



Making sure people are safe from sexual abuse and supported to talk about their sexuality

February 2020



Easy read version of 'Promoting sexual safety through empowerment: A review of sexual safety and the support of people's sexuality in adult social care'



About this booklet



We are the Care Quality Commission. We check services like care homes and hospitals to make sure they give good health and social care to people.



This booklet looks at how well people are kept safe from sexual abuse in adult social care services, like care homes or supported living services.



It also looks at how well people are supported to talk about or show their sexuality. For example, are people supported to have a boyfriend or a girlfriend, if they want to?



We do not think people talk about these things enough – which is one of the reasons we have looked into them.



What we found



Adult social care staff have to tell us when things happen to people who use their service, like when they are hurt. They also have to tell us what they have done, like how they have helped make them better.



We looked at what staff told us about in 3 months in 2018, to see how much of this was about ‘sexual incidents’. This means people doing sexual things that other people do not like or want.



We found that in this 3 months, staff told us about nearly 900 sexual incidents. We cannot be sure of this number, or how much each incident affected people, but it gives us a picture of what was happening.



Nearly half of the incidents services told us about were 'sexual assaults'. This means touching someone in a sexual way when they do not want them to.



More than 1 in 10 of the incidents services told us about were people taking all their clothes off and showing themselves to others.



1 in 20 of the incidents services told us about were people saying they have been raped. Rape is when someone is forced to have sex when they do not want it.



We have followed up these incidents to make sure the service has done the right thing, like talk to the police.



Most of the incidents were carried out by people who use services. And almost all the people affected by them were also using services.



Sexual incidents were nearly 4 times more likely to be carried out by men than women.



We found that nearly half of all the people affected by sexual incidents were women aged 75 and over.



Nearly half of the incidents happened in a care home. Over 1 in 10 incidents happened to people in their homes, who were using a home-care service.



Generally, services told us that when these incidents happened, they supported people and worked to stop them happening again.



As well as looking at these incidents, we also talked to people who use services, family, staff and other organisations to see what needs to happen to keep them safe.



They told us that sex is often seen as something that should not be talked about. This means that people may not speak up when something goes wrong.



Or they may not get the support they need when they want to talk about their sexuality.



We also heard about services that are very good at helping people talk about or show their sexuality. For example, in our report, we talk about Lizzie and Ian, who have a learning disability, who were supported to become girlfriend and boyfriend.



We used what people told us to talk about three main things that need to change:



- Guidance for adult social care staff needs to be improved so that they know how to protect people from sexual abuse and how to support them to talk about or show their sexuality if they want to.



- The people who manage adult social care services should make sure their staff use this guidance to make sure people and staff are safe and can talk openly about sexuality.



- As the Care Quality Commission, we need to improve what we do to help make these changes happen.



Find out more



See the full version of this report on our website at:

www.cqc.org.uk/PromotingSexualSafety



If you want to give feedback on your care – it can be good or bad – fill out our form at:

www.cqc.org.uk/givefeedback



Or you can call us on:

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