



# Looking at the Mental Health Act between 2019 and 2020

November 2020



Easy read version of 'Monitoring the Mental Health Act in 2019/20: The Mental Health Act in the COVID-19 pandemic'



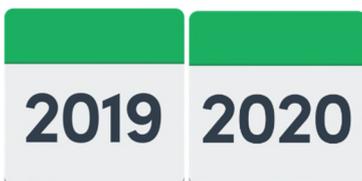
## About this booklet



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



We also check that health staff follow a law called the **Mental Health Act**. This law helps them decide if a person with a serious mental illness needs to be kept and treated in hospital.



This booklet looks at how well staff cared for people in hospital under the Mental Health Act in 2019 and 2020.



# What we found



This year (2020) saw the start of an emergency, when lots of people got sick with a new illness called coronavirus.



The 'coronavirus emergency' changed things a lot for people who use health and social care services, or work in them.



For example, staff and people using mental health services had to wear more equipment, like masks to keep each other safe.



At the start of the emergency, some services did not have enough equipment. We got lots of complaints about this.



The emergency also meant that most people in hospital were not allowed to be visited by family, friends or advocates.



We were worried that this might mean they did not have anyone to talk to if they thought their care needed to improve.



We carried on talking to patients and their relatives during the emergency.



Many mental health services coped well with the coronavirus emergency.



Some people told us that they were happy with their care:

“We’re in it together. We’d like to thank the staff for explaining what’s happening and keeping everyone safe.”



Others were less happy:

“I’m bored. I like to go to the gym and learn to cook, but because of coronavirus, these activities only happen once a week.”



In last year's report about the use of the Mental Health Act, we said that not everyone is treated the same, and people in different ethnic groups have different experiences of care.



We know that people from Black, Asian or some other backgrounds were more likely to get ill or die from coronavirus.



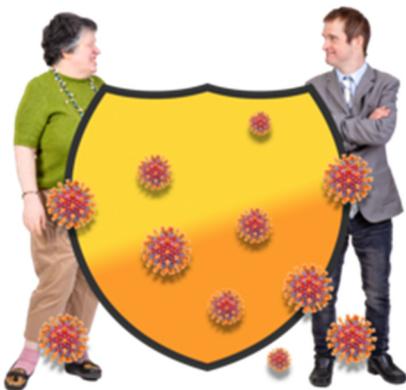
We will check how managers in hospitals are working to make sure everyone gets the same level of care.



# What we think needs to happen



It is important that plans for helping people leave hospital are made with patients and their families and other people who support them.



This will help keep them safe from getting ill with coronavirus or other diseases.



Many services need to improve their buildings, wards and rooms so that they are safer for people to use.



Some services stop patients from doing things for too long, like doing activities and leaving the service to visit family. This is not good for them and should not happen.



Services should continue to help patients stay connected with their friends and family. This might mean allowing patients to have mobile phones and providing WiFi.



We think that advocacy services should be given to patients to help them make decisions and speak out, unless they decide they do not want an advocate.



## Find out more



See the full version of our guidance on our website at:

[www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk)



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](http://www.cqc.org.uk/givefeedback)



Or you can call us on:

**03000 61 61 61**