

Mental Capacity Act and DoLS Project

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Project method

Richmond Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Richmond Council initiated a joint project to increase awareness and understanding of the Mental Capacity Act and the Deprivation of liberty Safeguards (DoLS). Despite formal training on MCA and DoLS, evidence taken from the quality of referrals from care homes had shown that both staff and managers were unaware of when DoLS applies and did not understand how to assess an individual's capacity, in particular within the context of human rights. The project was meant to increase understanding amongst providers' staff at all levels, and also amongst unpaid service user representatives so that they understand their roles and responsibilities better.

The overall aim was to ensure that people are not deprived of their liberty unnecessarily and that those who are deprived of their liberty are appropriately safeguarded.

There were separate courses for management and staff. A pre-course questionnaire was carried out to assess the level of pre-course knowledge. The materials were designed as a workbook which was completed during the course and meant to be used post training where attendees were still able to consult the trainer. (The actual training was half day but then the trainer offered additional learning support.)

Teaching methods included mini-lectures, sub-group case study exercises, plenary activities and group discussion. Attendees were encouraged to reflect on what they learnt and how this learning informed their practice.

Project results/evaluation

A number of care home managers and staff have gained greater understanding of the Mental Capacity Act. Due to turnover of staff in care homes and due to the training not being mandatory, the results have not been consistently maintained.

The referrals to the DoLS and safeguarding team increased after the training, although not necessarily as a direct outcome from the training as other measures were implemented to increase the number of referrals (e.g. letters to care homes reminding them of their legal responsibilities.)

Engagement with 'relevant person's representatives' has increased in some care homes due to better knowledge of care home staff. However, few unpaid representatives were willing to attend the training, despite efforts to encourage them.

Project area classification

Hospital care		Emergency care	
GP care		Dementia	x
Social care		Learning disability	
Voluntary sector		Other mental health	
Financial services		Palliative care	

Police		Advance planning, LPAs	
Legal		Commissioning	
Community health care		Training	x
Nursing and care home	x	For professionals?	x
Acute care		For public and service users?	
Chronic care			