

Visiting Adult Inpatient Mental Health Wards and OPR1

Guideline Responsibilities and Authorisation

Department Responsible for Guideline	Mental Health and Addictions Service
Document Facilitator Name	Kylie Balzer
Document Facilitator Title	Operations Manager
Document Owner Name	Rees Tapsell
Document Owner Title	Clinical Services Director
Target Audience	Mental Health and Addictions service staff
Disclaimer: This document has been developed for use specifically by staff at the former Waikato District Health Board. Caution should be exercised before use outside this district. Any reliance on the information contained herein by any third party is at their own risk and Te Whatu Ora Health New Zealand assumes no responsibility whatsoever for any issues arising as a result of such reliance.	

Guideline Review History

Version	Updated by	Date Updated	Summary of Changes
2	Kylie Balzer	October 2023	Real time feedback removed as an audit indicator OPR1 included into this guideline Safety requirements added e.g. infection prevention and control, guidance in emergency situations

Visiting Adult Inpatient Mental Health Wards and OPR1

Contents

1	Overview	3
1.1	Purpose.....	3
1.2	Staff group	3
1.3	Patient / client group	3
1.4	Exceptions / contraindications	3
1.5	Definitions and acronyms	3
2	Clinical management	4
2.1	Roles and responsibilities	4
2.2	Competency required	4
2.3	Equipment.....	4
2.4	Guideline.....	4
3	Patient information	8
4	Audit.....	8
4.1	Indicators	8
4.2	Tools	8
5	Evidence base	8
5.1	Associated Te Whatu Ora Waikato Documents	8
5.2	External Standards	8

Visiting Adult Inpatient Mental Health Wards and OPR1

1 Overview

1.1 Purpose

It is important to a tāngata whaiora recovery that they continue to maintain contact with whānau and significant others (visitors) as their main support systems throughout their care, including during admission to an acute inpatient unit. Due to the nature of the inpatient environment, it may at times be necessary to place some restrictions on visiting. Our guidelines are for the safety and wellbeing of tāngata whaiora, visitors, and staff.

The Code of Health and Disabilities Services Consumer's Right Regulation 1996 states that tāngata whaiora:

Have one or more support persons of his / her choice present, except where safety may be compromised or another person's rights may be unreasonably infringed.

To adhere to this statement this guideline sets out to:

- Define the visiting hours for the adult inpatient mental health wards and OPR1
- Ensure that tāngata whaiora have reasonable access to a whānau / carer and visitors whilst in the inpatient unit
- Describe the out of hours visiting process

1.2 Staff group

This guideline applies to adult inpatient mental health wards and OPR1.

1.3 Patient / client group

Adult inpatient tāngata whaiora and OPR1.

1.4 Exceptions / contraindications

Nil

1.5 Definitions and acronyms

Key support person	The person or persons nominated by the tāngata whaiora to provide emotional and practical support (as the tāngata and key support person wishes) during their stay in the hospital or facility. A key support person will typically be a loved one, for example a spouse, partner, adult child, sibling, close friend, whānau member (although not limited to those definitions). The key support person may change at intervals in response to the tāngata whaiora wishes and availability of a specific person. Tāngata whaiora are not obliged to nominate a key support person. A key support person may also (although not necessarily) be the tāngata whaiora next of kin, the spokesperson or the Enduring Power of Attorney.
Next of kin	The person officially notified by the patient as their next of kin and logged on hospital records as such. The next of kin may (although not necessarily) be the key support person.

Visiting Adult Inpatient Mental Health Wards and OPR1

Visitors	All other people visiting the tāngata whaiora
ACNM	Associate Charge Nurse Manager

2 Clinical management

2.1 Roles and responsibilities

All Staff

- All staff in inpatient areas are responsible for implementing these guidelines.
- All staff visiting the inpatient unit must wear their Te Whatu Ora Waikato identification.

