

14 December 2023

Our Ref: RFI 54962

Dear

**Freedom of Information Act 2000
Information in Relation to Learning Disability Services.**

I am writing to confirm that the South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust (the Trust) has now completed its search for information relating to the above, which you requested on 24 November 2023.

A response to each of the questions raised has been provided by the Adult Services Directorate and is attached in Appendix A.

If you are unhappy as to how this request has been handled, you have the right to seek a review within the Trust in the first instance. You should write to the Information Governance Department, Lough House, Ards Community Hospital (informationgovernance@setrust.hscni.net) within two months of the date of this response and your complaint will be considered and a response provided, within 20 working days of receipt.

If, after receiving a response, you remain unhappy, you can refer your complaint to the Information Commissioner at The Information Commissioner's Office –Northern Ireland, 3rd Floor, 14 Cromac Place, Belfast, BT7 2JB. It is important to note that if you refer any matter to the Information Commissioner, you will need to show evidence of having gone through the Trust's internal review procedure to try to resolve the matter with the Trust in the first instance.

If you have any queries about this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely

**Caroline Degans
Information Governance Officer**

Q1. *What policies and procedures, relating to any aspects of intimate relationships, including sexual activity for people with intellectual disabilities are given to qualified social work staff in Learning Disability Services?*

A1. The March 2016 Health and Social Care Board, now Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG), 'Adults with Learning Disabilities: Personal and Sexual Relationships Operational Protocol' is the current policy in place.

Q2. *What training is provided to qualified social work staff in Learning Disability Services when assessing capacity for sexual consent for women with intellectual disabilities?*

A2. The assessment of an individual's capacity to consent to a sexual relationship is completed by professional Psychology staff rather than Social Work staff.

Q3. *In what way are qualified social work staff involved in the assessment of capacity to consent to sexual activity of women with intellectual disabilities?*

A3. In line with the above, the role of the Social Worker is to make a referral to Psychology Services for assessment, where there are concerns in relation to an individual's capacity to consent to a sexual relationship. The social worker may provide background and circumstantial information as part of the referral process.