

Our ref: RG/PAW
Date: 17th April 2008



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This is an easy read version of a letter to Lord Darzi
about his review of the NHS

Dear Lord Darzi,

All National Directors were asked to arrange a breakfast meeting to get people to think and talk about what could be better in the NHS.



The National Director: Learning Disabilities held a meeting on 15 April.

This letter is about what was said at that meeting. People that came to the meeting included; people with learning disabilities, family carers, NHS people and voluntary groups.

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The Groups main message:



The group felt that the review process had not included people with learning disabilities properly. People at the meeting said that they had tried to get involved but had not been included.

There have recently been 4 big reports about healthcare for people with learning disabilities. The reports have all said that the NHS needs to do better and that people with learning disabilities do not always receive good healthcare treatment and sometimes they are treated very badly.

The group at the breakfast meeting agreed that the Review Team should immediately meet with the Independent Inquiry into Healthcare team to talk about how their recommendations can be included in the NHS review.

The main points the group made:

- People said that they want to see the Department of Health and the NHS stop talking and take action on improving healthcare for people with learning disabilities.



- There should be a performance framework that deals with the health of adults with learning disabilities. At the moment the Department of Health produces good examples for the NHS that people ignore. It doesn't set targets for it to reach.

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- The Department of Health needs to change the way it works on health inequalities. At the moment people with learning disabilities are not a priority for action on health inequalities.
- When the Cornwall abuse report came out David Nicholson wrote to all the SHAs and PCTs saying that they should have the right skills and leadership in learning disability services. Several SHAs and PCTs have ignored the letter. All NHS organisations must make sure that they have the skills that David Nicholson's letter described.



- Every report on healthcare and learning disabilities says that staff training is a problem. There must be better training that includes disability equality.

- The most important thing that the group felt should happen is that the review recommendations should be tested to make sure that they work for the most excluded sections of society – like people with learning disabilities. If you get it right for people with learning disabilities you get it right for other groups too. If the recommendations can't pass this test they shouldn't be used because they won't work.
- The reviews conclusions must be tested by a disability equality assessment and against the provisions of the disability equality duty.

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The people that took part in this meeting hope that these suggestions will help and can be used. They also wanted to say that there is some good work such as the work Ben Dyson is doing on the DH response to the DRC report and the introduction of health checks for people with learning disabilities.

I look forward to hearing from you. We will send your reply to everyone who joined the breakfast meeting.

Yours sincerely,

Rob Greig
National Director: Learning Disabilities

Copies of this letter were also sent to:

*David Nicholson CBE, NHS Chief Executive
David Behan CBE, Director General, Social Care
The people who attended the breakfast meeting
Darzi Review Team*