

Approved Procedure 21

Authorised Psychiatric Practitioners (APP) Appointment

Procedure details

This document establishes the criteria for appointment as an Authorised Psychiatric Practitioner under the *Mental Health and Related Services Act 1998* (the Act) and describes the application and appointment process.

Target Audience

This procedure must be followed by:

- Approved Treatment Facilities under the *Mental Health and Related Services Act*
- Approved Treatment Agencies under the *Mental Health and Related Services Act*

[Shortcut to Procedure Checklists](#)

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Introduction

Under the Act Authorised Psychiatric Practitioners (APPs) are responsible for examining and treating patients/clients referred to them. They have the power to authorise involuntary admission to an Approved Treatment Facility (ATF) or to place an individual on a Community Management Order (CMO). If the psychiatric examination occurs in another place external to an ATF, an APP has the power to refer a person to an ATF and where necessary involve police officers in the transport of that person.

An APP also has the power to withhold a notification and/or information to a primary carer or representative, where deemed appropriate, and approve leave from an ATF, discharge a patient or vary a CMO and may appoint a Psychiatric Case Manager for the purposes of monitoring a CMO.

Requirements for Appointment under the Act

Qualifications

Under Section 22(1) of the Act, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Department of Health (DoH) (or their delegate) can appoint a person to be an Authorised Psychiatric Practitioner (APP).

Under Section 22(2)(a)(i), to be appointed as an APP, the Act requires that the person has the qualifications specified in Section 22(3), being that the person:

- (a) is a medical practitioner who holds specialist registration under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law in the recognised specialty of psychiatry; or
- (b) has qualifications entitling them to fellowship of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists; or
- (c) is employed as a specialist or consultant in the medical specialty of psychiatry by the Commonwealth, a State or Territory, or an agency or authority of the Commonwealth, a State or Territory; or
- (d) is employed as a psychiatrist by the Commonwealth, a State or Territory, or an agency or authority of the Commonwealth, a State or Territory.

A person can also be appointed as an APP pursuant to Section 22(2)(a)(ii) if they have the specifications as per Section 22(4), and their appointment complies with approved procedures. The person is employed as:

- i. a medical practitioner employed by an approved treatment facility or approved treatment agency; or
- ii. a psychiatric registrar by the Commonwealth, a State or Territory, or an agency or authority of the Commonwealth, a State or Territory.

Training

Section 22(2)(b) requires all APPs to have successfully completed an approved training and orientation course prior to their appointment.

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Operational Requirements not Prescribed by the Act

Determination of Eligibility

The Person in Charge (PIC) of an Approved Treatment Facility (ATF) or an Approved Treatment Agency (ATA) will determine whether a person meets the criteria for appointment as an APP under the MHARS Act.

The positions appointed as PIC of the two ATFs in the NT are:

- Director of Psychiatry, Top End Mental Health Services (TEMHS); and
- Clinical Director, Mental Health Central Australia Health Service (MHCAHS)

The positions appointed as PIC of the two ATAs in the NT are:

- General Manager, Top End Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drugs Service (TEMHAODS); and
- General Manager, Mental Health Central Australia Health Service (MHCAHS)

Training

To meet the requirements of Section 22(2)(b), an applicant is to have successfully completed an appropriate training and orientation course approved by the Chief Psychiatrist.

Qualifications specified under Section 22(2)(a)(i) or Section 22(2)(a)(ii)

For the purposes of processing APP applications and the exercise of power under the Act, appointments are divided into two levels, which are dependent on what qualifications an applicant holds.

Level 1 APPs are those that meet the requirements of section 22(2)(a)(i) and Level 2 are those that meet the criteria outlined in Section 22(2)(a)(ii).

Because the qualification and experience requirements of section 22(2)(a)(ii) are not as extensive as those required for Level 1, a Level 2 appointed APP will be restricted to using their power under specific section(s) of the Act (which will be documented in their Instrument of Appointment).

When an application is lodged by a clinician, the PIC of the ATA or ATF will specify which level of powers are recommended for the appointment, taking into account the practitioner's experience and qualifications.

Level 1 (Consultant Psychiatrists, Senior Registrars)

APPs appointed at Level 1 will generally have completed or are nearing completion of qualifications recognised by the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists and are employed as Consultant Psychiatrists or in Senior Psychiatric Registrar positions.

These practitioners will have all of the APP powers available under the legislation.

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Level 2 (Junior Registrars, Medical Officers, Hospital Medical Officers)

APPs appointed at Level 2 will generally be employed in non-specialist categories (i.e. as a medical officer) by an ATF or ATA or may have recently commenced training and have been employed as a Psychiatric Registrar but have limited practice experience in psychiatry.

This will require that a Level 2 APP is supervised by a Level 1 APP for the duration of their appointment.

Appointment Process

Completion of Training and Orientation Requirements and Application for Appointment

Before a written request for appointment as an APP can be submitted, the Applicant must successfully complete a training and orientation course that has been approved by Chief Psychiatrist.

The Applicant then completes Part A of [58 Authorised Psychiatric Practitioner \(APP\) Appointment Application Form](#) and evidence of successful course completion must accompany the application.

Endorsement of Application

The Applicant then submits their application with evidence to support the following:

- compliance with the essential qualification and experience criteria; and
- successful completion of the training and orientation requirements

to the relevant PIC of the ATF for endorsement.

The PIC then ensures that the applicant meets the criteria for appointment and determines the level of the Applicant prior to completing and signing the remaining sections of the application form.

Practice Note:

Evidence that the person meets the essential criteria for appointment may include, for example, evidence of the applicant's professional qualification, AHPRA registration and certificate of completion of the required training and orientation course.

