

Healthcare for all



The report of
**the independent inquiry into
access to healthcare for
people with learning disabilities**
Sir Jonathan Michael

We have tried to write this easy read report without using any hard words, but there are a few words which some people might not understand.

We have printed these in blue.

You will find an explanation of these words in the blue box at the bottom of the page.



Healthcare for all

This is a report about the quality of healthcare for people with learning disabilities.

We know that people with learning disabilities are more likely to have a health problem than other people.



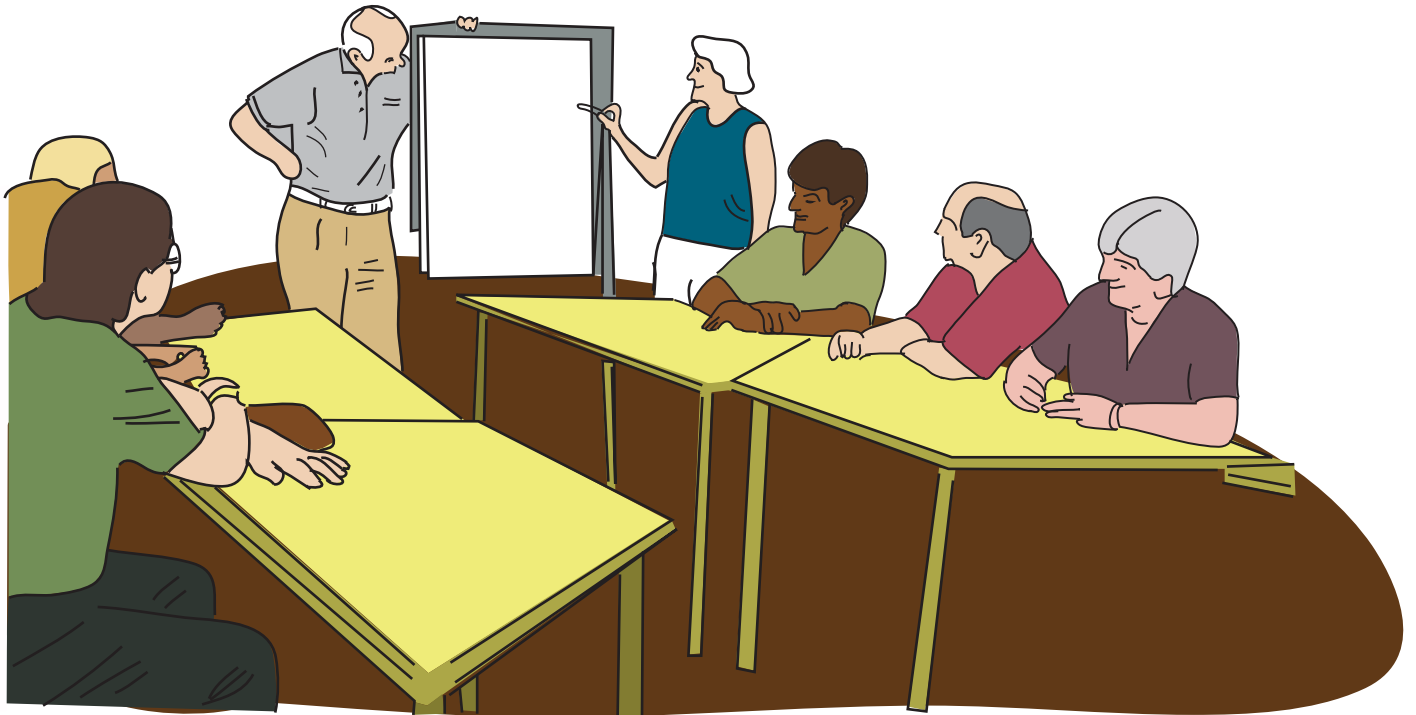
We also know that people with learning disabilities usually live shorter lives than other people.

Some people thought that the reason that people with learning disabilities have worse health than other people is because the **NHS** gives them a worse service.

NHS: The National Health Service provides most of the Health Services in this country.

What did we do?

