



all about people

News from BILD

26 May 2011

Panorama - Undercover Care: The Abuse Exposed

BILD is aware that the BBC Panorama programme to be broadcast on Tuesday 31st May will show disturbing scenes of people with learning disabilities and autism being abused within a secure hospital, a place where they should have expected to feel safe and protected.

Following on from the comparatively recent inquiries into care in Sutton and Merton, and Cornwall, where vulnerable people were found to have been abused over number of years, this is deeply saddening.

We know that many will be shocked that abuse of this type goes on in the UK today. Abuse in such environments is a systemic issue. Where abusive working cultures are allowed to develop, the abuse of people's basic human rights will inevitably occur. As a society, we must all take responsibility that the human rights of the most vulnerable people among us, who deserve protection, have been treated so appallingly.

It is clear that:

- The legislative framework is not robust enough to prevent this kind of abuse
- Staff need effective leadership; this requires senior management to understand what makes for good practice, to recognise when problems have become endemic and to take appropriate action to make change happen
- Organisations have not acted to deliver on policies and procedures that enable staff to report abuse and ensure those they are meant to care for have accessible complaints information and access to independent advocacy
- Staff do not have access to appropriate training, or the support to implement what they have learnt in their workplace

It is vital that the government legislate to protect people with learning disabilities and autism. We know that all too often 'specialist services' do not always deliver a specialist service, serving instead only to 'house' people without useful therapeutic input, care or support. This must change. BILD's work will be a contribution to making change happen and we will continue to work with others in protecting the human rights of people with learning disabilities.

BILD is extremely saddened that yet again, it has taken the media to highlight a problem many work so hard to prevent. We sincerely hope that the people affected by this terrible case are now feeling safe and are being supported by people who will work to help them survive the trauma they have experienced.

ENDS

For more information please contact BILD's Communications Manager, Peter Salisbury on 01562 723010 or email p.salisbury@bild.org.uk

Notes:

BILD (The British Institute of Learning Disabilities) is based in Kidderminster, Worcestershire and was founded in 1971.

BILD's vision is a society where people with learning disabilities are equal citizens and have access to the support and services they need. We work to make this happen in partnership with people with a learning disability and family carers. They are the real 'experts', knowing what support is needed, and what needs to change to improve the quality of their lives.

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