

Date: 22/07/2021

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST FOI/015799 – Vulnerable adults

Using Freedom of Information request rights, I would be grateful if you would provide me with answers to the following questions regarding policies and facilities for vulnerable adults being seen in the Emergency Department (ED):

1. Is there a separate waiting area for vulnerable adults with learning difficulties?

- Currently there is not a separate waiting area for adults with a learning disability, the learning disability team lead nurse and Consultant lead for Safeguarding are working with the facilities team to equip one of the cubicles to provide a quiet consulting room for people with a learning disability. This work is very nearly completed, the main works have been undertaken however there are still some decorating works to complete. There is a relative's room in the emergency department which is used as a waiting room as necessary for any patients with vulnerability who need a quiet space.

2. Are responsible adults allowed to accompany vulnerable adults with learning difficulties when they are seen by clinical staff in ED?

- Responsible adults accompanying people with learning disabilities into the emergency department has been made very difficult in the Covid pandemic, due to the risk to those adults from exposure to the Covid virus and to the uncertainty of the Covid status of any accompanying responsible adult. This would need to be discussed with the clinical team in ED with the risks and benefits carefully weighed up.

3. Are carers welcome to provide care if needed?

- Carers providing care should be discussed with the clinical team and agreements reached. Any support from carers is welcomed as it will support the person with a learning disability to be calmer in an unfamiliar environment.

The patient is the responsibility of the clinical team looking after them, and as such the care should be directed by them, for example if a patient needs to be nil by mouth, or needs to lie flat in bed. If a patient is so unwell that they need to come into hospital often their care needs change quite quickly. The main support from a familiar carer would be a psychological support, to reassure and explain information to the patient in the most appropriate way for them to understand.

4. Does your Trust have policies in place to assess capacity to consent to investigations and treatment for adults with learning disabilities? If so, could you supply me with a copy of these policies?

- Yes there are policies to support the assessment of a patient's capacity to consent to treatment, please see attached

5. Do you have policies relating to the administration of treatment/pain relief when an adult with learning disability is unable to consent? If so, please could I request a copy of these policies?

- Yes there are policies relating to all patients who lack capacity to consent to treatment and or pain relief, please see attached