Managers

- The Charge Nurse Manager or their delegate has overall responsibility for ensuring that the guideline is followed with consideration for all tāngata whaiora, key support people and staff in the area.

2.2 Competency required

- Communication skills to discuss the guidelines with tāngata whaiora, visitors, whānau and key support people as required.
- Critical thinking and discretion when using the guideline, applying it to individual circumstances and communicating it to individual visitors.

2.3 Equipment

- Signage regarding visiting hours in the adult inpatient service and OPR1
- Signage advising of infection prevention and control requirements

2.4 Guideline

2.4.1 Arrival at reception / ward

- All visitors will report to the wards and press the ward door bell.
- All visitors to adult inpatient wards and OPR1 will be escorted onto the ward with staff
- Staff will provide guidance to visitors on any infection prevention and control or other safety requirements
- The shift lead is to be aware of visitors on the ward and guidance is to be provided in the event of an emergency situation.
- Visiting community mental health staff and contractors must display their Te Whatu Ora Waikato identification at all times.

We recognise and acknowledge the difference between key support people and general visitors and the role that each play in the care, recovery and treatment of tāngata whaiora.

A tāngata whaiora may wish to nominate a key whānau / caregiver who may be a partner, relative or friend.

We welcome key support people to visit from 8am to 8pm or longer at the discretion of the Charge Nurse (or their delegate). The decision will be made in the best clinical interest of the tāngata whaiora and other tāngata whaiora on the ward.

At the request of the tāngata whaiora (if capable) the key support person is welcome, but not obliged, to be present with the tāngata whaiora they support to:

- Participate in clinical conversations and whānau meetings
- Help with basic / essential care needs (in agreement with appropriate staff)
- Support the tāngata whaiora with decision making
- Support transition of care out of hospital

In a situation where a tāngata whaiora has elected to have more than one whānau member / caregiver, ward staff will discuss with the CNM or ACNM outside usual working hours as to the number of people who may be permitted in a ward at any one time.

When staff consider that it is in the tāngata whaiora and / or other tāngata whaiora best interests to limit the number of whānau / carer to one, the reasons for this decision will be explained to the tāngata whaiora, their whānau / caregiver and documented.

Ward staff will monitor the clinical state of the tāngata whaiora before, during and following visiting in order to maintain clinical safety and provide any debriefing required.

- The reception is to notify the ward prior to visitors with children entering the unit. Visiting children are to be closely supervised at all times by their whānau / carer and are not to be left unattended.
- Children must visit in designated areas and are not permitted inside the ward areas.
- Designated visiting areas for children are the interview rooms, admission suite, Level 3 meeting room and staff room.
- Visiting children remain the responsibility of the whānau / carer whilst in the adult inpatient unit and OPR1.

Doc ID:	6267	Version:	02	Issue Date:	18 DEC 2023	Review Date:	18 DEC 2026
Facilitator Title:		Operations Manager			Department:	Mental Health and Addictions	
IF THIS DOCUMENT IS PRINTED, IT IS VALID ONLY FOR THE DAY OF PRINTING							Page 5 of 8

Visiting Adult Inpatient Mental Health Wards and OPR1

2.4.4 Food / Fluids

Whānau / carer are encouraged to bring in appropriate food / fluids for their friend / whānau.

Staff need to review these items for suitability (check for drugs / illegal or prohibited items), storage (requiring refrigeration), and appropriateness (e.g. lipid rich food in cases of metabolic syndrome, those on diabetic diet).

2.4.5 Visiting hours for the wards

Visiting hours for wards 34/35/41	Monday - Friday 1530 – 2000hrs Saturday – Sunday 1000 – 2000hrs Public Holidays 1000 – 2000hrs
Visiting hours for ward 36 and LSA	Monday – Friday 1530 – 1900hrs Saturday – Sunday 1000 – 1900hrs Public Holidays 1000 – 1900hrs

Visitors are limited to 2 persons at a time and may be restricted to ensure a safe environment at the discretion of the Charge Nurse Manager / delegate.

