

Joint Committee on Human Rights



A House of Lords Committee is looking into the human rights of people with a learning disability

Human rights are rights that every person should have. Things like:

- Good health care
- Good food
- Equal treatment



The Joint Committee on Human Rights wants to know if people with a learning disability are getting their human rights. They want to know about:

- your experiences of using services like health and social services
- What chances you have to have relationships with partners, family and children
- How you get involved in your local community



The Committee wants people to tell them what they think about

- How easy is it for people with a learning disability to have a say in decisions that affect them.
- How easy it is for people with a learning disability to make a complaint about a service
- What would help people with a learning disability to get their human rights and any examples of this being done well.



We talked about this in small groups at our meeting – see the next 3 pages

How easy is it for people with a learning disability to have a say in decisions that affect them.

It is difficult for people to make decisions and this is often due to the fact that people are not given time or information.



Person Centred Planning when done well does give people more control to make decisions.



It is not easy, especially for people who cannot speak or communicate easily.



There is a lot of exciting work on producing photo, video and DVD presentations which give people who have difficulty communicating a real say.

You need an independent advocate who speaks with you before Care Plan meetings. Families may not have the same views as the person with learning disabilities. You can talk things over in private with an advocate



It is also harder if there is a difference between expressed and functional communication. That is, people appear to have understood, but have not really.

Decisions/choices for major life decisions are limited by resources. You may be asked your views, but what if the choices aren't real? Sometimes people need to be more honest about how 'real' choices are and the resource constraints that will affect completely free choice.



*"I read my own report at my review meeting.
We did it in picture form so it was easy to understand"*

"I chose 4 people to come to my review meeting. 15 people turned up – it was scary and I walked out."

How easy it is for people with a learning disability to make a complaint about a service

There is not always support available for people to make complaints.

Self advocate groups work well in supporting people in this area. Accessible complaint formats are also encouraged.



People need to know their rights. They need easy-read information and support throughout the process. Services need more training on how to work with people with learning disabilities.

People need an advocacy service.

People worry that if they complain, a service may be withdrawn.



Complaining is difficult for lots of people, it can be even harder if you don't like interaction, (i.e. for some people with autistic spectrum disorders).

Individualised Budgets/Direct Payments, where a friend or neighbour is involved. People worry, what happens if we complain?



Younger people with learning disabilities are more confident about their rights and choices.

They have learnt about this at school. Many older people experienced being punished if they spoke out in the old days so are still scared of speaking up now.

"It was hard to make a complaint"

"People feel they will get into trouble if they make a complaint."

What would help people with a learning disability to get their human rights and any examples of this being done well.



Court Liaison Protocol Work



A local project in Surrey where we worked with the County and Magistrates Courts to agree how they would meet the needs of people with a learning disability

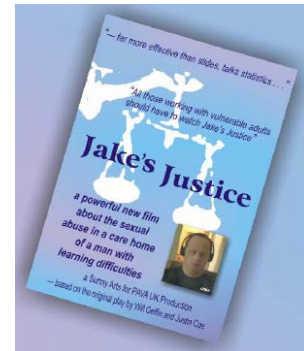
Acute Hospital Liaison Nurse



This project helped develop a communication book for people with a learning disability to use in hospital. Also developed protocols with hospitals to make sure people got equal treatment

Safeguarding Adults

We have produced a DVD called 'Jake's Justice' which tells the story of how a young man who is abused get support and justice. We are also produced an easyread guide to the Safeguarding Adults process



Dementia screening and Dysphasia screening

These two projects are helping to identify the specialist health needs some people with a learning disability have. Dysphasia screening helps identify people who are at risk on ongoing chest infections through problems with swallowing.

Work opportunities are so important. Tweaks to National Minimum Wage Act could help more people get a job.

Support for parents with a learning disability is important.

Self Advocacy Groups to help people gain confidence to speak up.

Supported Living is important. People need more choice of housing