



To: Chief Executives of NHS Trusts
Chief Executives of NHS Foundation Trusts
Chief Executives of Local Authorities
Directors of Adult Social Services
Directors of Children's Services
Clinical Commissioning Groups

21 November 2018

Dear Colleague

Improving Staff Training on Learning Disability and Autism - Government Response to the Learning Disabilities Mortality Programme Review (LeDeR) report

On the 12th September, the Government published its response to the Learning Disabilities Mortality Review Programme (LeDeR) annual report.

As you will know, the LeDeR Programme was established in June 2015 to help reduce early deaths and health inequalities for people with a learning disability by supporting local areas in England to review the deaths of people with a learning disability, and to ensure that the learning from these reviews leads to improved health and care services. The Programme's annual report, which was published in May, identified a number of cases where improved care may have prevented deaths.

Understanding the needs of people with a learning disability, as well as developing appropriate skills and knowledge, are essential elements of high quality, compassionate and dignified care. Our response to the LeDeR report acknowledges this and the need to promote greater awareness, amongst all health and care staff, of the needs of people with a learning disability.

Many staff working in health and care already receive learning disability training but we have heard very clearly that not every member of staff who might be in contact with a person with a learning disability has received specific training in how best to listen to, communicate, understand and meet their needs.

As part of our response, the Department of Health and Social Care has committed to consulting on options for mandatory learning disability awareness training with the consultation concluding by the end of March 2019. We will also wish to consider in this consultation the need for training in autism. Precisely which staff will require training, and what this training will entail, is something we will explore as part of our consultation proposals. What is clear is that we want to make sure that any staff that might need to meet, care for, or support, an individual with a learning disability or autism would receive the necessary training to develop appropriate skills and competencies.

In the meantime, however, we are writing to you to remind you that employers already have a clear legal duty to ensure that their staff are competent to undertake their role. The Health and Social Care

Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) and Regulations 2014 require that any person employed by a regulated service must 'receive the support, training, professional development, supervision and appraisal as is necessary to enable them to carry out the duties they are employed to perform'.

[The Learning Disabilities Core Skills Education and Training Framework](#)¹ can support employers in meeting their statutory duties as it sets out the essential skills and knowledge necessary for all staff involved in learning disability care. We would strongly encourage employers and commissioners of education to use the Framework to develop appropriate and consistent education and training and ensure that staff have the skills and capability to meet the needs of people with a learning disability.

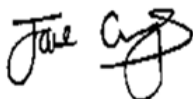
We would also strongly urge you to involve people with lived experience and their families in the development and deployment of training as they can bring a unique and valuable perspective as users of health and care services.

People with a learning disability and/or autism, their families and carers should expect high quality, responsive care. By ensuring that the workforce has the necessary skills and knowledge, we have a fantastic opportunity to completely transform the care and support that people with learning disabilities and/or autism and their families receive. Thank you for your continued efforts.

Kind regards,



Caroline Dinenage
Minister of State
Department of Health and Social Care



Professor Jane Cummings
Chief Nursing Office of England
NHS England



Professor Steve Powis
National Medical Director
NHS England

¹ <http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/images/resource-section/projects/learning-disabilities/Learning-Disabilities-CSTF.pdf>