
**Easy
Read**



National Audit Office



National Audit Office Report on Care Services – for people with learning disabilities and challenging behaviour



National Audit Office

What is the National Audit Office?

The National Audit Office tells people how well government spends money and if it keeps its promises.

It is not part of the government and tells everyone what it finds.

Introduction



In May 2011, a television programme showed staff being unkind to people with learning disabilities. The people were at Winterbourne View, a private mental health hospital.

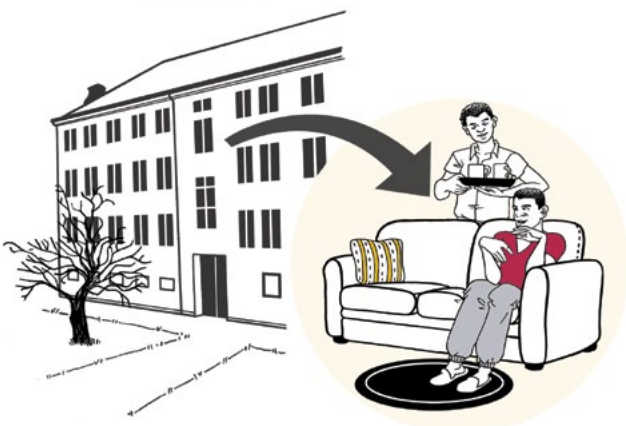


The government is a group of people who we choose to run the country.



In December 2012, the government promised to make people safer and look after them better.

The main promise was:

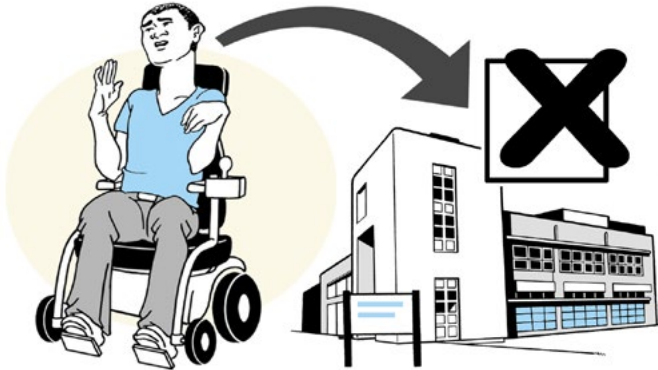


- By 1 June 2014, if anyone with a learning disability and challenging behaviour would be better off at (or near) home, then they should leave hospital.



The government also promised to:

- Improve 63 different things.

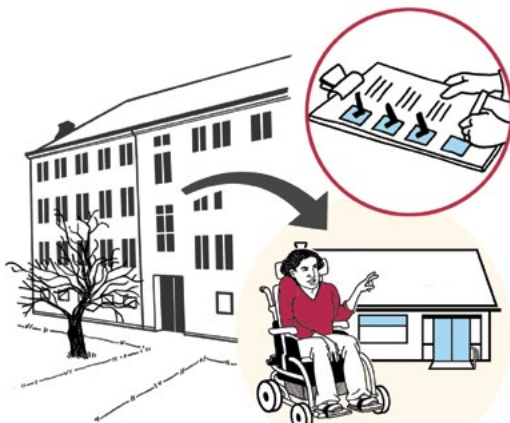


- Put fewer people with learning disabilities in hospital.



But this was a difficult thing to do.

What the government did

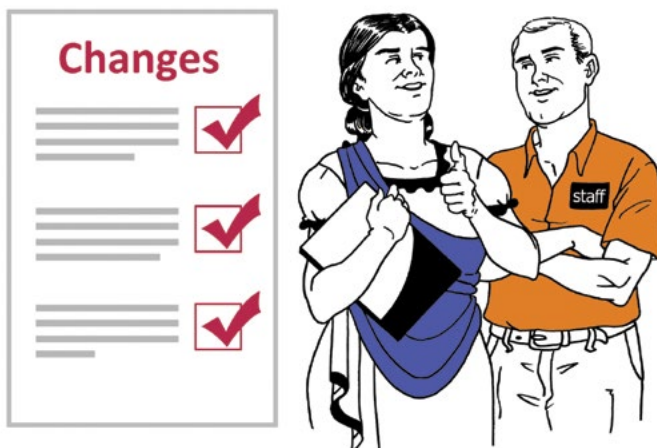


Many things have to happen to help people with learning disabilities, so they can leave hospital and go home.



