



**Chris Heaton-Harris**  
Member of Parliament for Daventry  
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA  
Tel: 020 7219 7048

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*Dear Constituent,*

Thank you for contacting me about inpatient units and those with learning disabilities and autism.

As a former Chairman of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Learning Disabilities I absolutely agree that patient safety and care for those with autism and learning disabilities should be to the highest standard and I am deeply concerned at the abuse that patients in Winterbourne and other hospitals faced.

Children, young people and adults with a learning disability, autism or both, with the most complex needs, have the same rights to live fulfilling lives. Since 2015, the number of people in inpatient care has reduced by almost a fifth, which is welcome progress.

The NHS Long Term Plan sets out key changes to inpatient units for those with learning disabilities and autism. This includes a commitment to reducing the number of admissions and decreasing the amount of time spent in these units.

I appreciate the need to do all we can to support the prevention of inpatient admission and so it is welcome that the NHS Long Term Plan includes increased investment in intensive, crisis and forensic community support. This will enable more people to receive personalised care in the community, closer to home, and reduce preventable admissions to inpatient services. Local providers will also be able to take control of budgets to reduce avoidable admissions, enable shorter lengths of stay and end out of area placements.

I firmly support the four principles set out in the Government's proposed changes to the Mental Health Act as an important measure for protecting patients, service users, and their loved ones. I understand that the Government is currently reviewing feedback from the consultation on reforming the Mental Health Act, which included consideration of the introduction of new duties on commissioners to ensure the adequate supply of community services for people with a learning disability and autistic people.

I will of course continue to monitor this issue carefully and contact ministerial colleagues to ensure that these changes work for patients, families and carers.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

**CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP**  
**MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY**