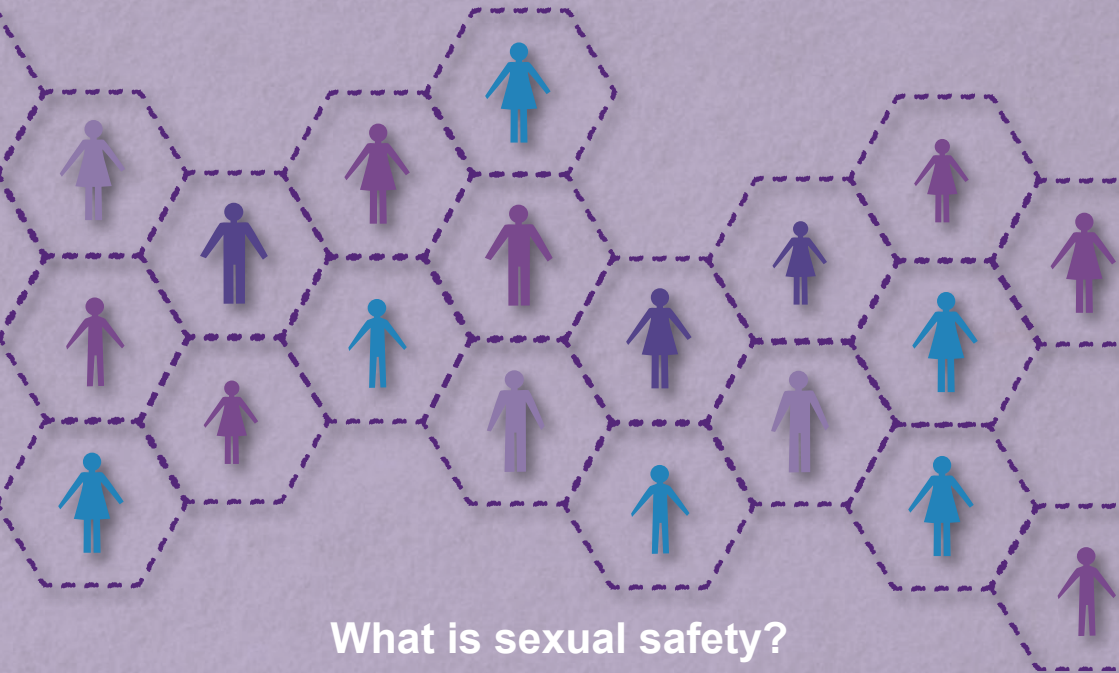


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# Your Rights to Sexual Safety Whilst an Inpatient

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Everyone has a right to feel safe emotionally, physically and sexually. This leaflet outlines your rights in regards to sexual safety whilst you are an inpatient.



## What is sexual safety?

Sexual safety – When your physical, sexual and psychological boundaries are maintained and respected. It is important to remember that everyone has different physical and psychological sexual boundaries, dependant on a number of reasons including; past experience, culture and their current situation. It can be very hard to identify where these boundaries lie, particularly if an individual is experiencing acute distress at the time. Boundaries are limits that you have which identify reasonable safe behaviour.

# What are my sexual safety rights?

## Key Principles:

- ▶ Nottinghamshire Healthcare will provide an environment which is as safe as possible and designed to support your sexual safety. Everyone has the right to feel sexually safe.
- ▶ You will be offered the opportunity to discuss any previous or present sexual behaviour that you feel is unhealthy to you. Staff will discuss any concerns regarding your relationships with you.
- ▶ We will ensure staff care for you with dignity in a safe and respectful way.
- ▶ We will treat any disclosures about sexual harm that you make with respect and at all times we will seek to give you control over how the situation is responded to. There may be times when we have to share information provided due to risk. This will be discussed with you.
- ▶ You will be informed of your options after experiencing sexual harassment or harm.
- ▶ All sexual safety incidents will be recorded and appropriately investigated.

# What is expected of me?

Patients in acute mental health wards often experience multiple factors that impact on their ability to make informed choices. These include:

- ▶ Impact of any mental health condition they may be experiencing
- ▶ Separation from family and support networks
- ▶ Impact of medication
- ▶ Impact of emotional distress.