We set up an **Inquiry** to look into the problem.



We set up 2 teams of expert people – one team of experts who work in the Health Service, and the other team was expert people who have learning disabilities.

A list of the people on both teams is on page 16.

Inquiry: is a committee of people that looks into something and writes a report.

We asked people to send us information.

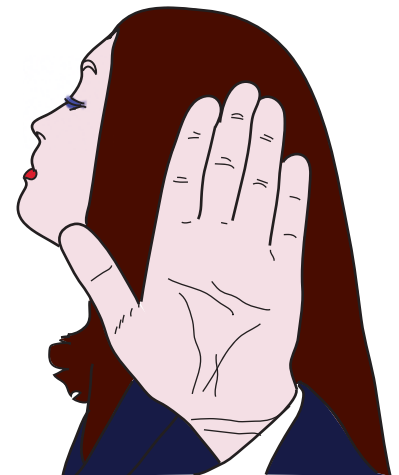
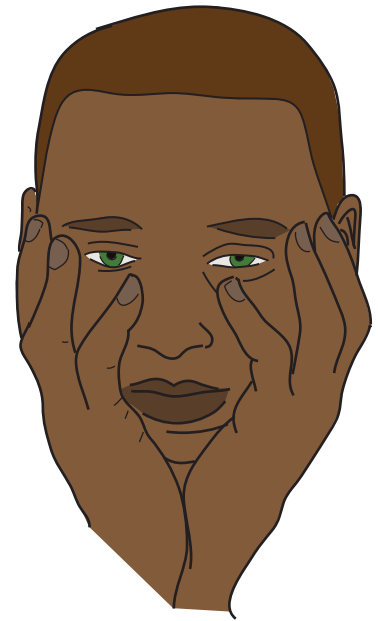
We received a lot of information from professionals, from people with learning disabilities, from family carers, and from other organisations.

We held meetings with organisations that work with people with learning disabilities, and meetings with family carers.



What did the Inquiry find out?

1. People with learning disabilities generally have worse health than everyone else.
2. They find it harder to get treatment for health problems that are nothing to do with their disability.
3. Health services often do not adjust the way they do things to make it easier for people who find it hard to **communicate** or understand.

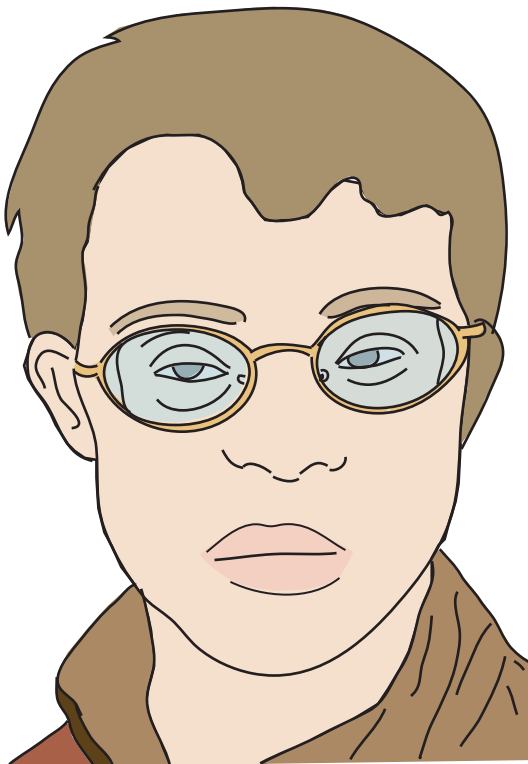


Communicate: talking, listening, writing, reading.

The Law says that services should make changes if a disabled person needs it. The Inquiry thought that Health Services were not making enough changes for people with learning disabilities.



4. Parents and carers of people with learning disabilities often struggle to make themselves heard, even though they have the best information about the people they support.



“I would like my supporter to be able to come with me to the doctor”

a person with learning disabilities.

5. Staff who work in general health centres often don't know enough about disability.

6. The different parts of the health service often don't communicate with each other very well.



“ Her GP had not seen her for nearly 20 years though he **prescribed** regularly. Eventually we discovered she had a **gastric ulcer**”.

