



**LEGAL SERVICES
BOARD**

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The legal needs of individuals with learning disabilities

We (Legal Services Board, Legal Services Consumer Panel and Mencap) are publishing on Monday a report by the Norah Fry Research Centre on the legal needs of individuals with learning disabilities. I have included a copy of the research with this letter. We commissioned this research as we believe in a rapidly changing legal environment, it is essential to hear the voice of those who face greater challenges responding to their legal needs. Indeed, recently the LSB's Board joined the Legal Services Consumer Panel in incorporating lessons from the British Standard on the treatment of vulnerable consumers (BS18477) into our work. We would encourage the Law Society to do so too in your work.

This research on individuals with learning disabilities has suggested the following recommendations:

- Develop accessible information for people with learning disabilities about the purpose of legal services and how they can be used
- Develop information and resources to clarify the routes that family carers and others can take to access specialist legal services on behalf of others
- Strengthen the awareness legal professionals have about learning disabilities through professional training and guidance
- Promote collaborative working between legal services and the social care sector

Regulators are now considering their response to the Legal Education and Training Review (LETR). Given this, we have also written to them encouraging them to consider what they can do to learn from this research and improve the availability of effective, approachable and affordable legal services for individuals with learning disabilities.

The changes required are not limited to regulation but encompass a wider need for accessible information and broader awareness of the needs of vulnerable clients. While

responsibility for training requirements falls to the frontline regulators, professional bodies play an essential role in encouraging the wider adoption of best practice and development of standards.

We hope that you might consider how you can support these recommendations through your work and we would welcome the opportunity to discuss this research with your team in greater detail.

Yours sincerely,

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Chief Executive

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