



23 March 2018

Dr Rhidian Hughes  
Chair  
The Care Provider Alliance  
c/o VODG  
Folly Brook Road  
Emersons Green  
Bristol  
BS16 7FL

By email

Dear Dr Hughes,

### **Mendip House Safeguarding Adults Review**

On 08 February 2018, the Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board published a Safeguarding Adults Review in to the mistreatment and abuse of residents by staff at a care home for people with autism in Somerset run by the National Autistic Society. The Review was written by Dr Margaret Flynn, who also undertook the Serious Case Review of Winterbourne View Hospital in South Gloucestershire.

All the residents at the care home, Mendip House, and the wider Somerset Court campus on which it was situated, were placed by over 30 different Local Authorities and Clinical Commissioning Groups as far away as Aberdeen. None of the people placed at Mendip House were Somerset residents and parallels have been drawn with Winterbourne View by Dr Flynn, albeit without the cameras.

In summary, the findings of the Review are that:

- Somerset Court is a dated, single-site “campus” model of service provision which sources residents with diverse support needs from around the UK.
- The unprofessional and cruel behaviour of a “gang” of male employees at Mendip House home did not suddenly occur, and action could and should have been taken by the National Autistic Society earlier.
- Neither the history of safeguarding referrals nor Care Quality Commission inspections revealed the cruelty of employees or the failures of management oversight.
- People were placed at Mendip House as a result of the detrimental practice “place hunting” by Commissioners. It does not appear that the agencies that commissioned the placements asked searching questions about the benefits of residents being placed there, or received detailed accounts of how fees were being spent on their behalf.
- Care planning was poor. Decisions about continuing placements by the agencies commissioning the placements at Mendip House were not based on data such as what was being achieved with, and on behalf of, individual residents.
- There can be no confidence that there is sufficient capacity in speech and language, psychology, behaviour support, learning disability nursing and psychiatry services to

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meet the needs of unknown numbers of adults who are placed by Commissioners outside their own localities.



Seven years after Winterbourne View it is unacceptable that vulnerable people have once again been abused by those who were employed to care from them as a result of failures management oversight. As you will be aware, the nominated individual is responsible for supervising the management of the regulated activity provided, and this Review indicates weaknesses in the understanding of this role. In relation to this, the Review makes the following important recommendation that:

- The Care Provider Alliance, with the support of the Care Quality Commission and Skills for Care, issue its members with guidance on how the role of responsible or nominated individual in supervising the management of the regulated activity should be performed in respect of quality assurance and safeguarding.

The abuse and mistreatment of the people placed at Mendip House could and should have been detected and stopped earlier. The Review has been discussed by the Independent Chairs of Adult Safeguarding Boards within the South West, who have written an accompanying letter in support of the recommendations of this Review. I am also aware that there are other Reviews in progress within the South West that relate to similar circumstances, which are likely to reach similar conclusions and make similar recommendations in the coming months. It is my view that without change it is highly likely that similar mistreatment and abuse will be uncovered elsewhere in the future, and I look forward to working with you on the implementation of these important recommendations.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Richard Crompton".

Richard Crompton  
Independent Chair  
Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board

Encl.

1. Supporting letter from Siân Walker, Chair, Devon Safeguarding Adults Board on behalf of the South-West Region Independent SAB Chairs Network
2. Mendip House Safeguarding Adults Review

CC.

Andrea Sutcliffe CBE, Chief Inspector for Adult Social Care, Care Quality Commission  
Dame Moira Gibb DBE, Chair, Skills for Care Chair  
Sharon Allen OBE, Chief Executive, Skills for Care

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