Learning Disability Nurse

Prescribed: giving medicines, tablets or other treatments.

Gastric Ulcer: a serious stomach problem.

The Inquiry also says:-

1. No one is keeping information about how people with learning disabilities are cared for by the Health Services.



2. People who work in healthcare services don't know enough about the health needs of people with learning disabilities.



3. The health needs of people with learning disabilities are not a high enough **priority** for the NHS.

Priority: This is the most important thing and should be done first.

4. People are not checking that health services keep to the law around **disability discrimination** and **mental capacity**.



“The doctor wouldn’t look at me, just talked to my carer.”

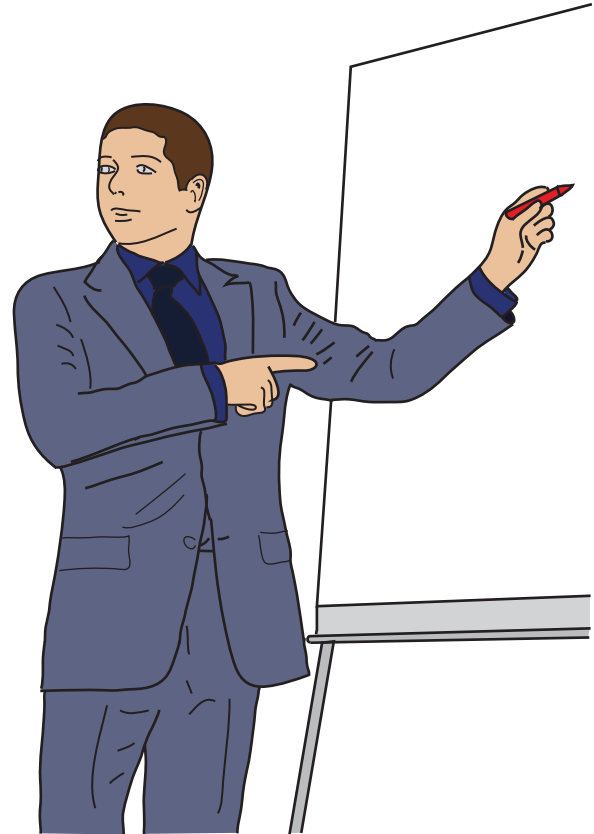
a person with a learning disability.

5. The people who inspect general health services do not look at the services provided to people with learning disabilities.

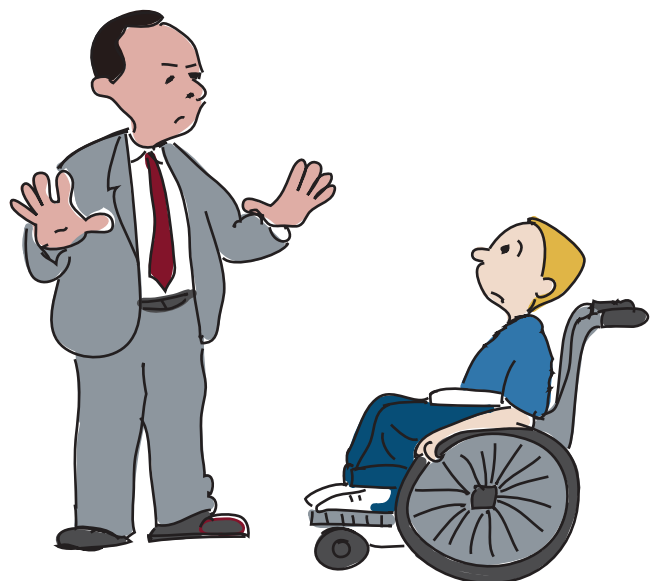
Disability discrimination: This is where people are treated badly just because they are disabled. The law says that people should not be treated differently if they are disabled.

Mental capacity: This is a law that says what should happen if people find it hard to understand some things.

6. There is too little training for NHS staff about learning disability.



7. Because there is little training - some NHS staff have **negative attitudes** towards people with learning difficulties, and fail to treat people with dignity or respect.