Visiting hours OPR1	11am to 1.30pm and 4 pm to 8pm daily
----------------------------	--------------------------------------

2.4.6 Out of hours

No whānau / caregiver is permitted to visit outside of the visiting hours except where approval has been given in advance by the Charge Nurse Manager of the ward or the ACNM outside usual working hours. This should be documented in the multidisciplinary team plan and clinical notes.

2.4.7 Visiting Hours for Ward 36 and LSA

Ward 36 and LSA is a specific high care area within the HRBC. There are potential risks for visitors within this environment and a potential for harmful items to be brought onto the unit, therefore specific care is required. Additional guidelines have been put in place to mitigate risk:

- A nominated visiting room both within the open side of ward 36 and LSA (interview room which has high visibility) is to be used for visiting. This is to be monitored by nursing staff at all times.
- Whānau and friends must **book time slots to visit ward 36**. These bookings are made via the ward directly.

Visiting Adult Inpatient Mental Health Wards and OPR1

- One to two visitors at a time per tāngata whaiora can visit, unless otherwise deemed safe by the Charge Nurse Manager of the ward or the ACNM outside usual working hours
- There is to be only one visiting group at a time on the ward unless there is an exception made by the Charge nurse Manager of the ward or the ACNM outside usual working hours
- Visitors are not permitted to take bags into ward 36 unless they are items for the tāngata whaiora which will be listed and possibly stored
- The Charge Nurse Manager of the ward or the ACNM outside usual working hours will agree on the approximate visiting time with the visitor, this will not exceed 30 minutes.
- Children are not permitted in ward 36. Alternative arrangements can be made to support a connection as required; this may include the use of technology.

2.4.8 Managing challenging incidents involving visitors

Ward staff have the right to:

- Refuse or limit access for clinical or safety reasons. These are to be explained to the visitor and clearly documented in the clinical work station
- Verbally question any person visiting the ward. This includes staff, legal practitioners and volunteers who are expected to provide identification and evidence of reason for visiting
- Check all items are brought in for safety and appropriateness
- Supervise visits if deemed necessary for example if there is reasonable grounds that the visitor may have brought in prohibited items
- Ask any person to leave if they feel their safety or the safety of others is at risk
- When necessary ban specific visitors including the use of trespass notices, and inform the policy if a crime may have been committed by a visitor

Unacceptable behaviours

- Visitors and whānau / carer must maintain an appropriate standard of behaviour whilst within the adult inpatient mental health wards and OPR1.
- Behaviours that are deemed unacceptable and are not to be tolerated include:
 - Verbal or physical assault on tāngata whaiora , staff or other visitors
 - Aggressive, threatening, disruptive or intimidating behaviour
 - Intoxication with legal or illegal substances
 - Supply of legal or illegal intoxicating substances
 - Supply of tobacco related products to inpatients
 - Theft or damage to property

Visiting Adult Inpatient Mental Health Wards and OPR1

- Breach of non-trespass order
- Sexual harassment or sexually inappropriate behaviour
- Smoking on site

3 Patient information

Information on visiting hours on the mental health and addictions section of the Te Whatu Ora Waikato internet site.

4 Audit

4.1 Indicators

- Tāngata whaiora / whānau / carer feedback on visiting
- Staff feedback on visiting

4.2 Tools

- Consumer feedback and complaints
- DATIX incident system monitoring

5 Evidence base

5.1 Associated Te Whatu Ora Waikato Documents

- [Consumer Feedback and Complaints](#) policy (0101)
- [Incident Management](#) policy (0104)
- [Security](#) policy (Ref. 0120)
- [Visiting Patients at Waikato DHB Facilities](#) guideline (Ref.0125)

5.2 External Standards

- Code of Health and Disabilities Service Consumer's Rights Regulation 1996
- Ngā Paerewa Health and disability services standard 8134:2021