

## ***“This must never happen again”*: Mencap and The Challenging Behaviour Foundation respond to the Winterbourne View sentencing**

The jail sentences given today send the clear message that the abuse of vulnerable people with a learning disability will not be tolerated, and those individuals responsible have rightly been held to account in a criminal court.

This must never happen again. Yet it is clear that the system is failing people with a learning disability, who are being sent away to institutions often hundreds of miles from home, where they remain for years, at increased risk of abuse and neglect.

Mencap and The Challenging Behaviour Foundation are calling on the Government to drive through the closure of these institutions, and commit to developing local services so people with learning disabilities can live near their families in their local communities.

ENDS

### **Notes to editors**

For further information, please contact Pasca Lane at Mencap on 020 7696 6017 or email [pasca.lane@mencap.org.uk](mailto:pasca.lane@mencap.org.uk).

*Out of sight*, the report by Mencap and The Challenging Behaviour Foundation, can be found here <http://www.mencap.org.uk/outofsight>

- **About Mencap**

There are 1.5 million people with a learning disability in the UK. Mencap works to support people with a learning disability and their families and carers by fighting to change laws and improve services and access to education, employment and leisure facilities. Mencap supports thousands of people with a learning disability to live their lives the way they want.

We are also one of the largest providers of services, information and advice for people with a learning disability across England, Northern Ireland and Wales. People with a learning disability and their carers can find out more about our services by calling Mencap Direct on 0300 333 111 or by visiting [www.mencap.org.uk](http://www.mencap.org.uk)

- **What is a learning disability?**

A learning disability is a reduced intellectual ability and difficulty with everyday activities – for example household tasks, socialising or managing money – which affects someone for their whole life.

People with a learning disability tend to take longer to learn and may need support to develop new skills, understand complex information and interact with other people.

The level of support someone needs depends on individual factors, including the severity of their learning disability.

### **The Challenging Behaviour Foundation**

Behaviour can be described as challenging when it is of such an intensity, frequency or duration as to threaten the quality of life and/or the physical safety of the individual or others and it is likely to lead to responses that are restrictive, aversive or result in exclusion.

The Challenging Behaviour Foundation provides information, support and training around challenging behaviour associated with severe learning disabilities, and leads the 'Challenging Behaviour National Strategy Group' which seeks to influence policy and practice nationally on behalf of individuals who challenge and their families.

'Severe learning disability' is a developmental disability meaning the individual has a significantly reduced ability to learn new skills. Individuals with severe learning disabilities typically have very limited communication skills, often non verbal, and need help with daily living skills such as eating and dressing. Challenging behaviour shown by individuals with severe learning disabilities may include aggression, self injury, disruptive and destructive behaviours, stereotyped behaviour, and is most often due to their lack of ability to communicate their needs.

The Challenging Behaviour Foundation was founded in 1997 by Vivien Cooper, parent of a son with severe learning disabilities and behaviour described as challenging. Today the Challenging Behaviour Foundation is in regular contact with over 4500 families and professionals across the UK. There are an estimated 30,000 individuals in England with severe learning disabilities and behaviour described as challenging.

For more information visit [www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk](http://www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk) or contact:  
The Challenging Behaviour Foundation

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