Negative attitudes: This is where people think badly about something.

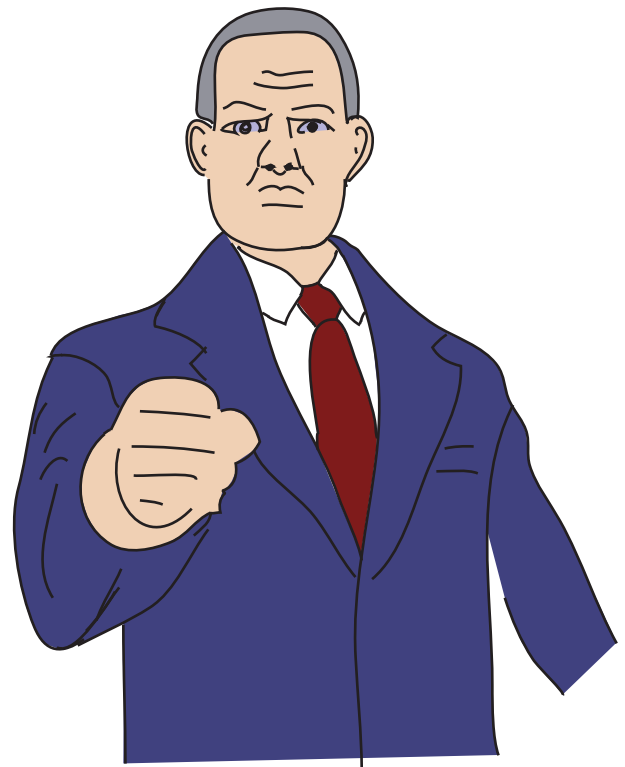
The Inquiry thinks that.....

1. Much stronger action is required at all levels to deliver equal access to general healthcare services in the NHS for people with a learning disability.



2. The **Department of Health** should tell all local Health Services to make sure that:-

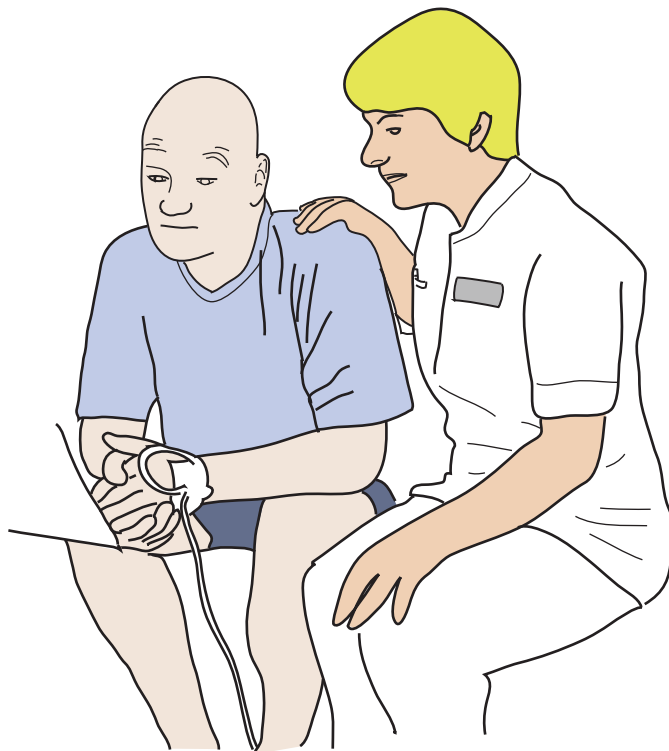
- a. There is a **Directed Enhanced Service** for people with learning disabilities.



