

Mental Health Commission

Guide to the Code of Practice

This booklet tells you about how mental health services should work with people who have an intellectual disability and mental health problems



Easy read

2009



Who we are

We are the **Mental Health Commission**.

It is our job to make sure mental health services work well for all the people who use them.

We give mental health services guidance and information to help them to do their job well.

Mental health



This is when people are ill in their mind.

It can be about feelings, like being depressed or getting very stressed and worried about things.

It can be about how someone's mind affects their mood and behaviour.

For some people it can be about hearing and seeing things that are not real.

What is the Code of Practice?



The **Code of Practice** is guidance for mental health services that work with people with an intellectual disability.

It tells staff about the best ways of looking after and treating people with intellectual disabilities.

It is called guidance because it tells staff what they **should** do.



It is not law but some of the Code of Practice does help mental health services to follow the law.



You may like to ask someone to help you go through this booklet. There is a what words mean section at the end to help you.

What is in this booklet?

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Part 1

Introduction



Everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect.

People with intellectual disabilities have the right to have their mental and physical health looked after in the same way as everyone else.



The Code of Practice is to help mental health services treat people in a person centred way.

Being person centred is about making sure that each person with an intellectual disability



- gets treatment that is right for them
- is supported in the best way
- has a say in their care and treatment
- has their needs understood
- is respected
- is listened to.

The other most important things in the Code of Practice



The Code of Practice tells mental health services that they should always do what is best for each individual.



The Code says services must always think that someone can make their own decisions and choices about their treatment and care.



The Code says that all care and treatment of people with an intellectual disability should be done in such a way that they keep as much of their independence and freedom as possible.



This booklet tells you about what the Code of Practice says about how mental health services should work with **you** (people with an intellectual disability and mental health problems).

Part 2

How services should be run and staff training



All mental health services should have policies about caring for and treating people.

A policy is information for staff about how the service should be run.

You can think of policies as being like rules.



All services should have policies on things like

- How people should be treated and cared for.
- How staff with different jobs should work together in the best way for each person they are looking after.
- How to stop people from hurting themselves or other people.
- How often policies should be checked to make sure they are still the right way of doing things.



Services should also have policies about how to work with children and young people with intellectual disabilities and mental health problems.

More about how services should be run and staff training



Staff should get all the training they need to do their job well.



Managers should keep information about what training staff have been on.



All new staff should get training as soon as they start.

Part 3

Being treated in a person centred way



Being person centred means mental health services should fit around what each person needs.



People should be able to use a service that is right for them.

People should be able to use services that meet their care and support needs.



Mental health services should make care plans with each person they look after.

Each person's care and treatment should be based on who they are and what they need.



Everyone will have a **keyworker**. This is a member of staff who will give the person extra support.

More about the care plan

The care plan should be about



- the person's mental health and physical health
- the person's medication
- looking after risks to the person or others because of their mental health
- what skills they have
- what they can do.

Communication

Services should find out how the person



- likes to say what they think
- wants to be told information.

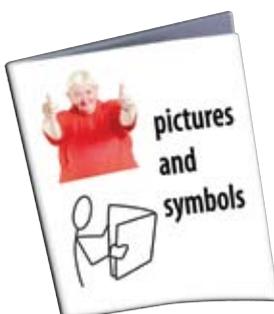
Services should find out what the person wants to know and when they want to know it.



Services should also find out who is the best person to communicate with each person with an intellectual disability.

Family, friends, carers or an advocate should be asked about how the person communicates.

They can also be asked to help the person communicate and understand what is going on.



Services should have information in easy read.

What the building is like



It is important that the buildings used by mental health services are good.

Staying in a nice place helps people to feel more at ease and relaxed.



Buildings should be

- the right temperature
- not too noisy or have lights that are too bright
- easy to get around.



There should be a garden or outdoor space that people can use when they want to.

How services should support people who have difficulties with their behaviour

Sometimes people with an intellectual disability and mental health problems can have difficulties with their behaviour.



For example, when someone is sick or is in pain or gets worried or stressed they may hurt themselves or other people.

When this happens, staff should first try to work out why someone is behaving in the way they are.

Mental health services can use different things to help someone with their behaviour.



They can help

- people talk about their feelings
- people to show what they feel in a way that does not hurt them or other people.

More about how services should support people who have difficulties with their behaviour



Sometimes, mental health services may do other things to help control someone's behaviour.

Staff might



- give someone medicine to calm them down
- hold someone to stop them hurting themselves or other people
- put someone in a special room on their own
- use something to hold someone down like a strap.



These are called **restrictive practices**.

You can find out more about what restrictive practices mean in the **What words mean** section.

What the Code of Practice says about restrictive practices

Restrictive practices should



- only be used if the person is going to harm themselves or someone else
- only be used when everything else has been tried
- be used for as short a time as possible.



All the staff who look after the person should talk together about if it is right to use a restrictive practice.

For example, staff should talk about if it is the right thing to give someone medicine or tablets for their behaviour.



Staff should try to understand how the person will feel if a restrictive practice is used.

Part 4

Making decisions and agreeing to treatment



It can be hard for some people to make decisions and choices.

Mental health services should work with people so they can have as much choice as possible about how they are looked after.



Mental health services **should not** think that someone can not make a choice or decision just because they have an intellectual disability.



Mental health services should make sure

- People have the support of an advocate to help them make choices and decisions. An advocate is someone who can help you to speak up or speak up for you.



- Family, friends and carers can speak up for someone who finds it hard to speak up for themselves.

Mental health services should make sure



- They talk to and involve all the important people in someone's life to help to decide about their care and treatment.



- Always check if there is another way to support or treat someone that would be better for them.

For example this could be things like



- learning some new communication skills
- learning skills to become more independent
- trying out a different medicine
- support to get treatment at home.

What words mean

Dignity



This is about how other people and staff make sure they respect who you are.

For example, if you need help to get dressed staff should support you in a way that makes you feel comfortable and in control.



Guidance

This is when an organisation like the Mental Health Commission tells services about the best way of doing things.

For example, we might say that the **best thing** is for people to choose the staff that support them.

This is our **guidance**. Services do not have to do it, but we think they should if they want to give people good care and treatment.



Person centred

Each person, who they are and what they need, is the starting point for all plans about their treatment and care.

It is about mental health services seeing everyone as an individual.



Policy

Information for staff about how something should be done.

For example, a policy about how to give out medication would tell staff the safest way to do it.



Physical health

The health of your body.

For example, high blood pressure is a physical health problem.

Restrictive practices

To restrict means to stop or make it more difficult for someone to do something.



Restrictive practices means what is done to stop or make it more difficult to do something.

For example, someone who is very stressed and who is hitting out at other people might be put in a room by themselves for some time.

This is a restrictive practice because it stops them hitting someone.



Another restrictive practice might be to give someone a tablet that makes them feel sleepy so they calm down.

More about restrictive practices



Staff should try to work out why the person was behaving in this way.

They must do what they can to help the person not to have to behave in this way in the future.

For example, a person is hitting their head against a wall.



Staff find out that the person is in a lot of pain from a bad tooth but can not tell them.

Staff support the person to go to the dentist and have the tooth fixed.

If the person behaves like that again, staff should remember it was because they had been in pain.

They should do their best to find out if the person is in pain again **before** they use a restrictive practice.





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Mencap helped to make this easy read.

Email: Accessibility@mencap.org.uk



Thanks to **Photosymbols** for the pictures.
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