

"Could do Better" – the Learning Disability Task Force Annual Report

The Learning Disability Task Force Annual Report to the Minister for Care Services Ivan Lewis was published on 10 September. Its main message is that some things have got better for people with learning disabilities but that there is still more work to be done.

The main topics in the report are: health, employment and Hate Crime. The report includes information about the work that the Task Force has completed over the past year to ensure that people with learning disabilities are represented in government policy making.

The report includes links to the original source of publications that are referred to in the text (for example 'Disability Hate Crime: a report about crimes against disabled people'; and 'Joint investigation into the provision of services for people with learning disabilities at Cornwall Partnership NHS Trust [Healthcare Commission]'. There are also links to a number of useful organisations

What follows below has been abstracted from the report, which can be found at:

<http://nationaldirectorld.org.uk/dynamic/ond15.jsp>

The last year has been a busy and in some ways difficult year for people with learning disabilities, their families and people who work to support them.

There have been a number of high profile reports about how services are failing people with learning disabilities. These have particularly been about the work of the National Health Service (NHS):

- Two reports from the Healthcare Commission about the abuse of people with learning disabilities in NHS services in Cornwall with the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) and Sutton and Merton
- The Disability Rights Commission (DRC) report about how primary health care services are failing people with learning disabilities
- Mencap's 'Death by Indifference' report about how people with learning disabilities are dying in general hospitals because of neglect.

Task Force Members were saddened by these reports – but in many ways not surprised. We all know that people with learning disabilities continue to be treated unequally by society.

These reports were about the NHS, and the Task Force has focused on the NHS a lot this year but they could also have been about other parts of life. This year the Task Force has also worked on employment and hate crime, and how those parts of public services are not treating people with learning disabilities equally.

The Task Force believes that good progress has been made in the lives of many people with learning disabilities since Valuing People was written in 2001 – but there is a long way still to go. The four reports this year show that very clearly. It is important that, wherever people with learning disabilities are not treated equally, this is written about and exposed.

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