The government:

- Planned to make care better and safer.



- Tried to check how everything changed.



A group of people working for the government watched over the people who made the changes, to improve people's care.



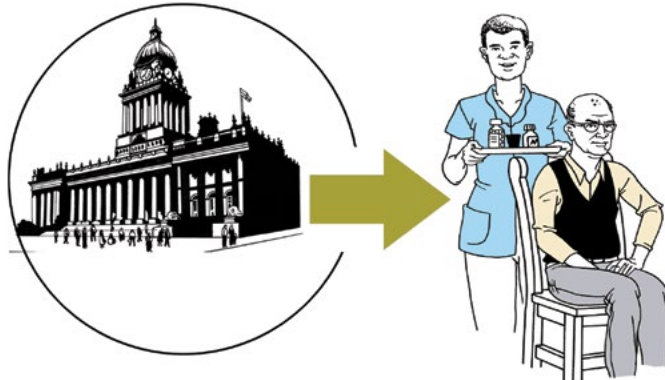
The government:

- Wanted everyone to work together, to improve people's care.



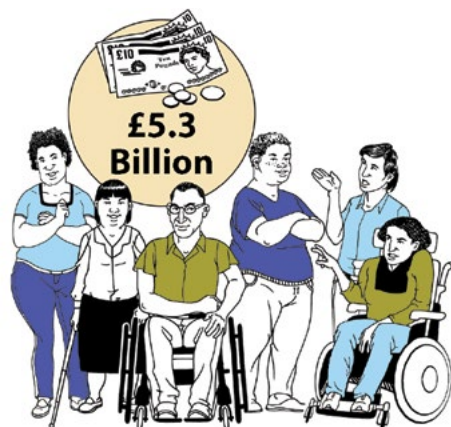
The government:

- Gave hospitals £557 million to care for people with learning disabilities and challenging behaviour in 2012-13.



Local authorities:

- Care for people, when they are not in hospital.



- Spent £5.3 billion to care for adults with learning disabilities in their local area in 2013-14.

What's in this report?



We looked at people with a learning disability and challenging behaviour in mental health hospitals in England.



The report looks at:

- What the government had to do to improve care.

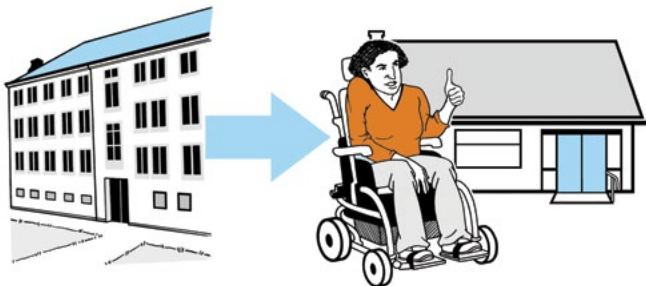


- If the government did what it said it would.

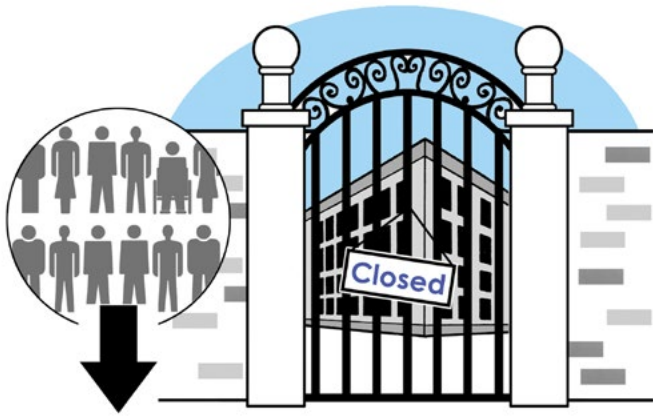


- Why it's hard to make care better.

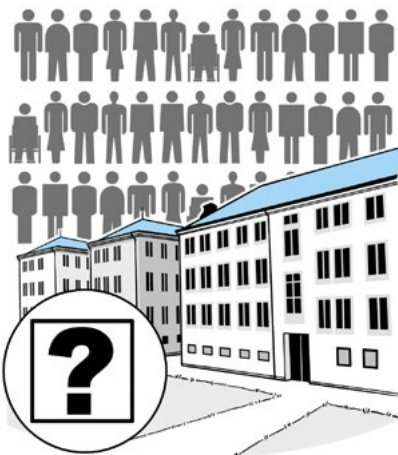
What we found out



Much work is needed, to improve care so people in hospital can go home.



