



05 March 2019

Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care
39 Victoria Street
Westminster
London
SW1H 0EU

Cllr Izzi Seccombe OBE
Chair
LGA Community Wellbeing Board
c/o Warwickshire County Council
Shire Hall
Warwick
CV34 4RL

By email

Dear Mr Hancock and Cllr Seccombe,

Mendip House Safeguarding Adults Review

A year has passed since the Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board published a Safeguarding Adults Review into the mistreatment and abuse of residents by staff at Mendip House, a care home for people with autism in Somerset run by the National Autistic Society.

Since the publication I have written to, and received replies from, the Care Quality Commission, Care Provider Alliance, the Department of Health and Social Care and Local Government Association. I was also invited to meet with representatives of the Minister of State for Care and the Local Government Association in June 2018. Thank you.

At the time when I met with the representatives of the Minister of State for Care it was indicated that a number of the recommendations raised by the Review might potentially be addressed through the forthcoming Social Care Green Paper, which it was suggested was due to be published imminently but to date has not been. The potential for the concerns raised to be addressed through the Green Paper was also noted in a letter received from the Local Government Association and NHS England that, while outlining the work of a number of initiatives, did not provide me with assurance that the recommendations of the Review had so far been addressed through them or were likely to be in the foreseeable future.

In the autumn of 2018 an advisory was published by the Local Government Association and the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (enclosed). However, it is notable that its recommendations have no statutory basis, nor do they apply to NHS Commissioners. In addition, while this advisory appears to have resulted in better communication from some Commissioners, without the backing of a statutory obligation it is unlikely to result in the system-wide change that the Review highlighted as being needed.

Email: ssab@somerset.gov.uk

Website: www.somerset.gov.uk/safeguarding

Address: Somerset County Council, County Hall, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 4DY



Locally, the Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board has led work to ensure that good practice is being followed for all people placed in services outside of Somerset by, or on behalf of, local Commissioners. However, while I will continue to work locally and with regional colleagues there will always be a limit as to what can be achieved without the national changes that the Review identified. In addition to the recommendations made in the Review I also want to emphasise my view that it is important that the opportunity presented by the forthcoming Green Paper is used to:

- Put the recommendations made by the Local Government Association and Association of Directors of Adult Social Services in their advisory on to a statutory basis;
- Make these requirements applicable to all Commissioners regardless of their employer;
- Add an additional requirement to inform the host Local Authority when a placement ceases to be commissioned, as well as when it starts.

Sadly, abuse and mistreatment of people similar to that experienced by those placed at Mendip House continues to be highlighted nationally, and in my view a clear contributory factor is continued poor commissioning practice. This poor practice begins when people are unnecessarily placed long distances from the people and communities they know, then exacerbated by a failure to properly monitor and review the arrangements once placed. It remains my view that without change it is highly likely that similar mistreatment and abuse will continue to be uncovered elsewhere, 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. [Mendip House Safeguarding Adults Review](#)
2. [Local Government Association and Association of Directors of Adult Social Services Advisory](#)

CC.

Ray James CBE, National Learning Disability Director, NHS England
Nick Rudling, Deputy Safeguarding Lead, NHS England South (South West)

Email: ssab@somerset.gov.uk

Website: www.somerset.gov.uk/safeguarding

Address: Somerset County Council, County Hall, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 4DY