents and/or complaints where same gender accommodation is not available should be recorded by the Bed Manager (or delegate) in the Safety Learning System Incident Management Module and, if relevant, the Consumer Feedback Module.

Refer to Tool 7 – [How to report incident or complaint on inability to provide same gender accommodation](#).

If the patient does not consent, every effort should be made by staff to ensure that greater awareness and protection is aligned to patient centred principles including privacy, respect and dignity are maintained at all times. Engage the Consumer Adviser and/or refer to local procedures.

1.4 Same gender accommodation and bathroom facilities on the wards

Clinical Service Coordinator and ward staff will ensure shared bed bays contain patients of the same gender.

Every effort must be made by staff to provide patients with access to a same gender bathroom and every effort must be made to ensure that patients do not have to walk through an opposite sex area to reach their own bathroom.

This means that male and females do not:

- sleep in the same room or bay
- use bathroom facilities at the same time
- have to walk through a mixed gender area to reach their own bathroom

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.

Patients, families and carers must be informed if same gender accommodation and bathrooms cannot be provided.

Patients, families and/or carers must be informed on what steps are being undertaken to address the situation and must be informed of the bathroom options available.

Refer to the principles on page 2.

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

In new areas / units, the design should support same gender bathroom facilities.

Audit tools

Audit tools have been developed for health care services to use to determine areas for improvement.

Refer to the Same Gender Accommodation Tool 12: Appendix 5

- Audit tool for Local Health Networks commitment
- Audit tool for physical environments
- Audit tool for individual staff
- Action plan
- Ward snapshot self-assessment audit tool

For more information

Safety and Quality Unit
Telephone: 08 8226 6539
www.sahealth.sa.gov.au

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