

Question on Notice

No. 717

Asked on 24 June 2022

MR S BENNETT asked the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services (HON Y D'ATH)—

QUESTION

With reference to reports from inpatients at the Bundaberg Hospital Adult Mental Health Service regarding unsupervised use of scissors and unlimited consumption of tea and coffee—

Will the Minister advise (a) if the Minister is aware of these reports and (b) what steps are being taken to ensure the safety of all patients relating to using sharp objects unsupervised and the unlimited supply of caffeine?

ANSWER

I have been advised the following by the Hospital and Health Service.

Mental Health Services work within a “least restrictive” framework, to ensure consumer engagement in treatment in a way that respects an individual’s human rights, while mitigating risks to all consumers and staff.

Access to any potentially dangerous items, including scissors, is individually risk assessed within a controlled and monitored environment and processes and procedures are in place to identify and appropriately manage risks. An individual’s risk is also regularly monitored throughout their admission.

Organised activities that may require the use of scissors are always monitored and supported by staff and only occur within low-risk, low-dependency areas within the Acute Mental Health Unit. Processes are in place to ensure all equipment is accounted for to remove any risk of a consumer concealing equipment that could cause potential harm.

In accordance with the *Human Rights Act 2019*, a person admitted to an Acute Mental Health Unit can access tea and coffee as they would within the general hospital environment. Any risk of accessing tea and coffee facilities is identified and managed within the context of both the environment and with an individual.

A balanced approach is important, and education is provided to support healthy choices and to help reduce overuse of caffeine.