

Alan Morrison, Interim Deputy Director,
Health Infrastructure, Investment and PPE
Gavin Gray, Deputy Director,
Improving Services, Mental Health
Directorate

Dear Colleagues,

MENTAL HEALTH BUILT ENVIRONMENT ASSESSMENT POLICY FOR NHS SCOTLAND

This letter refers to the introduction of a new mental health built environment (mHBE) app-based assessment and associated guidance. Local implementation of this is described in the mental health section of the 25/26 delivery planning guidance issued to all NHS Boards.

Background

To help meet our commitment to enhancing patient care and outcomes, we are introducing the Mental Health Built Environment (mHBE) assessment. This initiative is a critical step towards ensuring that our healthcare environments are conducive to the well-being of our patients and all service users.

The aim of this policy is to systematically evaluate and improve the built environment. Its initial focus is on our NHS adult acute mental health wards. By conducting regular mHBE assessments, we aim to identify and address key environmental factors evidenced to impact our mental health service quality and safety outcomes.

Continuous improvement is integral to this, and will be driven via consistent, effective monitoring, with regular user feedback and allowing comparator data reviews. Adjustments may be made as necessary to the mHBE process to ensure its aims are effectively implemented.

The mHBE assessment App has been made available to all Boards on a licenced basis, and issued via NHS Scotland Assure.

Action

As set out in 25/26 NHS Scotland Delivery Planning Guidance, Health Boards are expected to progress local use of the Mental Health Built Environment assessment

19 June 2025

DL 16 (2025)

Addresses

For action:

Chief Executives

For information:

NHS Scotland Strategic Facilities
Group

NHS Scotland Property Advisory
Group

NHS Scotland Building Design and
Construction Group

NHS Scotland Mental Health
Nurse Leads Group

NHS Scotland Health and Safety
Directors Group

Mental Welfare Commission for
Scotland

software (mHBE App), within the NHS Scotland Strategic Asset Management System (SAMS), on at least an annual basis, for all adult acute mental health wards.

The mHBE assessment provides evidence for meeting quality and safety standards, including NHS Scotland Assure Guidance for Mental Health facilities (HBN 03 series). HBN 03-01 status for use in Scotland has been updated to refer to this Policy Letter and its related mHBE App publications, including a How-to-Guide. These can be found online at: [Mental health - Adult acute units \(HBN 03-01\)](#).

If you have any questions, please contact James Niven (Mental Health Team Leader – Standards and Assurance) james.niven@gov.scot .

Yours sincerely

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