

# Winterbourne View: The Scandal Continues



Challenging  
**BEHAVIOUR**  
foundation



making a difference  
to the lives of people with  
severe learning disabilities





This is a broken promise to the families of people who have faced abuse and everyone who watched Panorama and demanded change. But most of all, it is a betrayal of our loved ones who remain in these units, at risk of abuse and neglect, isolated and away from their families.

**From a letter to Prime Minister David Cameron, written by families.**



# Nobody should be sent to places like Winterbourne View

In 2011 there was a public outcry when the BBC's Panorama programme exposed the horrific abuse of people with a learning disability at Winterbourne View assessment and treatment unit. Six workers were jailed for the ill treatment and neglect of vulnerable people in their care.

This shone a light on a wider scandal- how the NHS and local authorities across England were sending people with a learning disability to similar places, in many cases for years. For over 20 years it has been accepted that people should be able to get the support and services they need in their local area.

The Government responded to the scandal by putting in place an action plan. This was to ensure that people with a learning disability are supported to return to their communities and get the right support and services in their local areas. The NHS and local authorities were given a deadline of **1st June 2014** to make this happen.

## But the situation has got even worse

The deadline is here. But there are still 3,250 people with a learning disability stuck in units<sup>1</sup>. There has been an appalling failure to meet the target set out by the Government.

Not only has there been no progress but recent figures show more people with a learning disability are going into units than are leaving them.

### Recent NHS England research<sup>2</sup> shows that over the last 6 months:

**544** people were **admitted to** units

**339** people came out of units

**90%** of the thousands of people in units have no date set when they will leave<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Learning Disability Census 2013: [www.hscic.gov.uk/catalogue/PUB13149/ld-census-initial-eng-sep13-rep.pdf](http://www.hscic.gov.uk/catalogue/PUB13149/ld-census-initial-eng-sep13-rep.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> NHS England research: [www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/qual-clin-lead/wint-view-impr-prog/](http://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/qual-clin-lead/wint-view-impr-prog/)

<sup>3</sup> Out of the 2,615 people in units which NHS England have identified, 2358 do not have a discharge date (note NHS England are still not managing to account for the full 3,250 identified in the Learning Disability Census, 635 people remain unaccounted for)

# The reality of life in a unit

Thousands of people with a learning disability are trapped in a system where they face the very real possibility of:

- Being **stuck in units months or years** after they should have returned to their local community
- Being **over-medicated**, which can have serious long term side effects
- Facing practices like **regular restraint, long periods of isolation** and even **physical assault**
- There are cases where people with learning disabilities have **died** in units, due to neglect.

**The Learning Disability Census 2013<sup>4</sup> revealed that of the 3,250 people with a learning disability in units:**

**64%** had been **given anti-psychotic medication** on a regular basis

**57%** had experienced **self-harm, an accident, physical assault, hands-on restraint** or been **kept in seclusion**

**60%** have been in units for **one year or more**. One in six have been in **five years or more**

Thousands of people are trapped in a failing system, their families desperately worried about their safety and wellbeing, battling to bring them home.

<sup>4</sup> Learning Disability Census 2013 Further analysis: [www.hscic.gov.uk/catalogue/PUB14046/ld-census-further-sep13-rep.pdf](http://www.hscic.gov.uk/catalogue/PUB14046/ld-census-further-sep13-rep.pdf)

# Survivors of abuse and neglect



**Simon**, 39, **abused** at Winterbourne View.



**Simone**, 21, **abused** at Winterbourne View.  
**Remains in a unit a long way from her family.**



**James**, 39, spent **5½ years in a unit, 150 miles from home**, where there was evidence of **abuse** and **misuse of restraint**.

A funding dispute **delayed him moving** for over 4 years.

**Sam**, 23, **restrained over 45 times** at Winterbourne View, **over-medicated**.\*

**Kirsty**, 28, after Winterbourne View, sent to another unit **250 miles away from home**. In total spent **9 years in locked units** where she was **over-medicated** (sometimes forcibly) and **inappropriately restrained** causing injuries.\*

\*Some families did not want a photo of their loved one used in the report.



**Emmanuel**, 22, **abused** in a unit far away from his family



**Joe**, 37, **detained and neglected** in a 26-bed unit **130 miles from home for 2 years.**



**Victoria**, 42, **restrained and neglected** in a unit. **Unexplained loss of teeth and sight in one eye.** Physical health and sensory needs repeatedly ignored.



**Chrissy**, 29, spent **4 years** in a unit. Stuck there 3 years longer than planned due to funding dispute.

# A new generation

Of the 3,250 people with a learning disability in units, **185 are children and young people.**



**Fauzia, 16, repeatedly restrained, heavily medicated and kept in isolation.**

Still there 18 months later.



**Josh, 13, two years in a unit, 260 miles from home.**

Separation from his family has increased **anxiety** and **self-harm.**

Still there. **His family fear for his life.**



**Connor, 18, drowned** having a seizure in the bath whilst left unsupervised in a unit with four staff and five patients.

# Why isn't change happening?

NHS England and local authorities, as well as the Government, have all failed to deliver on the promises they made to people trapped in units and their families. The money needed to set up local support and services is not being made available, so people remain trapped in units, with nowhere to go to. Of increasing concern is the new generation who need support and services locally but who are instead being sent to units.

## What we know:

- Units for people with a learning disability were identified in the Winterbourne View Serious Case Review as places where people are at **“risk of receiving abusive and restrictive practices”<sup>5</sup>**.
- **Most people with a learning disability should never need to go into an inpatient unit.** They should be able to get the support they need in their local community.
- It costs an average of £4,500 per week for someone to be in a unit<sup>6</sup>. **It is entirely possible to develop the right support and services around most individuals within their local community.** In many cases it will cost the



I estimate the total direct costs of this provision to be in excess of £500m a year, of which £46m a year is spent on incarcerating children. For what? Putting people in places where they are at high risk of being assaulted, having an accident and being prescribed anti-psychotic medication.

**Eric Emerson, Professor of Disability and Health Research at Lancaster University.**



<sup>5</sup> Winterbourne View Serious Case Review: <http://hosted.southglos.gov.uk/wv/report.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Learning Disability Census 2013



# It is possible

A number of those who have been abused and neglected are now back in their local communities, such as Simon:



Simon is now back living near us, and he is loving every minute of his life. After everything Simon has been through, it's wonderful to see how content he is now.

Simon's package of care now costs about half as much as it did for him to be in Winterbourne View. The staff he has now have been wonderful and are truly dedicated. I know that not only is Simon happy, he is safe.

**Simon's mum**



Some local areas are developing the right support and services:



Before, when we were sending people out of area, money was just disappearing out of Salford. Now that we are spending money investing in local services, people can have a fulfilling life in Salford.

**Dave Clemmett, Salford Council and NHS**



# Change is possible. There can be no more excuses.

## What must happen now

An urgent priority must be the development of local expertise, support and services.

NHS England, Local Government Association, Department of Health, the Care Quality Commission and other organisations who signed up to the Government's action plan, must deliver on their promises. They must commit to removing the red tape and funding barriers that are preventing so many people from returning home.

The Prime Minister David Cameron must take personal responsibility and address the failure to date to make this happen.

## Take action

Sign our petition calling for Prime Minister David Cameron to keep his promise and make this happen.

**<https://www.change.org/en-GB/petitions/david-cameron-david-cameron-the-winterbourne-view-scandal-continues-take-responsibility-and-take-action>**

For further information and to download copies of this report go to **[www.mencap.org.uk/outofsite](http://www.mencap.org.uk/outofsite)**