The government thought that less people with learning disabilities would need to go to hospital. This would then let the government close large hospitals.



In 2012, when the government made plans to improve care, it did not know how many people with learning disabilities were in hospital:



- Early guesses about how many people were in hospitals were wrong.



- This made it hard to plan how to make things better.



In 2013, the government tried to count everyone again:

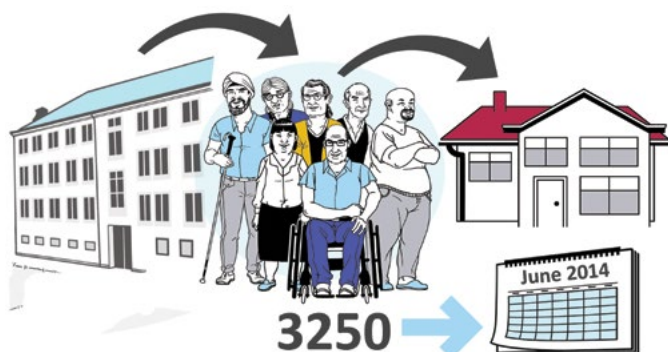
- Hospitals said that they had about 3,250 people in them.



- But those that paid the hospital said that there were about 2,600 people in them.

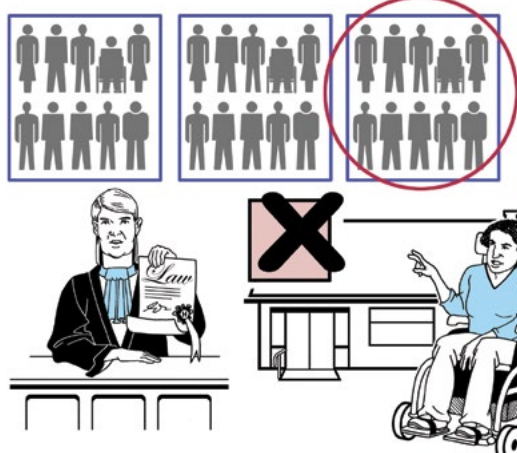
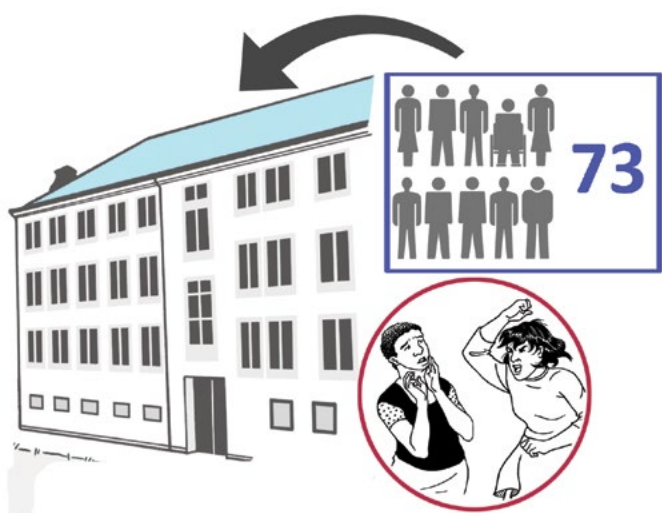


The government thinks that the information is better than it was but is still not good. It wants to carry on checking these numbers.



Families, carers and local people thought that almost all the 3,250 people in hospital would go home by 1 June 2014.

But:



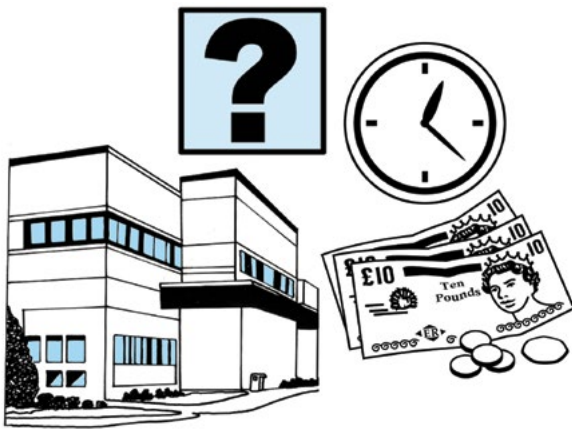
- 73 needed to be there because they may hurt themselves, or someone else.

- About a third could not go home because the courts said so.

So people might still need good hospitals near where they live

When it started to try to make care better, the government did not know:

- Why new people with learning disabilities went to hospital.



- How much time and money hospitals needed, to get people ready to go home by 1 June 2014.

- How hard it would be to get good care where people lived, so they could leave hospital.

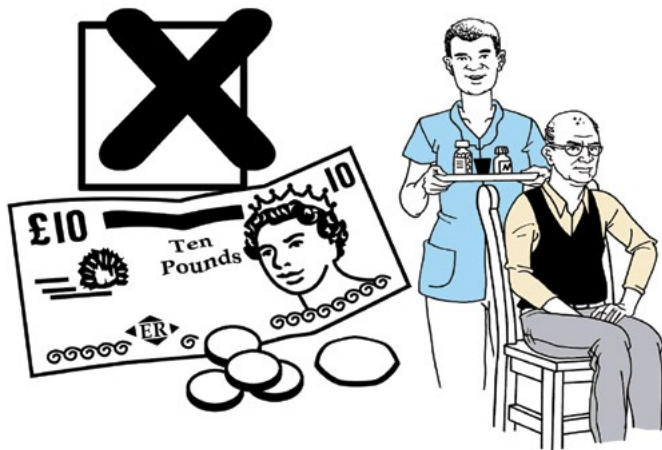
Better ways of working



The government left mental health hospitals, and those who pay for care, to decide how to make the changes promised.

The government could not make changes happen. They:

- Did not have rules, to show those who pay for care what to do differently.



- Did not have more money, to pay for more care near peoples' homes.



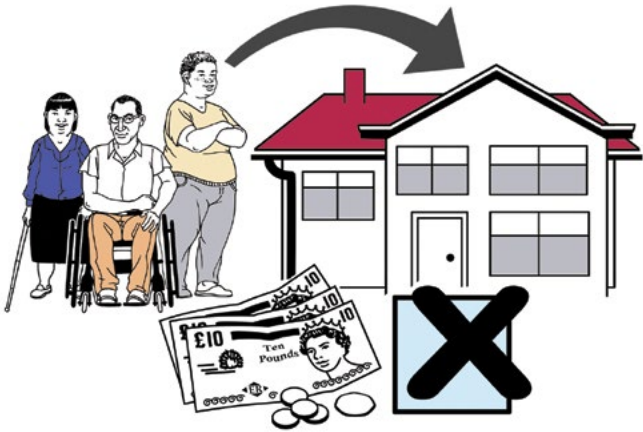
- Could not make different groups who pay for care share their money to buy more good care for people at home.



Mental health hospitals, and those who pay for local care, were the ones who had to make the government's promises happen. The government did not ask them to agree to the plans.

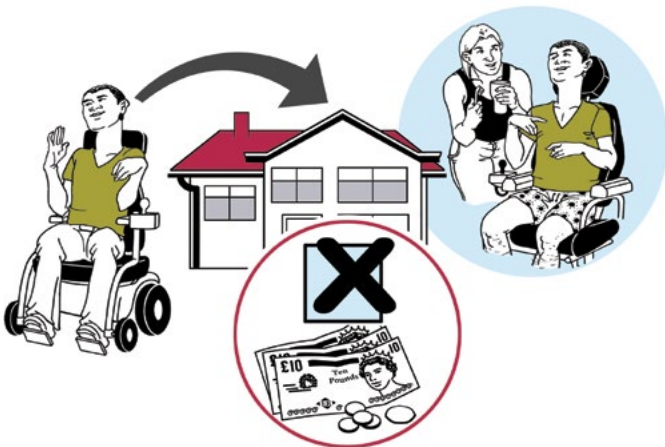


But, the government did give £5 million to help make the changes it promised happen.



The government pays for about half of people in hospital, but it:

- Stopped paying this money, when people went home.



- Gave no extra money for care, and to help bring people home from hospital.



To do what it promised, will cost more money to care for people where they live rather than in hospital.



The last time many people went home from hospitals there was more money to help them where they lived. This time there was no extra money.

How well did the government do?



The government made 20 main promises. It:

- Met 6 by the promised time.



- Met 7 but not by the promised time.



- Didn't meet 7.

Promises the government kept



The government met its promise to show those who pay for care what they need to do differently.



