

P-05-854 Make Learning Disability training mandatory for hospital staff

Pwyllgor Deisebau | 15 Ionawr 2019
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Research Briefing:

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Paul Ridd was our brother. He had severe learning disabilities and died in Morriston Hospital in 2009. The Public Services Ombudsmen report into the circumstances leading to Paul's death said that neglect, lack of training and ignorance were contributory factors leading to Paul's death.

1 in 4 healthcare professionals has never had training on learning disability or autism. This is unacceptable. Two thirds want more training, and 1 in 3 think a lack of government leadership is contributing to the problem of avoidable deaths. The Government must ensure all healthcare professionals get mandatory training to address the huge health inequalities facing people with autism and a learning disability.

Background

The Welsh Government published specific guidance to improve the care and treatment of people with a learning disability in hospital in January 2014 as part of the 1000 Lives Improvement Programme. The '[Care Bundle for People with a Learning Disability in a General Hospital Setting](#)' was developed following the death of Paul Ridd. It is designed to help hospital staff ensure that people with learning disabilities receive a fair and equitable service when they visit hospitals. The Welsh Government also published '[Learning disability - Improving lives programme](#)' in June 2018.

There is currently a Welsh Government consultation open until 18 January 2019 on [Action on disability: the right to independent living](#) - Question 7 says "We want the Welsh social care

sector and health services to support people to lead independent lives. Looking at the Action Plan, how can we better achieve this for disabled people?”.

Key legislation that requires services to reduce preventable inequalities in health by people with a learning disability include the *Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014*, the *Wellbeing of Future Generations Act*, and the *Equality Act 2010*.

The petition is calling on the Welsh Government to make learning disability training mandatory for hospital staff. It has collected 5,312 signatures. Petitions on the Assembly website that get more than 5,000 signatures are automatically considered for a Senedd debate.

A similar petition urging the UK Government to prevent avoidable deaths by making autism and learning disability training mandatory for healthcare professionals was debated in the UK Parliament on 22 October 2018. In response to the petition, the UK Government said that: “we want all staff to receive the support, training and professional development they need to support people with learning disabilities and autism, in line with employers’ existing responsibilities”.

In September 2018, in a [written statement](#) in response to the learning disability mortality review, the UK Government’s Care Minister, Caroline Dinenage committed to completing a public consultation on proposals for mandatory learning disability training for all health and care staff in England. It states that by March 2019, the public consultation on proposals for mandatory learning disability training for all health and care staff will be complete.

In England, there is also a duty in the *Autism Act 2009* statutory guidance for all health and care staff to have appropriate autism training. An Assembly Member Bill, introduced by Paul Davies AM, [the Autism Wales Bill](#), which includes provision for staff training in autism is at Stage 1. The Stage 1 debate and vote is due to take place on 16 January 2019. If the Bill proceeds to Stage 2, tabling for amendments will then open, and Stage 2 scrutiny will take place shortly after.