

PRESS RELEASE

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86 Learning Disability Organisations Demand Action from the Prime Minister in Response to Private Sector Hospital Abuse

Eighty six leading individuals and organisations in the learning disability field, from across the UK, have written to the Prime Minister calling for a programme of action in response to the abuse of people with learning disabilities, in a private hospital in Bristol, that was identified by Panorama.

A letter has been sent to the Prime Minister and describes a programme of action that the signatories believe is necessary to prevent a repetition of such abuse and to help ensure that people with learning disabilities are supported to live lives as equal citizens in our communities.

The letter describes fifteen sets of actions that together aim to:

- Stop the use of learning disability hospitals such as that at Winterbourne View
- Instigate a two year programme to ensure that the NHS and local government work together to ensure they deliver high quality, individualized and local services for people with the greatest needs
- Place the voice of people with learning disabilities and families at the centre of decision making about their lives
- Reform the regulatory framework in order to place a greater emphasis on quality of life and service improvement
- Immediate support for those people and their families who have been subjected to this abuse
- Short-term action to ensure standards in learning disability institutional provision pending its replacement with more appropriate services

The full letter can be seen at: <http://www.thecbf.org.uk/campaigns/latestnews.htm> and is attached to this press release.

Gavin Harding, Co-chair of the National Forum of People with Learning Disabilities said that “People with learning disabilities and families should be listened to more and involved in inspections”.

Cally Ward on behalf of the National Valuing Families Forum “This unprecedented level of unanimity across the learning disability field shows the level of horror felt by people across the UK. Publicly funded services that allow this type of abuse must clearly be brought to an end”.

Keith Smith, Chief Executive of the British Institute for Learning Disabilities said “There is clear evidence that services such as that at Winterbourne View do not work in terms of either outcomes for people or value for money. Policy already calls for

individualised, local services for people with the greatest needs and our programme of action urges Government to ensure that this policy is delivered across England¹.

David Congdon, Head of Campaigns at Mencap said “Many of the actions we propose are already Government policy – policy that simply is not being implemented at a local level. Other ideas are logical steps forward in the light of the Panorama programme – such as preventing future placements in learning disability hospitals and in the interim requiring everyone in such institutions to have access to an independent advocate”.

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For further information please contact one of:

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Or

Viv Cooper, Challenging Behaviour Foundation on 01634 838739

Or

Alison Giraud Saunders, Co-Director Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities on 020 7803 1110 / 07500 334 165 (FPLD press office)

¹ Learning disability policy is a devolved policy across the UK. The letter to the Prime Minister has been signed by people from all four countries of the UK and has been copied to Ministers in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.