

10 December 2012

*Richmond House
79 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2NS*

Gateway Reference number: 18516

To: PCT Cluster Chief Executives
Local Authority Chief Executives
Directors of Adult Social Services

Cc: SHA Chief Executives
SHA LD leads
DRDs for social care

Dear Colleague

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH REPORT:
Transforming Care: A National Response to Winterbourne View Hospital**

The final report of the Department's review into the events at Winterbourne View was published today. A copy of the report, the accompanying Concordat agreed with over 50 key partners, good practice guidance and other documentation are all available on the DH website: www.dh.gov.uk. A summary of the key points in the report is attached to this letter.

The report sets out a clear programme of national and local actions, to ensure that we provide better care for, and reduce the health inequalities suffered by, people who have a learning disability or autism and whose behaviour is regarded as challenging. A new NHS and local government-led joint improvement programme is being established to support the transformation that will be necessary to achieve the required improvements.

We now expect the NHS and local government to work together, and with service users and carers and other partners, to make these changes.

The Government's Mandate to the NHS Commissioning Board confirms this expectation. It requires the Board to ensure that CCGs work with local authorities to ensure that vulnerable people, particularly those with learning disabilities and autism, receive safe, appropriate, high quality care. The presumption should always be that services are local and that people remain in their communities. We expect to see a substantial reduction in reliance on inpatient care for these groups of people.

We have already asked the strategic health authorities to begin the work with PCTs to ensure that the focus on these issues is maintained and prioritised through the transitional period for the NHS over the coming months.

Please ensure that you understand, and have a clear, shared plan for the actions that you will now need to take together locally.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Nicholson', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Sir David Nicholson
NHS Chief Executive

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shaun Gallagher', written in a cursive style.

Shaun Gallagher
**Acting Director-General
Social Care, Local Government
and Care Partnerships**

Key points and actions

- The abuse revealed at Winterbourne View hospital was criminal. Staff routinely mistreated and abused patients, and management allowed a culture of abuse to flourish. Warning signs were not picked up, and concerns raised by a whistleblower went unheeded.
- It has revealed weaknesses in the system's ability to hold the leaders of care organisations to account. This is a gap in the care regulatory framework which the Government will tackle.
- The abuse in Winterbourne View is only part of the story. Many people are in hospital who don't need to be there. Many stay there for far too long – sometimes for years. People with learning disabilities or autism, who also have mental health conditions or challenging behaviour can be, and have a right to be, given the support and care they need in the community, near to family and friends.
- We will make sure that people no longer live inappropriately in hospitals but are cared for in line with best practice.
 - By spring 2013, we will set out proposals to strengthen accountability of Boards of Directors and senior Managers for the safety and quality of care which their organisations provide.
 - By June 2013, Clinical commissioning groups and their local authority partners will review all current placements . Arrangements will be made for everyone who is in hospital inappropriately to move to community-based support as quickly as possible, and no later than June 2014.
 - By April 2014, Clinical commissioning groups and their local authority partners will have a joint plan to ensure high quality care and support services for all people with learning disabilities or autism and mental health conditions or behaviour described as challenging, in line with best practice.
 - As a consequence, there will be a dramatic reduction in hospital placements for this group of people.
- CQC will strengthen inspections and regulation of hospitals and care homes for this group of people. This will include unannounced inspections involving people who use services and their families. CQC will include reference to the best model of care in their revised guidance and will consider it as part of the regulation and inspection of services from April next year.
- Our partners are committed to this change. A concordat, published alongside the report, sets out specific actions which individual partners have committed to deliver.
- A new NHS and local government-led joint improvement team will be created to lead and support this transformation.