Practice Note: Locum Doctors

Should an applicant be identified as a locum doctor, this is to be identified on the application form. This is to assist with data capture.

Authorisation by the CEO and Legal Instrument of Appointment

A completed, signed and endorsed application form, with evidence of the essential qualifications and experience criteria and successful completion of the training and orientation requirements is to be emailed to the Office of the Chief Psychiatrist (OCP) (MHRSATraining.DOH@nt.gov.au).

As far as possible, an Application for Appointment should be submitted to the OCP at least 2 working days prior to the practitioner's proposed commencement date. Where requests are made at short notice, there is no guarantee that the request will be processed in time. **Please note that if this does not occur in time,**

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then an APP will potentially commence at the service without the practitioner having the required instrument in place and be unable to carry out their duties.

Once a completed and signed application form and accompanying evidence of compliance with essential criteria has been received by the OCP, an Instrument of Appointment will be prepared and sent to the CEO or delegate to request the approval the Appointment. Documented evidence of compliance with essential criteria will also accompany this request.

As far as possible, the OCP will process an application for Appointment as an APP within two (2) working days of receiving the completed and signed form.

Once the legal Instrument of Appointment has been signed and approved by the CEO or delegate, the signed original of the Instrument will be returned to the OCP. A PDF copy of the signed Instrument will then be emailed to the Applicant and relevant PIC. A copy of the signed Instrument will be placed on the OCP electronic file.

Practice Note:

The appointment process is not complete until the applicant and the PIC receive a copy of the signed instrument. A person cannot act in their capacity as an APP until the appointment process is complete.

Register of APP Appointments

TEMHS and MHCAHS will ensure that a register is maintained of all APP appointments to ensure currency. The OCP will maintain a register of all issued APP Instruments for administration purposes only.

Review of APP Appointments

TEMHS and MHCAHS will be responsible for coordinating peer review processes of appointed APPs.

TEMHS and MHCAHS will regularly review all individual appointments to ensure that the powers under the Act are being discharged appropriately. Where there are sufficient grounds to conclude that an individual is not practicing in accordance with the Act or is found to be insufficiently qualified to continue their appointment as an APP, the appointment may be revoked and the individual's name removed from the TEMHS or MHCAHS registers. If this occurs the OCP **must** be notified.

Periodic review

All appointments will be reviewed by OCP every three (3) years to ensure knowledge of the legislative provisions, their application and the powers available to the APP is regularly updated.

Additionally OCP will liaise with both the applicant and TEMHS or MHCAHS to ensure that relevant trainings and information are maintained.

This period of review will also provide a regular opportunity to consult each APP regarding the application of the legislative provisions and/or procedures to discuss issues or problems encountered and to receive their views as to how improvements might be made.

Term of and Termination of Appointments

Although not stated in the Act, appointments are for either a specified term or subject to the person's ongoing employment with the ATA. This ensures that an APP's appointment is commensurate with current

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qualifications, experience and employment details. Should the APP cease employment with the ATA, OCP is to be notified as soon as practicable.

As such, if a practitioner ceases to be employed and is then reemployed at TEMHS or MHCAHS within 6 months, a new application for appointment is not required. However, OCP is to be notified to ensure correct record keeping.

Practice Note:

If the employment of the person is terminated under provisions of the [Department of Health Probation Guidelines](#) or for any other reason, the appointment as an APP is also terminated.

Definitions

The following definition(s) are relevant to this procedure.

Term	Definition
APP	Authorise Psychiatric Practitioner
ATA	Approved Treatment Agency
ATF	Approved Treatment Facility
CEO	Chief Executive Officer of Department of Health
DoH	Department of Health – known as NT Health
MHCAHS	Mental Health Central Australia Health Service (includes Barkly Region)
The Act	<i>Mental Health and Related Services Act 1998</i>
OCP	Office of the Chief Psychiatrist
PIC	Person in Charge
TEMHS	Top End Mental Health Services

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Procedure Checklists

Application for Appointment

- The applicant completes any relevant training relating to their Appointment
- The applicant meets all other essential criteria for Appointment.
- Form 58 Authorised Psychiatric Practitioner (APP) Authorisation Application Form** is completed (please ensure that the person's full name, including any middle names, is provided).
- The PIC ensures that the applicant meets the criteria for appointment**, determines the level of the APP powers and completes and signs the remaining sections of the application form.
- Evidence of successful completion of relevant training program** e.g. copy of the certificate of completion of a training and orientation course approved by the PIC is attached to Form 58.
- Evidence that the applicant meets all other essential criteria** for appointment i.e. relevant supporting documentation regarding the person's qualifications is attached to **Form 58**.
- Form 58 and any other relevant documentation is sent via **email to the OCP** (MHRSATraining.DOH@nt.gov.au) at least 2 working days prior to the practitioner's proposed commencement date.

Appointment by the CEO

- Form 58** is fully completed, signed and endorsed by the PIC.
- Relevant documented evidence of the person's compliance with essential criteria** has been included in the application.
- Instrument of appointment prepared and submitted to the CEO or authorised delegate** for approval.
- Instrument of appointment is approved and signed by CEO or authorised delegate**.
- A signed copy of the instrument returned to **OCP and placed on the relevant electronic file**.
- A signed copy of the **instrument is emailed to the Applicant and the endorsing PIC**.
- The **APP is to be added to the register** maintained by TEMHS and MHCAHS.

Periodic Review of Appointments

- A review is held within 3 years of appointment** by OCP.
- The APP's knowledge of the legislative provisions, their application and the powers available is confirmed.
- The APP is provided with an opportunity to provide their view regarding the application of the legislation, procedures and available materials and their views have been documented for further consideration of the Safety and Quality Teams of the relevant health service.

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