

Victorian Chief Psychiatrist Direction 2017/01

Appropriate locations for the use of seclusion in designated mental health services - November 2017

The Chief Psychiatrist has statutory roles and functions under the *Mental Health Act 2014* (s.120 and s.121). This includes the power to issue directions to mental health service providers in respect of the provision of mental health services (s.121(1) (j)).

The following direction is issued by the Chief Psychiatrist to mental health service providers in relation to use of seclusion in designated mental health services.¹

Chief Psychiatrist direction under the Mental Health Act s.121 (1) (j)

Preliminary

- The Mental Health Act regulates the use of seclusion in designated mental health services.
- Seclusion is the sole confinement of a person to a room or any other enclosed space from which it is not within the control of the person to leave (s.3).
- A person receiving mental health services in a designated mental health service may be kept in seclusion if seclusion is necessary to prevent imminent and serious harm to the person or to another person (s.110).

Direction regarding use of seclusion in a designated mental health service

- Seclusion must not occur in BAR (behavioural assessment rooms)² in Emergency Departments and Urgent Care Centres as well as rooms within the general hospital. These settings are not designed for the use and monitoring of seclusion as required by the Mental Health Act.
- Seclusion can only be undertaken in purpose built and designed seclusion rooms within acute inpatient, forensic and secure mental health units.
- Authorisation and monitoring of seclusion must occur in accordance with the Mental Health Act (s.111 and 112).

Compliance

- Mental health service providers are required to comply with this direction of the Chief Psychiatrist.
- Any breaches of this direction must be reported to the Chief Psychiatrist.
- Mental health service providers must include this advice in their local policies and procedures related to restrictive interventions. They must ensure that it is communicated to staff and that training is provided to make sure practices are consistent with this Direction.

¹ This Direction should be read in conjunction with the Chief Psychiatrist's guideline on restrictive interventions in designated mental health services, available at <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/key-staff/chief-psychiatrist/chief-psychiatrist-guidelines/reducing-restrictive-interventions>

² <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/publications/policiesandguidelines/behavioural-assessment-rooms-emergency-depts-guide>