

Our Annual Report 2009

Easy read

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Who we are and what we do

The Mental Welfare Commission makes sure that people with learning disabilities and people with mental health problems are properly treated.

The Commission is independent. Some people who work for the Commission have used mental health and learning disability services. Some are carers.

This is a report about the work we have done this year. You can get more information by asking us for our full report. Call freephone 0800 389 6809.

If you have the internet you can look at our website www.mwcscot.org.uk.

Investigations

Our job is to protect people with learning disabilities and people with mental disorder. We investigate cases where people seem to be badly treated. We did 3 big investigations last year. We want people to learn from our investigations, so that the same things do not happen again.



The first investigation

A group of people with a learning disability were living in the same house. We heard that some of the people residents said that they had been hurt and abused by the people who owned and ran their house.

We did a full investigation.

We found that the people who lived in the house had to obey a lot of rules, which is wrong. Some social workers and healthcare workers had been worried about the people in the house but no-one had checked to find out what was going on.

The police are still investigating what happened, but we are happy that social work moved fast to put things right.



Ms L's story

Ms L is a young woman with a severe learning disability and severe behaviour problems. She was in a care home. We heard that she had problems and had been bitten by another resident. We were worried about the place she lived in, so we decided to investigate. We found that Ms L was often held down to stop her from doing things. The times she was held down were written in her file, but no-one had tried to find a different way of managing Ms L. Although there are only a few people like Ms L in Scotland we think the Scottish Government should have a plan to make sure they are properly looked after.

Q's story

Mr Q is a young man with Aspergers Syndrome. Aspergers Syndrome is a kind of autism. He lives with his parents. He went into hospital because he had mental health problems and was kept there for four years.

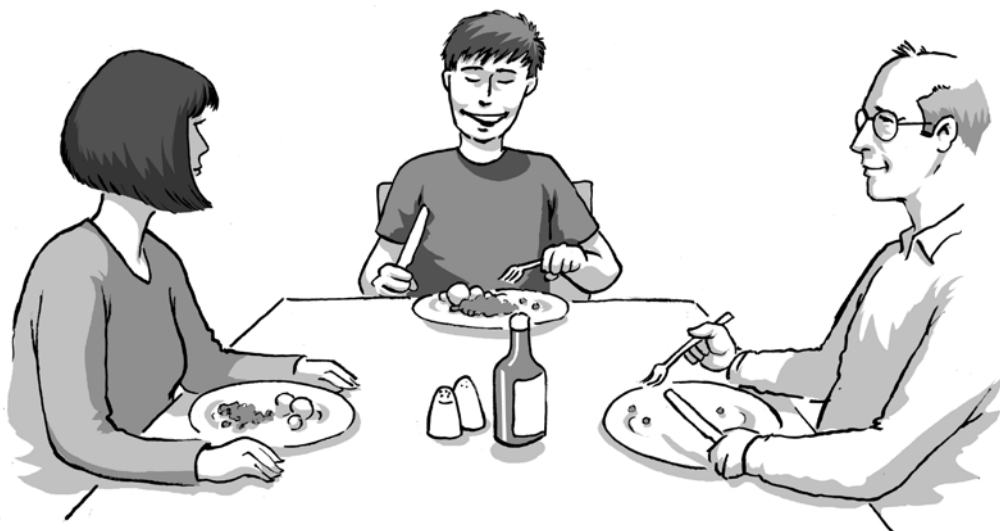
People with Aspergers Syndrome can find it hard to cope with people. They get upset by being in a strange place. Mr Q could get violent when he was upset.

Mr Q's mum was very worried about the way he was treated in hospital and got in touch with us. She thought the hospital ward he was in was the wrong place for her son. She was not happy that he had to spend a lot of time on his own in his room and wasn't getting the help he needed. She was worried that no plans were being made for his future.

All the time Mr Q was in hospital we were asking questions, but things did not change. The staff at the hospital did not listen to people like Mr Q's mum, who knew him well. We decided to do an investigation.

We found that people who work in mental health services sometimes don't know how to look after people with Aspergers Syndrome. We have made a list of things that could be done to make things better for people with Aspergers Syndrome.

Mr Q is now living back at home with his parents.



Information and advice

Information

We give information about your rights. Our information is

- Independent – we are not part of any other organisation
- Confidential – what you tell us will stay private
- Free – you do not have to pay for any of our services

Advice

We work hard to make sure we give good advice to anyone who gets in touch.

Some of our advice is given by phone. You can call us for advice and information about your rights.