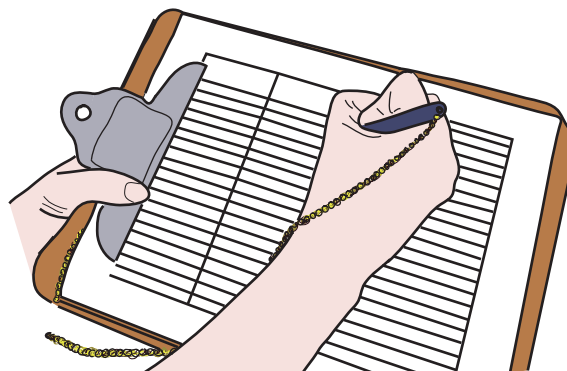
The Department of Health: This is the part of the government that pays for all the health services.

Directed Enhanced Service: is a better service for people with learning disabilities.

b. All services including foundation trusts make reasonable changes so that people with learning disabilities get the same healthcare as everyone else - like better communication.



c. Local health trusts should collect information about how services provide healthcare to people with learning disabilities.



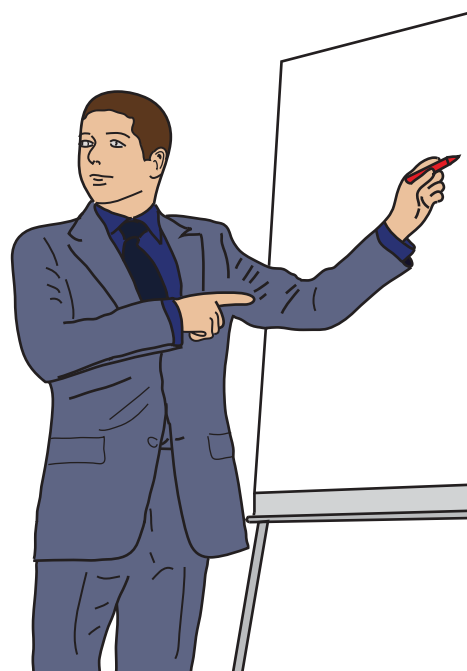
3. The Department of Health should change its standards and rules for healthcare to say that the services should adjust the way they do things to make it easier for people who find it hard to communicate, or hard to understand.



4. The Department of Health should let all healthcare staff know about the risk that people with learning disabilities could die if they don't get the right care.



5. The people training doctors and nurses should make sure that all new staff learn about the issues for people with learning disabilities as part of their training.



6. People who inspect health services should work better together and they should especially look at how services provide healthcare for people with learning disabilities.



7. All Trust Boards should show that they collect information about the care services for people with learning disabilities.



“I work with a client with learning disabilities who has a **cataract** and **challenging behaviour**.”

The GP refuses to treat on the basis that ‘ He can see out of the other eye’”

Learning Disability Nurse

Cataract: This is a problem in the eye that makes it hard to see - or blind.

Challenging behaviour: This is where someone is behaving badly a lot of the time - for some reason.

8. All Trusts should make sure that the views and interests of people with learning disabilities and their carers are included in planning.



9. Family Carers need to be involved as partners in the provision of care and be given enough information.



10. Local Health Trusts should consult with Learning Disability Partnership Boards and user-led learning disability organisations.



If our report is accepted.....

in future people with learning disabilities should expect:-

1. A health check every year,
2. Support if they need to go to hospital,
3. Help to communicate,
4. Better information.



The people on the inquiry teams were:-

Sir Jonathan Michael (chair)

Chris Davies CBE

Sir Len Fenwick CBE

Professor Sheila Hollins

Professor Jim Mansell

Professor John Moxham

Ms Ann Norman

Ms Joan Saddler OBE

Mr Paul Adeline

Ms Michelle Chinery

Ms Jackie Downer MBE

Ms Karen Flood

Mr Fahad Matabdin

Mr Michael Ratcliffe

Easy read pictures and design

by Martin Dobson at Easy-Web-Page



making the internet easy for people with learning difficulties

Sir Jonathan would like to thank everyone who helped with this inquiry

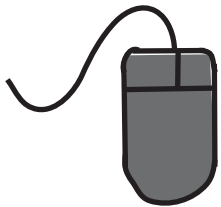
If you have a problem with the care you receive from the NHS please speak to the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) at your local hospital.

or



Contact the Mencap Learning Disability Helpline on
0808 808 1111

email: help@mencap.org.uk



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