PRESS RELEASE

***(date)***

**Learning disability campaigners in *(name of your town)* demand end to unequal healthcare**

* **Events happening across the country to highlight Learning Disability Week (18-24 June) and its focus on improving healthcare for people with a learning disability in hospital.**
* **Photos of the event held at *(add location – e.g.name of hospital)* can be found** **here *(include a Dropbox, Google drive or WeTransfer link where images from your event can be downloaded)***

Local campaigners in ***(name of your town)***have today ***(date of event)*** held an event ***(details of where this took place and anyone well known in the community who attended)*** as part of Mencap’s *Treat me well* campaign, aimed at ending the scandal of unequal healthcare experienced by people with a learning disability.

It is estimated 1,200 people with a learning disability die avoidably every year. On average women with a learning disability die 18 years sooner, and men with a learning disability die 14 years sooner than the general population in England.

This year’s Learning Disability Week, run by Mencap, is aimed at improving awareness of learning disability amongst healthcare professionals.

At the event held in ***(give location of event)*** people with a learning disability and campaigners highlighted the need for NHS Trusts to ensure people with a learning disability receive good quality healthcare and healthcare professionals are equipped to make reasonable adjustments to their care, which are a legal duty under the Equality Act 2010.

***(Name of representative)*, who is from *(name of your town)* and helped run the *Treat me well* launch event, said:**

“People with a learning disability get worse healthcare than people without. Every single year 1,200 people with a learning disability die when their death could have been avoided if they had got good healthcare.

“This event was a chance for local campaigners to ensure our local NHS Trust and people who work in our hospitals are aware of the simple reasonable adjustments they need to be making by law. These adjustments can save lives.”

**-ENDS-**

For further information on the local event or to arrange interviews, please contact ***(include contact details).***

For more information on Mencap’s *Treat me well* campaign please contact the Mencap Press Office on 020 7696 5414 or [media@mencap.org.uk](mailto:media@mencap.org.uk) or for out of hours 07770 656 659.

**Notes to editors**

**Information on the health inequalities people with a learning disability face:**

* On average women with a learning disability die 18 years sooner, and men with a learning disability die 14 years sooner than the general population in England. \*\*\*
* 1,200 avoidable deaths of adults and children with a learning disability in the UK every year. \*
* 38% of people with a learning disability died from an avoidable cause, compared to 9% in a comparison population of people without a learning disability. \*\*
* Barriers to equal healthcare for people with a learning disability include:
  + staff having little understanding about learning disability
  + failure to recognise that a person with a learning disability is unwell
  + failure to make a correct diagnosis
  + not enough involvement allowed from carers
  + inadequate aftercare or follow-up care.
  + patients not being identified as having a learning disability
  + anxiety or a lack of confidence for people with a learning disability
  + lack of joint working from different care providers.

\* Glover, G. and Emerson, E. (2013) ‘Estimating how many deaths of people with learning disabilities in England could be prevented by better medical care’, *Tizard Learning Disability Review*, 18(3): 146-149.

\*\* Heslop, P., Blair, P., Fleming, P., Hoghton, M., Marriott, A., & Russ, L. (2013) Confidential Inquiry into premature deaths of people with learning disabilities (CIPOLD): Final Report. Norah Fry Research Centre.

[www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/cipold/migrated/documents/fullfinalreport.pdf](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/cipold/migrated/documents/fullfinalreport.pdf)

NOTE: Mencap uses the term avoidable death for deaths that could have been avoided by the provision of good quality healthcare.

\*\*\*NHS Digital (2017) *Health and Care of People with Learning Disabilities: Experimental Statistics: 2016 to 2017*. <http://digital.nhs.uk/catalogue/PUB30167>

**About Mencap**

There are 1.4 million people with a learning disability in the UK. Mencap works to support people with a learning disability, their families and carers by fighting to change laws, improve services and access to education, employment and leisure facilities. Mencap supports thousands of people with a learning disability to live their lives the way they want.

[www.mencap.org.uk](http://www.mencap.org.uk)

For advice and information about learning disability and Mencap services in your area, contact the **Learning Disability Helpline** on 0808 808 1111 (9am-5pm, Monday-Friday) or email [help@mencap.org.uk](mailto:help@mencap.org.uk)

**What is a learning disability?**

A learning disability is a reduced intellectual ability which can cause problems with everyday tasks – for example shopping and cooking, or travelling to new places – which affects someone for their whole life.

People with a learning disability can take longer to learn new things and may need support to develop new skills, understand difficult information and engage with other people. The level of support someone needs is different with every individual. For example, someone with a severe learning disability might need much more support with daily tasks than someone with a mild learning disability.

Learning disability is NOT a mental illness or a learning difficulty. Very often the term ‘learning difficulty’ is wrongly used interchangeably with ‘learning disability’.