Inspectors work to make sure people with learning disabilities in hospital are treated well and get good care. They:

- Visited 118 hospitals and 32 care homes.



- Found 69 places that were not always caring for people properly.

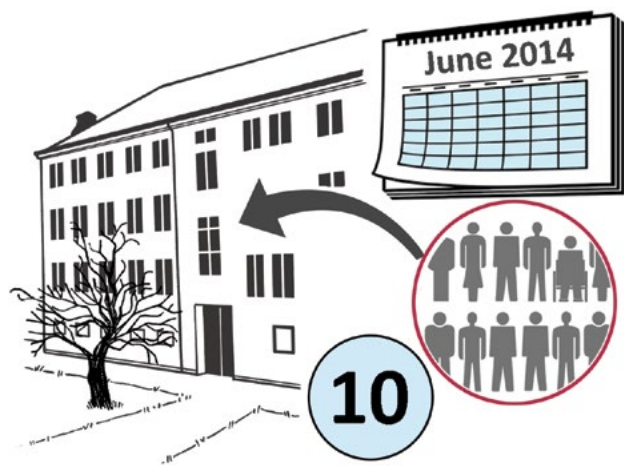


Some hospitals kept people in for a long time and took too long to help them to go home.





The government looked at what happened to the 48 people at the Winterbourne View hospital when it closed.

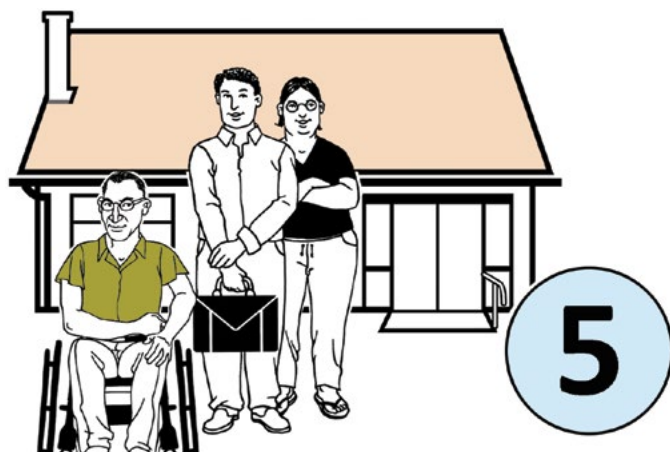


They found that by June 2014:

- 10 people were still in hospital



- 20 were in care homes



- 5 were helped to live in their own home



- 12 had their own home

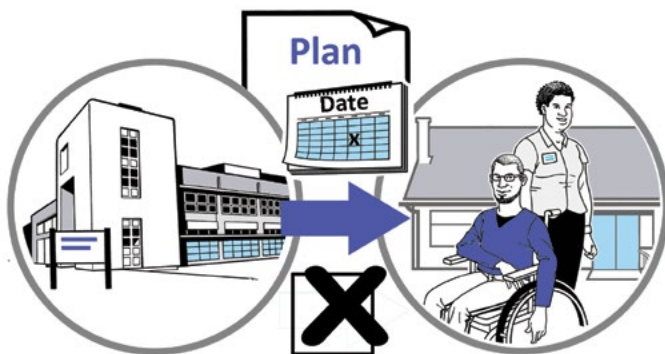
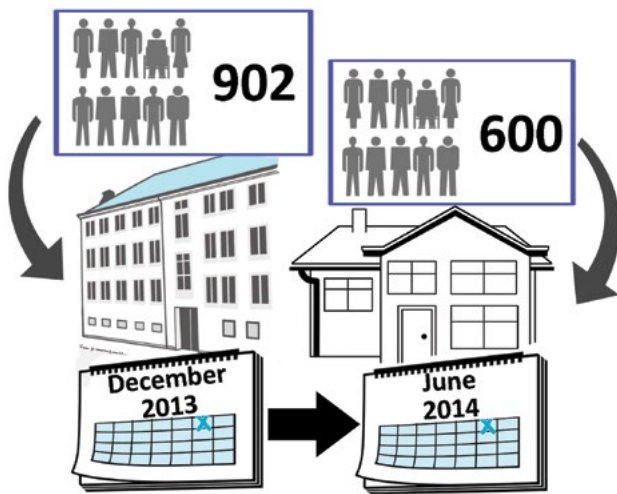
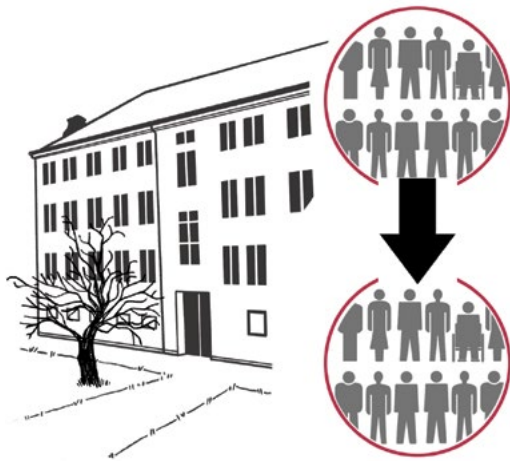


