

**SEX AND THE
VULNERABLE:
WHAT
YOU NEED TO
KNOW**



Northern
Ireland
Office

FOUR FACTS YOU NEED TO REMEMBER:

The law says –

1. If someone has a mental disorder which prevents them from making an informed choice about whether or not to have sex, you will be guilty of an offence if you have any form of sexual activity with them.

Maximum sentence – life

2. If you offer any inducement, make threats or practise deception in order to obtain the consent of a person with a mental disorder to have sex with you, you will be guilty of an offence if you have any form of sexual activity with them, despite any consent given.

Maximum sentence – life

3. If you are a care worker for someone with a mental disorder, you will be guilty of an offence if you have any form of sexual activity with that person, even if they consent.

Maximum sentence – 14 years

4. If you have sex with someone whose physical disability means that they cannot communicate their agreement to have sex, it will be presumed by a jury that consent was not present unless you can prove otherwise.

For more details about the law see the leaflet 'Working within the Sexual Offences Order' available on www.nio.gov.uk/sexualoffences