



Best safeguarding practice in residential care and supported living services for adults with learning disabilities

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Overview

This workshop will report some of the findings from a research study which examined the extent to which support staff in residential care and supported living services share a consistent understanding of what constitutes poor or abusive practice when working with adults with learning disabilities.

56 semi-structured interviews were undertaken with care/support staff and frontline managers in residential care and supported living services for adults with learning disabilities across England. Each interview included asking respondents to categorise nine vignettes of staff-service user interactions as 'acceptable practice', 'poor practice' or 'abuse'. Findings showed that there was little overall consistency in respondents' categorisations of the vignettes and that respondents struggled to define both 'abuse' and 'poor practice'. Respondents also reported being uncertain how they would respond to poor practice in their service.

The findings suggest a need for clearer guidance for frontline staff regarding abuse and poor practice, in order to improve the quality of their practice and to ensure that when abuse occurs it is reported to the appropriate authorities.

Workshop participants will be invited to discuss some of the vignettes used in the original research and to consider a range of proposals for improving practice in these settings. There will also be practical activities focused on working with residential care staff, and an opportunity to hear from an experienced practitioner in this field.

Biography

Dr. Rachel Fyson joined the Centre for Social Work at the University of Nottingham as a lecturer in September 2005, having previously worked as a Research Fellow for both the Ann Craft Trust, University of Nottingham, and the Norah Fry Research Centre, University of Bristol.

Her research interests lie primarily in matters relating to the lives of people with learning disabilities, including the interface between promoting choice and independence and the need to safeguard against avoidable abuse; policy implementation, interagency working.

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