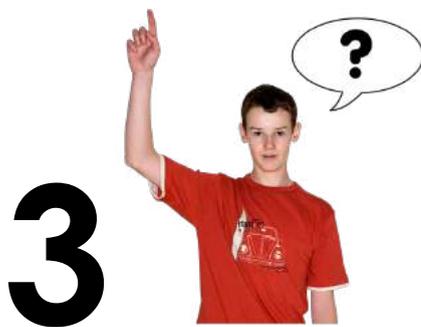




**This is an update from bemix for the Kent Learning Disability Partnership Board in June 2020.**



**Some things in our update might be upsetting to read.**



**We have 3 questions we wanted to talk about in the Partnership Board.**

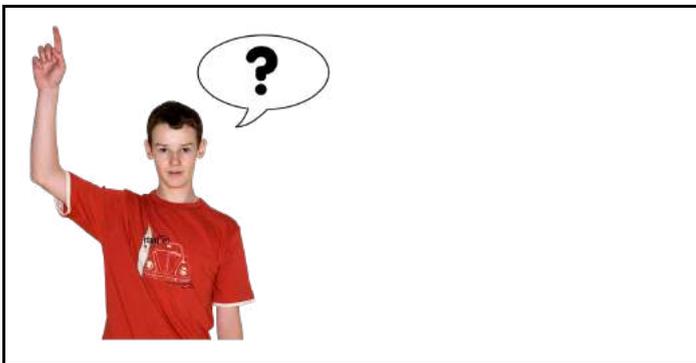


**QUESTION 1  
Can people with learning disabilities in hospital see their family and advocates?**



**NHS guidance says that visiting can be arranged for people with learning disabilities and/or autism.**

**But families tell us they have been stopped from visiting their loved ones.**



**Is this what you are hearing too?**



**We have been talking to parents with children in secure mental health settings in Kent. Some have not seen their loved one for 12 weeks.**



**This is causing a lot of distress. People are self-harming more. We are very worried about this.**



**The Joint Committee on Human Rights also talked to parents in England.**



**A joint committee is a group of members of Parliament and members of the House of Lords who look at what the Government does.**

**They write down what they find out and say what they think should happen.**

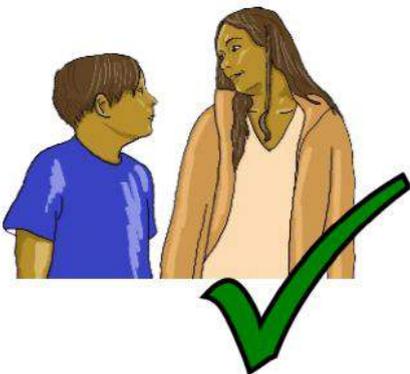


They wrote a report. Here is some of what the report says.

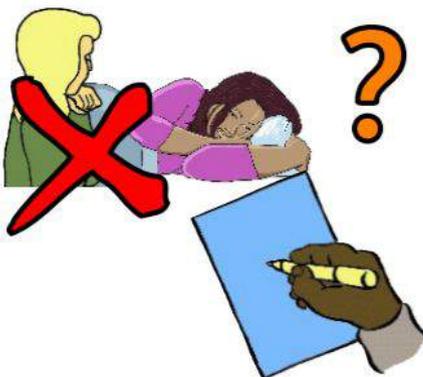
## What we think



Stopping all family visits takes away the family's and the young person's **human rights**. It breaks the **European Convention on Human Rights**, the rules about the **Mental Health Act** and **NHS guidance on coronavirus**.



The NHS should act quickly and write to all private and NHS hospitals to say families should visit unless they can show it is not safe for that person to have visitors.



If a hospital decides a visit is not safe they must write down why and give copies to the patient and to their family. They must look at the decision again, at least every 48 hours.



**NHS**  
England

We agree with this. We organised a letter signed by 208 people and sent it to the Director of Mental Health at NHS England. The letter asks for visiting to be allowed urgently.

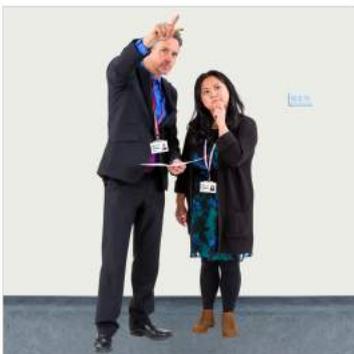


We have also asked Rachel Jones, the Transforming Care Senior Responsible Officer for Kent and Medway, to act on this locally.



## QUESTION 2

In lockdown, are people with learning disabilities who are not living with their family safe?



We are worried about this because people's care is not being checked on site by families, advocates, commissioners and inspectors.



Are you worried about this too?



We ask KCC to please put this on the agenda of the Adult Safeguarding Board and Children's Safeguarding Board.

We would like to talk to the Boards about this.



We organised a meeting with NHS England with other self-advocacy groups about how unsafe some people are in secure mental health settings.



The meeting was on 22 May. This was 1 year after we saw on TV people with learning disabilities being abused in Whorlton Hall.



We said peer-advocacy is needed.

We know people can see an independent advocate. But people can relate more easily to someone with lived experience like theirs.



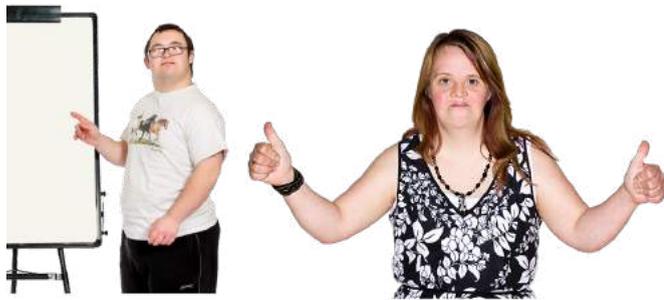
We said safeguarding training is needed for people in secure care.

This helps people to be aware if they are being abused or neglected, and what to do about it.



**We said self-advocacy training is needed. This makes people more confident to speak up if they are being abused or neglected.**

**Self-advocates are the best people to deliver this training.**



**People who have moved on from secure care should be involved in delivering this support and training.**

**This would help their recovery and wellbeing too.**



**Sammy from bemix said:**

**“It looks like NHS England will change things and involve us. Let’s hope they stick to their word.”**



**We are still working with NHS England on this.**



### **QUESTION 3**

**How has lockdown affected people needing to be admitted to hospital because of mental health crisis and being discharged?**



**Since lockdown, the number of children and young people admitted as inpatients in mental health settings went up from 7 to 14.**



**Most new admissions are teenagers around the ages of 15 or 16. The youngest was age 12.**



**Young people are admitted because families cannot cope with violent behaviour from a child.**



**Very sadly, 2 young people in the Kent and Medway community have killed themselves and 3 have tried to kill themselves.**



**In lockdown, schools have less contact with young people. This means there is less support. Lots of young people are isolated and struggling.**



**Organisations are trying to join up more to give support to families who are struggling.**



**There are 74 adults who are autistic and/or have learning disabilities in secure mental health settings in Kent and Medway. There have been no new admissions.**



**One adult sadly died from COVID-19 in a secure mental health setting.**



**Care and Treatment Reviews are still happening to help people move out of hospital into the community. They are using videoconferencing.**



**Even though lockdown makes things harder, good work is being done to support people to move out of hospital and choose the home they want.**

**We want to thank professionals for this good work.**



**Thank you for reading our update.**