Ward staff are available to discuss sexual relationships with all patients and will do so in a supportive, non-judgemental manner with the aim of supporting you to make decisions considering the impact on yourself and your partner. Whilst on the ward please speak to a member of staff if you would like any support regarding your sexual health and wellbeing. It is not appropriate to engage in sexual activity in a public place. This includes hospital premises.

## How are sexual boundaries broken?

We want to keep our wards as safe as possible for patients, visitors and our staff. The following list is a range of behaviours that could break a person's sexual boundaries. Staff will discuss with you if any of the following behaviours are witnessed or reported to them:

- ▶ Making comments of a sexual or demeaning nature that could cause upset or distress
- ▶ Being asked inappropriate questions about sex or sexual orientation
- ▶ Asking for or accepting an offer of sex
- ▶ Unnecessary exposure of a person's body
- ▶ Any sexual act without all parties giving their permission
- ▶ Taking photographs that are not consented to
- ▶ Watching someone undress
- ▶ Touching someone without their permission
- ▶ The exchange of drugs, money, cigarettes or services for sex or sexual acts
- ▶ Watching or being encouraged to watch/view internet content that could cause distress.

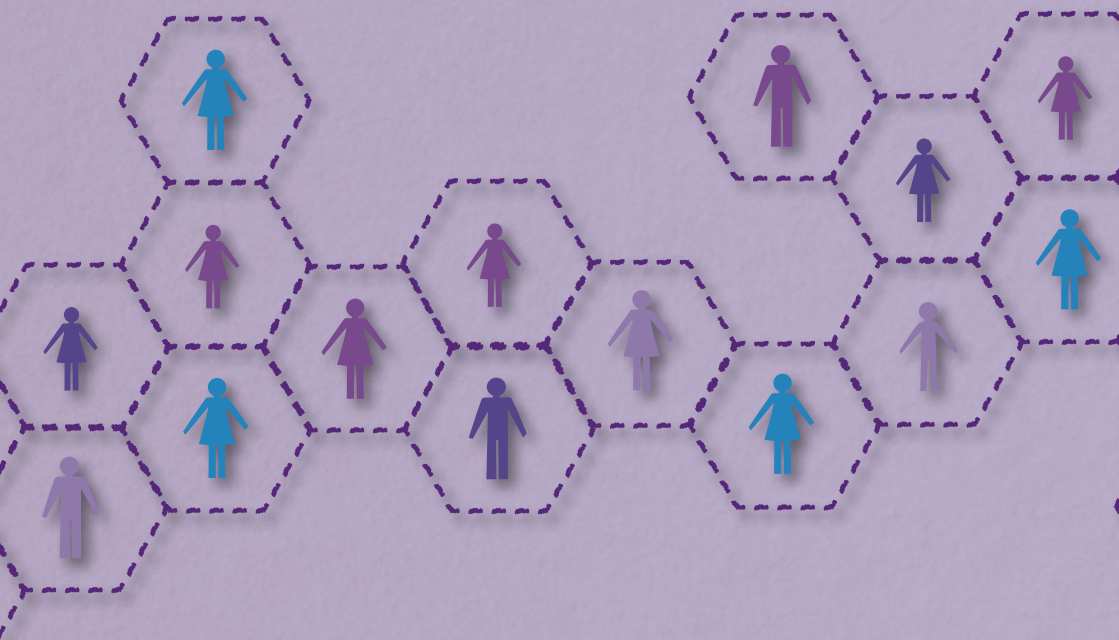
## Tips on staying safe:

These are general tips on ways to stay safe inside and outside the ward. Areas outside the ward are open to the public so consider precautions you would normally use when going out. For example:

- ▶ Not going out alone at night
- ▶ Inform a member of staff before you leave the ward
- ▶ Be aware of how you would seek help if required
- ▶ If you have a mobile phone and use it when leaving the ward, make sure it is fully charged
- ▶ Keep your personal information safe. Do not share any personal information on social media including your address, or phone number
- ▶ Whilst on the ward you may still have access to the internet, think about how the information you share could be used if it was accessed by someone with bad intentions
- ▶ Discuss any worries you have about safety with a trusted staff member.

If you have any concerns regarding your experience on the ward, please tell us or you can tell the Patient Advice & Liaison Service, PALS:

Email: [complaints@nottshc.nhs.uk](mailto:complaints@nottshc.nhs.uk)  
Freephone/Minicom: 0800 015 3367



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