



**Sarah Laurence-Couzens RNLD**  
Clinical Lead and Training Director

*"What should the Government's new year's resolutions be for social care?"*

Having worked in the Health and Social Care industry for the last 32 years within the NHS and community services I do not proclaim to be a political reviewer, but a professional expressing my opinion and experience within the field as it stands currently.

There is a high demand for complex case specialist providers within the field of Learning disability and Autism, due to the closure of many local NHS assessment and treatment facilities, but there is pressure on providers to have care cost packages within local Authority bench marks, which are not viable or take into consideration the infrastructure, education and support required to offer such care, this has in my experience lead to poor placements based on cost and inevitably another traumatic breakdown and move for the service user. There needs to be flexibility for professionals to allocate care to the right provider without having to go through preferred providers based on cost.

Fair and Equal pay for NHS staff and social care staff, NHS provision and or private assessment and treatment facilities need provision to discharge their service users back into the community, but the government does not recognise or appreciate what community services provide and how they avoid and prevent admissions, yet the pay is not **equal**.

In my experience over the years there has also been an unfair access to specialist professionals within the NHS, these services are overstretched and are only able to focus on those service users deemed to be in crisis, where is The Care Act 2015 resources and funding to prevent such incidences, early intervention and prevention. Professionals that require further recruitment/funding within regions are SALT, LD psychiatrists, LD psychologists, Occupational Therapist, Epilepsy specialist, general hospital Liaison nurses LD.

Social services review of provision for Social Workers experienced in Learning Disability and dual diagnosis, that within regions have sufficient numbers of Social Workers to meet their case load that are full time and not part time, easing access to their service users and providers, family/ carers to release further pressure and demands on the provider.