- 1 had died

Promises the
government did not
keep



The government did not meet its biggest promise – that anyone with a learning disability and challenging behaviour who would be better off at (or near) home, should leave hospital.

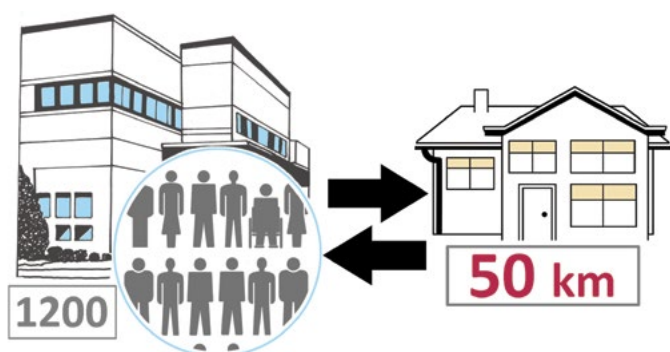


In June 2014, the date for meeting the government's big promise, information showed they had not stopped more people going to hospital:

- The number of people in hospital did not change much.
- From December 2013 to June 2014 (6 months), 902 people went into hospital and 600 went home – so there were 302 more people in hospital than before.
- The government said that people in care must have a planned date for going home – but most of the 2,601 people in hospital did not have one.
- More than half of the people in hospital had a reason from a doctor, to say why they should not go home.



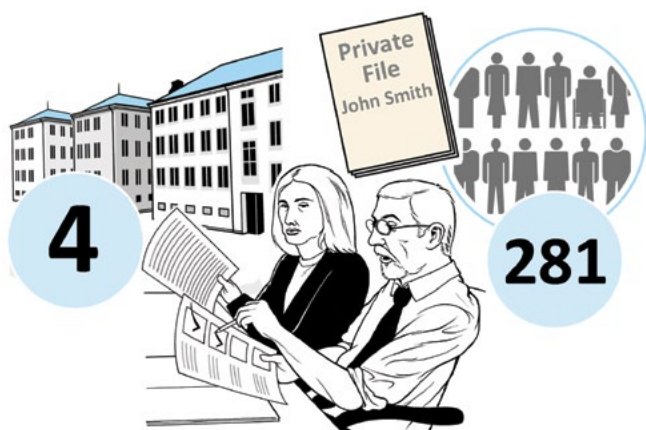
- For almost half of the 2,601 people in hospital, the people who pay for care locally did not know they might be sent home from hospital.



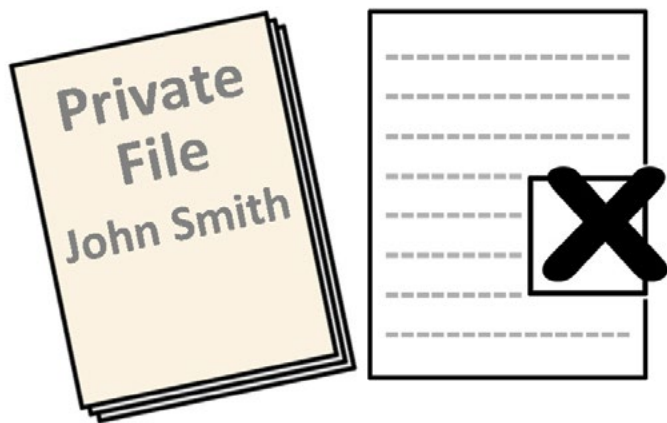
- The September 2013 check of hospitals showed that nearly 1,200 of people in hospital were over 50 kilometres or 31 miles from their home.



