

10 April 2026

Grace R

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Tēnā koe Grace

Your request for official information, reference: HNZ00201748

Thank you for your email on 18 March 2026, asking Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora for the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the OIA):

Can you please provide information regarding uniforms for nurses (registered, enrolled etc) and mental health assistants/psychiatric assistants working within Forensic mental health inpatient environments. Including, but not limited to, high, medium and low security wards (e.g. Lock, Unlocked, or transitional wards).

Area that may be included, but not restricted to

- Mason clinic
- Henry Rongomau Bennett Centre/Puawai Forensic services
- Stanford house
- Ratonga-Rua-o-Porirua
- Hillmorton
- Wakari

Or any other mental health units under health NZ providing forensic mental health support.

please outline each ward if uniform varies (as different acuity wards may require different uniform).

Please outline which areas/wards have a specific uniform, if so what, or if RNs/MHAs wear civies (e.g. Normal clothing without branded or identification to maintain patient privacy and reduce power imbalance between staff and patient for therapeutic purposes).

Response

Health New Zealand recognises that uniform requirements within forensic mental health inpatient environments may vary across New Zealand and in some forensic settings, staff may wear standardised uniforms, while in others a non-uniform or “civvies” approach is adopted.

Health New Zealand is progressing a national standardisation programme for nursing and health care assistant uniforms, which is being implemented in a phased manner and is aligned with existing uniform stock levels. This approach will be rolled out in May 2026 and allows uniforms to be replaced as part of normal operational cycles rather than through a standalone procurement exercise. Costs associated with this programme are therefore managed within existing operational provisions, and the broader standardisation initiative is expected to reduce administrative and supply-chain complexity across the organisation.

While cost efficiencies are a benefit of standardisation, they are not the primary driver of the programme. The initiative focuses on staff comfort, ease of uniform supply, clear professional identification, and supporting positive patient experiences.

It is important to note that decisions about whether staff wear uniforms or non-uniform clothing in forensic mental health units are currently made locally and as a result, the presence and type of uniform may vary between sites and wards.

Details of these local arrangements are outlined in **Appendix One** for each relevant service and ward.

How to get in touch

If you have any questions, you can contact us at h.nzOIA@tewhatuora.govt.nz.

If you are not happy with this response, you have the right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman. Information about how to do this is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or by phoning 0800 802 602.

As this information may be of interest to other members of the public, Health NZ may proactively release a copy of this response on our website. All requester data, including your name and contact details, will be removed prior to release.

Nāku iti noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sasha Wood', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Sasha Wood

Head of Government Services

Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora