



Department for

**Communities**

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## Section 75 Action Plan Response template

### Confidentiality of Information

The Department for Communities processes personal data in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation and in most circumstances this means that personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

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Do you agree with the actions that have been included in the draft Section 75 Action Plan?

<b>Yes</b>	
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....but the Plan needs expanded upon as set out below.

Are there any actions not included that you feel should be included? If so, please outline these below:

**Yes and these are:**

- 1. Stigma: There must be an active programme provided to address stigma and this could readily be done as a means of promoting good relations in line with Programme for Government direction of travel.**
- 2. The needs of the deaf community (- and we think especially of those who additionally have a mental illness): There is a specific issue re the shortage of Sign Language Interpreters for those with deafness and this needs to be urgently addressed and cured by the appropriate Department.**
- 3. A way must be found to assist those with severe and enduring mental illness or learning disability. Just having such a person as a member of a Committee/Group does not of itself achieve meaningful Co-Production. Because of neuropsychological or cognitive deficits, such individuals may be unable to articulate for themselves and often do not take up or participate actively in programmes. This situation will continue to pertain unless this need is specifically addressed here and elsewhere across the board.**
- 4. The Condition Management Programme must be expanded to include specifically targeting those with severe and enduring mental illness and those with learning disability.**

Any other general comments you wish to make?

**Disability secondary to severe mental illness has not been recognised and this is the moment to put this to rights. The point we make is that an individual with a physical health issue, in common with the rest of the population, can articulate and respond to issues as they arise. Not so those with severe and enduring mental illness or learning disability, however, who need to have their voices channelled. Facilitating the voice of this cohort of Patients/Users and Carers is key; giving them a voice is key – for they experience the barriers of higher levels of stigma and of lower levels of engagement as a direct result of their illness/condition/disability. The cognitive issues of those with severe and enduring mental illness/learning disability require a different approach. Otherwise they will continue to face issues of acute inequality due to stigma, isolation, poverty etc which inevitably follow on. The Plan must address these inequalities by placing focus on this cohort's requirement for assistance to allow them to articulate - and in turn to genuinely participate and be heard.**

Thank you for completing this proforma.

Please return your completed proforma to [equality.unit@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:equality.unit@communities-ni.gov.uk) on or before **22 November 2019**