The government does not have enough information to see how things are getting better.



We (the National Audit Office) visited 4 hospitals. We looked at the files of 281 people staying there and this is what we found:



- Most files had at least one mistake in the information given to the government.



- The government thought that these people had been in hospital for about 3 years and 10 months each, but they had been there longer – 4 years and 3 months.



- The information showed how long people had been in a hospital ward, but not all their time in hospital. It did not show all the time someone stays in the same or another hospital, how many times they have been in hospital, or all the time they had spent there.



- The people we looked at were in hospital, without going home, for about 6 years and 9 months each.



- The same people going into hospital many times had been there for about 17 years and 4 months each, when you add up all the time they have spent in hospital.

Government plans to meet its main promises in the future



The government knows that it has been slow in meeting its promises. So to make care better:

- In April 2014, hospitals began to work with those who pay for local care to make good plans to help people leave hospital.



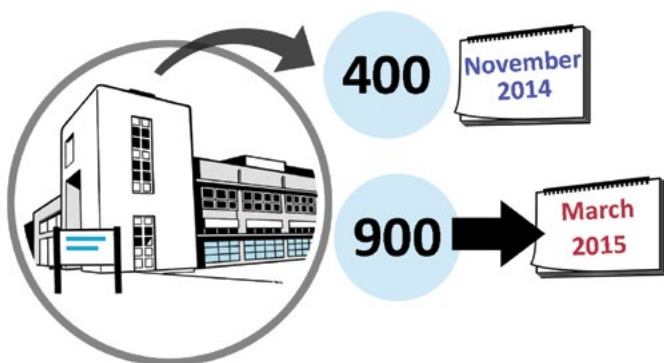
- In May 2014, the government started to make a new plan to try to meet its promises.



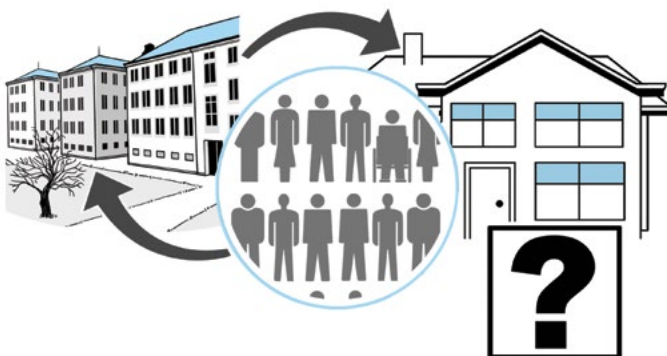
- The boss of the organisation that helps to support charities (Sir Stephen Bubb) was asked to look at the best way to make sure people with learning disabilities could leave hospital.



- A new plan, in August 2014, was agreed to move half of the people in hospital on 1 April 2014 (about 1,300 people) home by 31 March 2015.



- Around 400 people had left hospital by 1 November 2014, so 900 more need to leave by 31 March 2015.



Things are changing but it is hard to be sure how much better things have become. The numbers do not show if people went home or went to other hospitals or came back into hospital.

What people told us about the new plan



When we (the National Audit Office) met with hospitals and those who pay for people's care in October 2014, they did not know about the new plan.

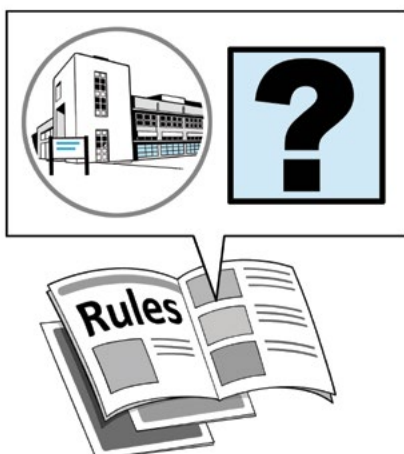


There was no plan about what to do if things went wrong, or how to help make things easier if it was still hard to send people home from hospital.



People told us that:

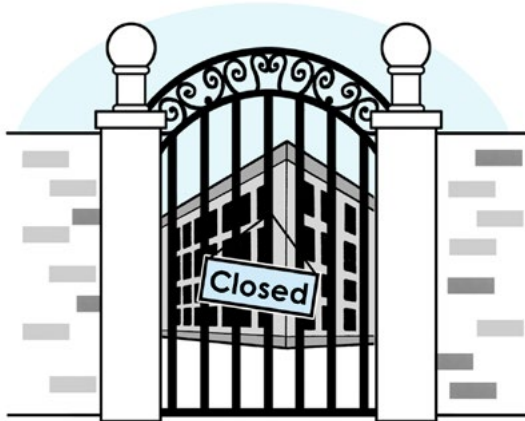
- Everyone responsible for local areas had to make sure that things are working.



