



Berkshire Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust



Mental Health Act 2018

Use of Force (Seni's law)

Information for parents and carers

Summary

The Mental Health Use of Force Act 2018 affects all hospitals that have mental health inpatients.

- This Act is sometimes known as **'Seni's Law'** and was passed after the sad death of a mental health patient who was restrained by police whilst in hospital
- Force was and still is allowed in mental health hospitals
- In practice this means use of: **control and restraint, seclusion and rapid tranquilisation using medication**
- The aim of this Act is to reduce such practices to a minimum and ensure that their use is monitored and recorded at all times

What is meant by **'Force'**?

Many patients in hospital have consented to admission because of their mental health difficulties. Others are in hospital under a section of the Mental Health Act, which means that they have not consented.

Sometimes patients in either of these groups, due to their mental health condition, become disturbed and may be a risk to themselves or to other patients and staff.

In these situations it may become necessary to use methods of management such as:

- **Control and restraint** whereby highly trained staff use minimal hands on restraint to prevent a patient being a risk to themselves or others
- **Seclusion** whereby a patient is placed in a room away from other patients for a short period of time to prevent risk to others
- **Rapid tranquilisation** whereby fast acting medication is given to the patient in order to have a calming effect and reduce risk

What does the Use of Force Act require from **mental health hospitals**?

The overall purpose of the Act is to reduce any use of force in inpatient mental health services. Berkshire Healthcare is committed to working in the spirit of the Act in order to minimise the use of force through the promotion of positive cultures, relationships and approaches which will prevent escalation and any need to use force.

We recognise the potentially traumatising impact the use of force can have and the human rights implications of such interventions. However, we also recognise that this has to be balanced against our duty to protect patients from themselves and provide a safe environment for other patients and our staff.

In order to comply with the Act we have:

- Appointed a **Responsible Person** under the Act, **Tolu Olusoga**, our Medical Director
- Provided information for patients about our practices
- Provided training for our staff
- Made arrangements so that each use of force that falls within the Act is recorded
- Made arrangements for the investigation of deaths and serious incidents
- Continue to provide support to people who are involved in the use of force



You can find out more about the Mental Health Use of Force Act by talking to a member of our staff on the ward.

Concerns, questions and complaints

Please tell a member of staff if you have concerns. We want everyone to get the right care and support and will listen to what you say. For more information or if you have any concerns contact:

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS):

Tel: 0118 904 3467 **Email: PALS@berkshire.nhs.uk**

Or the Complaints Office:

Tel: 0118 904 3420 **Email: complaints@berkshire.nhs.uk**

Useful to know

Mind - Promotes the views and needs of people with mental health problems.

Call: 0300 123 3393 (weekdays, 9am - 6pm)

Rethink - Support and advice for people living with mental illness.

Call: 0300 5000 927 (weekdays, 9.30am - 4pm)

SANE - Emotional support, information and guidance for people affected by mental illness, their families and carers.

Call SANEline: 0300 304 7000 (daily, 4.30pm - 10.30pm)

Textcare: comfort and care via text message, sent when the person needs it most:

www.sane.org.uk/textcare

Samaritans: 116 123

NHS non emergency line: 111

In an emergency always call 999