Some of our information is in our leaflets. You can phone us to ask for these. If you have the internet you can find information at our website www.mwcscot.org.uk

A call from Mary's mum

Mary is fifteen and has autism. She lives at home with her Mum, younger sister and brother. Mary goes to a special school.

Because of her autism, Mary sometimes has trouble managing her behaviour. She can be aggressive. Sometimes she hurts herself.

Mary's Mum called us because Mary had been kept in a police cell overnight.

The people who help care for Mary thought that it was OK for Mary to be taken to a police station if there was another problem. Mary's mum thought this was wrong.

We went to visit Mary, visited her school, spoke to her mum and Mary's psychiatrist. Mary's care plan has changed. Now, if her behaviour is causing a risk she will be taken to hospital.



New booklets

We get asked lots of questions about the same kinds of things. We have written four new booklets because of the questions we get asked.

Advocacy

We get a lot of calls about advocacy. The law says that everyone with a mental illness or a learning disability has a right to an advocate. We know that this does not always happen. We know that staff are not always sure how to involve advocates. We have written a booklet called Working With Independent Advocates. We hope it will help service users, staff and advocates to work together.

Care plans

We also get asked about care plans. People should have a proper care plan. People should have a say in their care and treatment. We have written another booklet called Mental Health Act Care Plans.

Money matters

It is important that people get the help they need to manage their money. Staff are not always sure how to do this. We have written a booklet called Money Matters to help staff.

Social circumstances reports

Staff need to know about you so that they can give you proper care and treatment. They need to know what you are good at, what might help you get better and what you need help with. If you are being treated under mental health law your social worker should write a report with all this information. This does not always happen. We wrote a booklet for social workers that says why these reports are important and when they should write one.

The Law

Scotland has two laws that affect people with a learning disability or mental illness.

- The Adults with Incapacity Act 2000
- The Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003

It is our job to check on how these laws work. We tell the Scottish Government about this and tell them if changes need to be made.

The law says that we must know what happens to

- Children and young people
- Young people who have welfare guardians
- People who have a mental illness who need to be kept in hospital

We get sent lots of paper work about people. We look at it to check that people are getting the right care and treatment.

Good things we found out this year

- A lot of people have an advocate
- People are getting better healthcare

Things we think that need to improve

- Not many people have a good care plan
- People who have been in hospital a long time do not have a big say in their care and treatment.

Joe's story

Joe is a young man who had to go into hospital because he had a mental illness. When he went into hospital we were sent a form that said Joe would be searched and he would only be allowed a few visitors. His visitors were also told that they might be searched when they came to visit Joe.

We did not think this needed to happen to Joe or his visitors.

We told the hospital what we thought and they changed things for Joe. They also changed the information they give to visitors.



Visiting People

One of the best ways to check that people are getting the care and treatment they need is to meet them and ask them what they think.

Who we visit

- people who get care or treatment for mental illness
- people with learning disabilities
- people with dementia

We visit people

- in hospital
- in care homes
- in prisons
- in community centres
- at home

This year we visited 1,855 people, all over Scotland.

What we found in our visits this year

Good things

- People expect better treatment
- People get out more often from hospital
- More people have advocates
- People live in care homes and hospitals that are cleaner and nicer than before

Things that need to improve

- People sometimes get locked in their rooms or ward when they do not need to be
- Too many people feel unsafe in hospital
- Sometimes there is not enough for people to do in hospital
- People cannot always get the help they need to stop smoking or deal with drug or alcohol problems
- Lots of people do not like going to big meetings to talk about care plans

A visit to Donald

Donald had been in hospital for five years. We found that he was spending 8 hours a day away from hospital. The hospital staff did not think he should be in hospital. His social worker did not agree. He thought that Donald was safer in hospital. We got the health care staff to talk to the social workers. This helped the social worker understand more about the care Donald needed.

8 weeks later Donald was living in a home of his own.

Because of what happened to Donald we decided to find out if there were other people, who should not be in the hospital. We found that there were, so some of these people have now been able to move out of hospital.



Our Commissioners

Doris Aiten

Prof. John Bain

Shelagh Creegan

Dr Ian Clark

Carol Dobson (until September 2008)

Lynne Edwards

Angela Forbes

Linda Graham

Deirdre Hanlon

George Kappler (until March 2009)

Jan Killeen

Myra Macguire

Catriona Maclean (until March 2009)

Jamie Malcolm (until December 2008)

Dale Meller

Corinna Penrose

Colin Welsh

Get in touch

You can



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