

## Accessing inpatient mental health care for children and adolescents

**Summary** This Information Bulletin advises of the publication of a framework for clinicians and health care providers who are involved in decision-making regarding admitting children and adolescents into inpatient mental health care and a guide for people who are currently involved in or may become involved in caring for a child.

**Document type** Information Bulletin

**Document number** IB2023\_001

**Publication date** 12 January 2023

**Author branch** Mental Health

**Branch contact** (02) 9461 7074

**Replaces** PD2011\_016

**Review date** 12 January 2028

**Policy manual** Not applicable

**File number** H22/98638

**Status** Active

**Functional group** Clinical/Patient Services - Medical Treatment, Mental Health

**Applies to** Ministry of Health, Local Health Districts, Specialty Network Governed Statutory Health Corporations, Community Health Centres, Public Hospitals

**Distributed to** Ministry of Health, Public Health System, Divisions of General Practice

**Audience** Clinical staff, nursing, medical, allied health, paediatrics, mental health, emergency departments.

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### PURPOSE

This Information Bulletin advises NSW Health of the release of the framework *Accessing Inpatient Mental Health Care for Children and Adolescents* and the guide *Guide to Understanding Inpatient Mental Health Admissions for Children and Adolescents* that replaces the NSW Health Policy Directive *Children and Adolescents with Mental Health Problems Requiring Inpatient Care* ([PD2011\\_016](#)).

### KEY INFORMATION

The decision to admit a child or adolescent into inpatient care is challenging due to the limited research evidence, and the diversity of children and adolescents and their ill-health. Internationally, it has been recognised that inpatient care can be a traumatic experience for children and adolescents (and their families, carers, or close social supports).

In response to new evidence and approaches, as well as a shift in consumer's expectations of appropriate mental health support to children and adolescents, Perinatal Child and Youth, Mental Health Branch, NSW Ministry of Health have developed two new documents to support clinical decision-making and empower decision makers.

[Accessing Inpatient Mental Health Care for Children and Adolescents](#) is a framework for clinicians and health care providers who are involved in decision-making surrounding whether, and under which model of care, to admit children and adolescents into inpatient mental health care.

[Guide to Understanding Inpatient Mental Health Admissions for Children and Adolescents](#) is a resource document for people who are currently involved in or may become involved in caring for a child or adolescent experiencing mental-ill health. This could include families and carers, social workers, Peer Workers, education professionals, adult mental health, and non-mental health clinicians such as paediatricians and emergency department consultants, general practitioners, communities and justice professionals and children and adolescents themselves.

The framework and the guide builds on the key principles outlined in the NSW Health Policy Directive *Children and Adolescents with Mental Health Problems Requiring Inpatient Care* ([PD2011\\_016](#)) and provides for determining the most appropriate treatment facility for those children and adolescents with mental health problems who require inpatient treatment. This includes admission into specialist child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS) units, paediatric hospitals and paediatric wards in general hospitals, and Psychiatric Emergency Care Centres (PECCs).

## REVISION HISTORY

Version	Approved By	Amendment Notes
IB2023_001 January_2023	Deputy Secretary, Health System Strategy and Planning	The NSW Health Policy Directive <i>Children and Adolescents with Mental Health Problems Requiring Inpatient Care</i> (PD2011_016) has been rescinded following the publication of a framework and guide.
March 2011 (PD2011_016)	Director-General	Revised policy for managing placement of children and adolescents into inpatient units. Replaces GL2005_006.
September 1990 (GL2005_006)	Director-General	<i>Mentally Ill Young People – Severely Disturbed – Interim Guidelines for Acute Care</i> originally issued as Circular 90/95. Made obsolete 9/3/2010 by IB2010_017.