



Health and Social Care Committee
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From Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP

20 September 2021

Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care

Sent by email

Dear Sajid,

The Health and Social Care Committee published its report on *The treatment of autistic people and people with learning disabilities* on 13 July 2021. The Report made urgent recommendations to ensure that autistic people and people with learning disabilities are not denied the right to live independent, free and fulfilled lives in the community.

As you will have seen from the report into the three tragic deaths at Cawston Park, we are still seeing the terrible impact on people with learning disabilities and autistic people of being trapped in inpatient facilities that are inappropriate for them.

During the course of our inquiry, we heard from autism activist Alexis Quinn about her experiences in an inpatient hospital. Alexis told us that "*The model of care is brutal. It is aggressive and not supportive.*" Our report makes a number of recommendations laying out an alternative model of care for autistic people and people with learning disabilities and to reduce the use of damaging restrictive practices in inpatient facilities.

Our Report stipulated a timeline of the end of this year for a number of recommendations, and the Government response to the report as a whole was due on Monday 13 September. I am concerned that the response to our report has not been provided to the Committee, nor has the Committee received any indication that there would be a delay in response.

The Committee recognises the significant pressure on the Government as we move toward the difficult winter period, but given that we are now more than a decade on from the Winterbourne scandal, yet around 2,000 people still live in these facilities, the response to our recommendations has never been more urgent.

I would therefore be grateful if you could ensure that a substantive response to the recommendations laid out in our report, is provided to the Committee as soon as possible, and to confirm in your response when you expect this to be.

Yours sincerely,

Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP
Chair, Health and Social Care Committee



Department of Health & Social Care

*From Gillian Keegan MP
Minister of State for Care and Mental Health*

POC-1365736

The Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP
By email to: hsccom@parliament.uk

20 October 2021

Dear Jeremy,

Thank you for your letter of 20 September to the Secretary of State about the response to the Health and Social Care Committee's report on The Treatment of Autistic People and People with Learning Disabilities. I am responding as the Minister of State for Care and Mental Health.

I welcome the Select Committee's report. Given the seriousness of the issues raised, I want to give full consideration to the recommendations. I agree that the recent publication of the Norfolk Safeguarding Adults Board review into the completely unacceptable and tragic deaths at Cawston Park demonstrates again why we need to continue to work together to drive progress on this critical agenda. It is for this reason that I will be chairing meetings of the cross-Government, cross-system Building the Right Support Delivery Board to drive further progress on the implementation of the Building the Right Support national plan.

The aims of Building the Right Support are to improve quality of care, reduce avoidable admissions, and reduce reliance on specialist inpatient care for people with a learning disability and autistic people by building the right support in the community. To achieve these aims, we are working at pace to publish and implement our Action Plan which will bring together, in one place, the full range of activity and programmes needed to fulfil our commitments including that of the NHS Long-Term Plan that, by March 2024, no more than 30 adults with a learning disability, autism or both will be in a mental health inpatient setting per million adults; and no more than 12-15 children and young people with a learning disability, autism or both will be in a mental health inpatient setting per million children.

As part of our plans to reform the Mental Health Act we will improve the way that people with a learning disability and autistic people are treated in law by limiting the scope to detain without a co-occurring mental health condition. We are clear that when inpatient care is necessary, it should be the highest quality, have clear therapeutic benefit, be close to home and be for the shortest time possible.

Included in the Action Plan is our commitment to invest in community support as part of the NHS Long Term Plan objective to provide an extra £4.5 billion a year for primary care and community health services by 2023/24. This financial year we are providing more than £90 million of additional funding for community support and to facilitate discharge for people with a learning disability and autistic people. This includes £40 million aimed at preventing avoidable admissions and improving community support in 2021/22 through the LTP (£25 million to improve the capacity and capability of 7-day specialist multidisciplinary and crisis support, and £15 million to put in place keyworkers for children and young people with complex needs in inpatient mental health settings, as well as those at risk of being admitted to these settings); £21m to local government through the Community Discharge Grant to accelerate discharges back into the community and £31m for learning disability and autism services through the Mental Health Recovery funding package. As part of the development of the Action Plan, we have considered the recommendations made in a number of reports, including those from the Committee, in identifying what we must deliver on with urgency.

By focusing our efforts on the Action Plan now, we will be in the best possible position to provide the Select Committee with a thorough, formal response, including the full range of work underway, with clear owners and timescales for delivery, once the Action Plan has been readied for publication. This includes for example, work commissioned by the Department of Health and Social Care to examine in detail funding flows and financial (dis)incentives in the system which was a focus of the Committee's report and recommendations. It also includes the work being undertaken to reform the Mental Health Act. Officials would continue to keep Clerks updated as this work develops.

Thank you again for your letter. Whilst it is clear that no one Government department could achieve the aims of Building the Right Support alone, I am confident that, through the cross-Government, cross-system Action Plan, we will realise our ambitions of improving the quality of care and enabling people with a learning disability and autistic people to live well with the right support in their own communities.



GILLIAN KEEGAN