

Six Lives

*Progress Report
Summary*

Easy Read



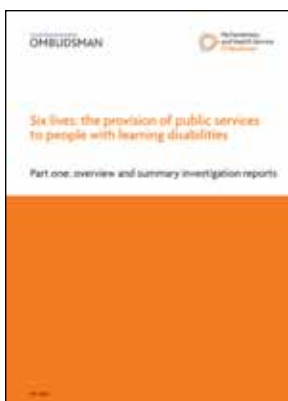
This is a report from the Department of Health for the **Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman** and **Local Government Ombudsman** to say what has happened since they wrote 'Six Lives'.



The Health Service Ombudsman has the power to look into complaints people make about the NHS.

Local Government
OMBUDSMAN

The Local Government Ombudsman has the power to look into complaints people make about local councils.



'Six Lives' is their report which looked at the services given to six people with learning disabilities who died. 'Six Lives' was published in March 2009. It said that:



- some organisations did not understand the laws about human rights and disability discrimination;



- some organisations needed to make big changes to the way they see people with learning disabilities and the way they work;



- the Department of Health should help make these changes and check they were happening.



This report says what has happened since 'Six Lives'.



To write this report we found out what lots of different people thought about how people with learning disabilities were being treated. We spoke to:



- people who work in the health service and in social care;



- people with learning disabilities and their families;



- Learning Disability Partnership Boards;



- organisations who provide support to people with learning disabilities;



- charities like Mencap.

Doing what the Ombudsmen asked



To make things better the Ombudsmen said all health organisations and social care organisations (like hospitals, local doctors, and local authorities) needed to look at:

- how well they can meet the different needs of people with learning disabilities;





- how they can give the right care and treatment to people with learning disabilities.

We asked health organisations and local authorities if they had done what the Ombudsmen asked them to do in 'Six Lives'.



All health organisations said they did this, but many did this after the date the Ombudsmen said it should happen.

All Local Authorities told us they carried out the checks or had a clear plan when they would. Many did the checks after the date the Ombudsmen said it should happen.



The Ombudsmen asked three organisations who check health and social care services to say how well their rules work for people with learning disabilities. They are:



- Care Quality Commission, who check that health and social care services are good;
- Monitor, who check some kinds of NHS organisations are working well;
- the Equality and Human Rights Commission, who check people's human rights, are being respected.

**Equality and
Human Rights
Commission**



All three organisations have written to the Ombudsmen to say what they have done.

What have we found out?



It is 18 months since 'Six Lives' was written.



Organisations have done lots of work to make care better for people with learning disabilities.



But we know there were lots of problems all over the country that meant people with learning disabilities were not getting the care they needed.



It will take time to make sure all places are giving the right care and treatment to all people with learning disabilities all the time.

Good things happening are not routine and part of everyday work in many places. When good staff move on to other jobs, the good work stops.

Things that people told us are helping make a difference are:



- Leadership – people who are in charge making sure they think about people with learning disabilities in what they do.



- Annual health checks by GPs for people with learning disabilities.



- Including people with learning disabilities and their families when deciding how services are working for them and planning to make services better.



- Acute liaison nurses and health facilitators – people whose job is making health services work better for people with learning disabilities.



- “Reasonable adjustments” – changing how services are given to people with learning disabilities so they meet their needs. For example, longer appointment times and having information in ‘easy read’.



These good things need to be happening everywhere for all people with learning disabilities. More work is needed to make this happen.

There were also things that people were worried about, like:



- Capacity and consent – following the law about capacity and consent and making decisions when people are not able to make them for themselves.

Consent means making your choice about treatment.

Capacity means being able to understand choices about treatment.



- Understanding of staff – making sure people who work in the health service understand about learning disability, how to communicate and how to make 'reasonable adjustments'.



- Complaints and advocacy – giving people the support they need to make choices about healthcare and making sure when things go wrong people are listened to and changes made.

What happens next?



More work needs to be done by lots of organisations to make things better in all places for all people with learning disabilities.



Health will continue to be one of the three priorities in making sure that the Government plan 'Valuing People Now' happens.



The Government have said they want to make changes to how health services and social care services are organised.

People are being asked what they think of these changes.



It is important people with learning disabilities and their families are asked what they think.

It is important that what we have learnt about improving services for people with learning disabilities is included in these changes.



The Government wants to work with people with learning disabilities, families and their organisations to make sure things keep getting better.

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