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**Abstract: Making Diversity Interventions Count, 16 June 2015,
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Sexuality, Intimacy and Older Care Home Residents

Over half a million people aged 65+ live in care homes (ONS 2011). Yet, sex, sexuality and intimacy and old people remain overlooked in social policy and professional practice (Hafford-Letchfield 2008). We explore narratives from a feasibility study based in Northwest England that consulted on the significance of researching sexuality and intimacy. We draw on narratives generated with two focus groups of professional carers (n = 16) and interviews with three residents, (two male and one female) and four female spouses (n = 7). All three types of stakeholders expressed concern about privacy and environmental impediments to intimacy (e.g. shortage of double rooms). However, distinct concerns were expressed by each group. Residents' expressed scepticism that the topic was 'too personal', that old people were post-sexual or that sex/intimacy were part of range of needs and could be eclipsed by those relating to grand-parenting, avoiding isolation and personalization of care. Spouses emphasized the importance of intimacy over sex/sexuality as an indicator of the depth and longevity of a relationship but were concerned about unmet needs and loss of influence over their partners' care. Obligated to meet a complex of legal, professional, ethical and interpersonal obligations, care staff articulated a need for guidance to help them support residents and their significant others. We conclude with practical recommendations that address barriers to enabling intimacy.