



Sorby House
42 Spital Hill
Sheffield
South Yorkshire
S4 7LG

0114 272 7723

Councilor Mary Lea
Sheffield Learning Disability
Partnership Board
Sheffield City Council
Town Hall
Pinstone Street
Sheffield
S1 2HH

Re: Panorama - Undercover Care 31.05.2011

Dear Mary ,

A group of MPPs from Sheffield People's Parliament met at SUFA on the 15th of June to discuss the issues raised by the Panorama investigation into the systematic abuse of people with learning disabilities at Winterbourne View in Bristol.

We felt compelled on behalf of disabled people to make sure that people in Sheffield aren't living lives where they are at risk of abuse like that endured by the people at Winterbourne View.

We want health and social care commissioners to reassure us about the steps they are taking to make sure people are safe and living good lives. We would like to know that they are making changes where needed and developing services that first and foremost make sense to the people that rely on them, and think about challenging behavior as communicating unmet needs rather than a characteristic of someone's impairment.

We would like reassurances on the following points:

- A commitment from commissioners to avoid placing people in institutional care and instead work with disabled people, families and organisations to create lives for people in their community in real homes. A commitment should be made to include all people in this aim, including people with reputations for challenging behavior.
- We would like to make sure that Sheffield is working in line with the guidance, best practice and policies that the government says should be in place. A few of us met Jim Mansell recently in Sheffield and believe that if his reports were implemented this would reduce the risk of abuse occurring. His recommendations have to be put in place in advance so that people and commissioners would have more choice about how and where care and support is provided, instead of people just being fitted into institutions because that is all there is.
- We want to be reassured that the changes taking place to the ways advocacy is provided in Sheffield will mean that all people in institutional care will have access to it. Independent advocacy is important means of helping people at risk of abuse to speak out. We also want to know whether people whose support and housing is being planned will have access to advocacy, so they can have a proper choice and so this can help stop them ending up in institutions.
- We would like to know how many people from Sheffield are being placed 'out of city' and how many of these are in institutional care. We would like to know that steps are being taken to ensure that these people aren't at risk of abuse and what steps are being taken to review their support options and actively help them come back into their communities.

- We would like to know what role commissioners in Sheffield are playing along with the CQC to put the right checks and inspections in place that will establish that services are safe and that staff are properly trained and supervised.

We would appreciate a written response to these points to share with MPPs and other Sheffield people with a learning disability and their supporters. It may also be helpful if a Council representative could attend a meeting of MPPs in order to discuss how more information can be provided to Parliament about these issues.

Yours sincerely

Sheffield MPPs on behalf of Sheffield People's Parliament
With assistance from Speaking Up For Advocacy

Letter copied to: Julie Dore
Josie Bennett
Ed Sexton
Sarah Adams