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Westminster Briefing

'Healthcare for People with Learning Disabilities: Ending Discrimination, Raising Awareness and Delivering Equality of Care'

Westminster Briefing, in partnership with the **House Magazine**, presents a series of events aimed at providing a forum for practitioners, local policymakers and civil servants to debate key issues with leading figures from within Westminster, Whitehall and Local Government.

Date: Thursday, 6th November 2008
Time: 10.40am – 2.00pm
Venue: The Commonwealth Club, Westminster

"I have since recognised that addressing the difficulties faced by people with learning disabilities in accessing general healthcare services does not require specialist knowledge about learning disabilities; the issues they face are relevant to all members of society. What matters is that people with learning disabilities are included as equal citizens, with equal rights of access to equally effective treatment".

- Sir Jonathan Michael, Chair, Independent Inquiry into Access to Healthcare for People with Learning Disabilities, 29th July 2008

"Mencap welcomes the Independent Inquiry report. It proves that people with a learning disability are being discriminated against in the NHS, which is leading to unnecessary pain and death. It is clear that there is a desperate need for mandatory learning disability training for all health care professionals, and for people with a learning disability and their families and carers to be at the centre of all decisions made surrounding their healthcare".

- Dame Jo Williams, Chief Executive, Mencap, 29th July 2008

Delivering quality care for the most vulnerable is a fundamental measurement of not only the effectiveness of a society's care services but the strength of that society's capacity to ensure equality for all its members. Evidence from the recent [Independent Inquiry into Access to Healthcare for People with Learning Disabilities](#) shows that the quality and equality of care for learning disabled people is lacking and, in some cases, has highlighted disturbing examples of discrimination, abuse and neglect.

Delegates at this *Westminster Briefing* will have the opportunity to consider the report and its implications, share examples of best practice and discuss what more can and should be done to ensure that the quality of healthcare services for people with learning disabilities are fit for purpose. Delegates will consider important issues, including:

- What measures are needed to raise the profile of learning disabled people and their needs amongst health professionals? How can healthcare staff training and the system of inspection be improved to ensure a higher standard of care for people with learning disabilities?
- What more needs to be done to ensure effective compliance with the legislative framework covering disability discrimination and mental capacity? Does such legislation and guidance need further strengthening? What are the implications of the Single Equality Bill on healthcare provision for those people with learning disabilities?
- How can health services be made more accessible for learning disabled people? How can PCTs form more effective partnerships with their local communities and user-led learning disability organisations?
- Are family carers for those with learning disabilities receiving adequate help and support? How can health service professionals better engage with family carers?
- How can negative attitudes and values towards people with learning disabilities be overcome? Do learning disabled people from BME communities suffer higher instances of such negative attitudes?

Delegates will be drawn from a wide range of stakeholders. These will include representatives from national, regional, and local health services; councillors and officers from local authorities; members from relevant central government departments & bodies; learning disabled specialists and professionals; learning disabled NGOs and charities; and any stakeholder with an interest in improving the quality of care offered by health services for those people with learning disabilities.

All *Westminster Briefings* take place within close proximity of the Palace of Westminster; morning refreshments will be served upon arrival with a networking lunch to follow proceedings. **Places on our briefings are strictly limited; I advise you, therefore, to book as early as possible to secure your delegate place(s).**