






Time For Action



**Stopping the abuse
of people with
learning disabilities**

Index

	Page
 Introduction	3
 Commissioning	4
 Supporting staff	6
 Visitors and advocates	7
 Checking services	8
 Good care companies	10
 Human rights	11

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Introduction



Some people with learning disabilities are treated very badly. There was an example of this recently on the TV programme “Panorama”.

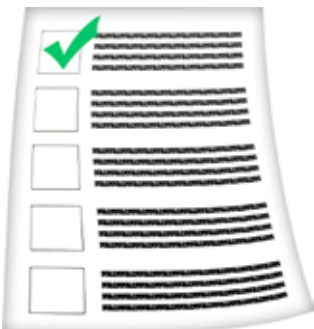
Panorama showed people with learning disabilities being **abused** by staff. It happened at a care home called Winterbourne View.



People with learning disabilities are more likely to be treated badly if they show challenging behaviour.

Challenging behaviour is things like hitting your head against a wall, pulling curtains down, or pulling someone’s hair. People might do this because:

- they cannot communicate with words
- they have little or no choice and control over the things that happen to them



There are lots of reports and guidance written about challenging behaviour already. Instead, this is a list of actions, because things must change.

An **action** is a job to do. Each action will make support and services better. Then life for people who show challenging behaviour will be **better** and **safer**.

1. Commissioning



Local authorities spend money on **support services**. This is called **commissioning**.

Local authority means your council and health services.



Support services are things like staff who help you at home, day centres and residential homes.

There are two main problems at the moment:

- There are too many big services and units. It is hard to support each person properly if homes are too big.
- Some people go to live in places away from their original home. This happens when there are no support services nearby. This is known as an **out of area** placement.

Actions for local authorities:



- ▶ **Stop** sending people to live in hospitals for people with learning disabilities.



- ▶ **Plan** services better. Find ways to use money from **social care** and **health** to set up good local support services. Work out how much they will cost in the future.

1. Commissioning... part 2



- ▶ **Work out** how much **money** is spent on care services for people with learning disabilities.
- ▶ **Find out** which services are **good** for people who show challenging behaviour. Work out why they are good. Find out which services are **not good**.



- ▶ **Find out** how many people show challenging behaviour. How many:
 - Young people
 - People paid for by other authorities
 - People living at home and not getting services
 - People who live out of their local authority area



- ▶ **Make sure** there are teams of specially trained staff who can help people with challenging behaviour in their homes, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.



- ▶ **Help families** use Individual Budgets to buy good, local care services.
- ▶ **Count** how many people are looked after by other local authorities.

2. Supporting staff

Supporting people with challenging behaviour can be very difficult.

Support staff often do not get paid very much and do not always get good training.



- ▶ **Make sure** managers are trained. They should have to do Positive Behaviour Support training. This will help them to **understand** why people show challenging behaviour.



- ▶ **Give staff** good training too. This will help them to respect people with challenging behaviour and treat them kindly. Training should cover:

- Positive behaviour support
- Communication
- Involving people in activities
- The laws about protecting people and making decisions.



- ▶ **Make sure** all staff know how to support people who show challenging behaviour. Guidance has been written to help with this.

3. Visitors and advocates

People are less likely to be hurt if the place where they live welcomes families, friends and advocates



► Use advocates.

If people live in:

- An assessment unit
- A hospital
- A home away from their local authority

...then they should have an **advocate**.

An **advocate** is a well trained person who can check to see if a person is okay, and sort out any problems they are having.

► **Advocacy** could be run and paid for by the Care Quality Commission.



► **Find out** how many visitors people have. The Care Quality Commission should check this.

4. Checking services

The Care Quality Commission finds out whether services are being run properly. They do this by sending inspectors into care homes and hospitals.

The way this is done now is not good enough. Things must change.



- ▶ **Train inspectors** so that they know what to look for in learning disability services.

Inspectors are people who visit care homes and hospitals to see how good they are.

They stay for a few hours and:

- Look around
- Talk to people
- Check things like rules and care plans



- ▶ **Involve** people with learning disabilities and family carers as part of inspection teams.



- ▶ **Watch people** for a while if they cannot talk to their inspectors. By looking at people and their staff together, inspectors can learn about how well people are supported.

4. Checking services... part 2



- ▶ **Ask people** with learning disabilities and their families what they think of the support that they get.



- ▶ **Don't register** big care homes and hospitals, or places where visitors are not allowed in.



- ▶ **Find out** more about people's lives. Inspectors should look at whether people are doing the things they want to do.



- ▶ **Make it easy** to find the reports that inspectors write. They should all be on the Care Quality Commission's **website**.

5. Good Care Companies

Good care companies make sure they support people well.

Good support staff give people **freedom** to do the things that they want to do.

This means **not** doing things to hurt people or make them feel bad like:

- holding a person by force on the floor
- locking a person in a room
- using medicine to keep a person quiet
- not letting friends and family visit

Ways to make care companies better;



- ▶ **Make sure** that the people who **run** care companies have the right skills and experience.



- ▶ **Make information** about companies easy to find. Information about:
 - Their money
 - The people who are in charge



- ▶ **Ask care companies** what their support staff are doing to give people more **freedom**.

6. Human rights

Laws about human rights are to protect everyone.

Human rights are things like:

- Respect
- Freedom
- Equality
- Dignity
- Fairness



The people who were filmed by Panorama had their human rights taken away. This was very wrong.

People who are labelled as challenging are:

- less able to speak up
- less likely to know what their rights are
- more likely to be ignored if they say that something is wrong



▶ **These organisations** must do as much as they can to help keep people safe and well supported:

- Local authorities
- NHS (health services)
- Private care companies
- Police



▶ **Local authorities** must follow the rules in the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

What next?

Things you can do to help.

1. Write to your MP. Tell them about these actions and ask for their support.



Find your MP

Website: www.parliament.uk

Phone: 020 7219 4272 (House of Commons Information Office).

2. Sign our charter about the rights of people who show challenging behaviour.



See www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk for more details.

3. Contact your local Learning Disability Partnership Board.



Ask them what they are doing to protect the human rights for people who show challenging behaviour.

Find your local board:
www.valuingpeople.dh.gov.uk

4. Join your local People First or Speaking Up group to see what they are doing to help.



Use **Google** to find your nearest group. Most groups have their own websites.

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