- There are rules for finding out if people need to be in hospital.

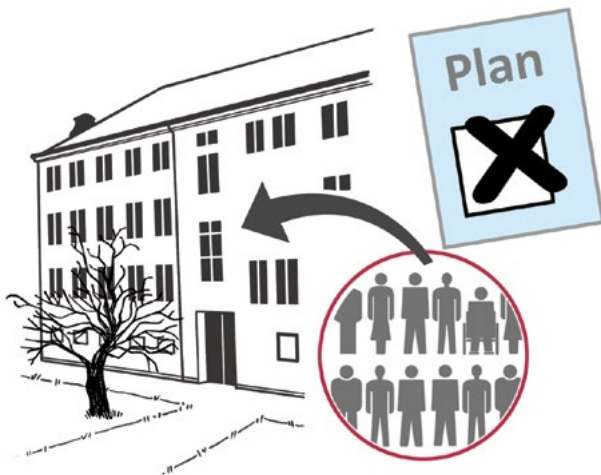


- The government worked hard to help make those who pay for local care work together.

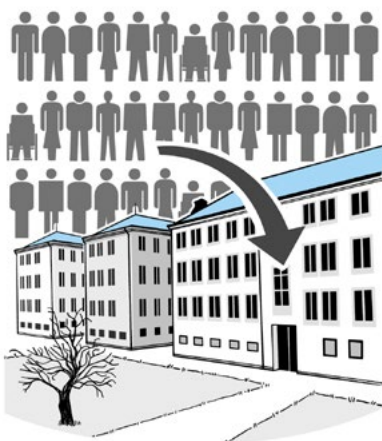


If the government had done what it promised, then fewer people with learning disabilities would go into hospital and large hospitals would close.

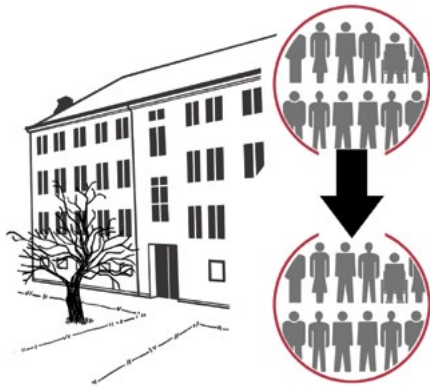
But:



- There is no plan to stop so many people going into hospital or to close hospitals.



- The hospitals we visited all had lots of people waiting to go into them.



So even if lots of people do go home, the number in hospital would stay the same because many are still waiting to go in.



This may mean that people still need good hospitals near where they live. Either because of the problems they have with their care or because how they behave could cause problems for them, or for other people.

Getting care services that will last



Those who pay for care have to work together to help people to go home from hospital.



This is more likely to happen where:

- Care teams at home have lots of skills, and work with hospital doctors to make good plans for each person going home.



- Care teams work together to quickly help people if they have a problem at home and stop them from having to go back to hospital.



We also found that:

- People who make decisions about money took too long, and this sometimes stopped people from going home from hospital.

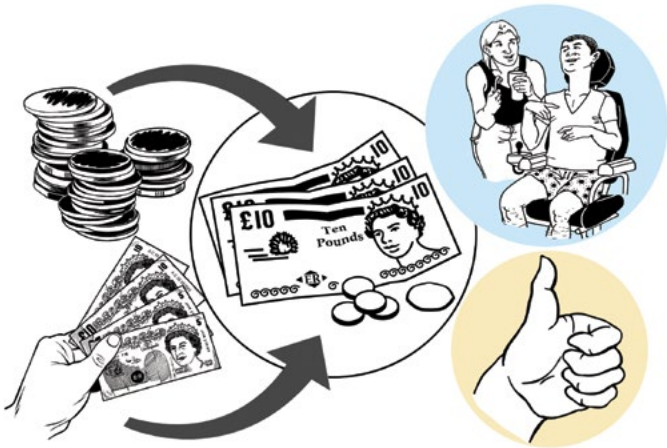


- Mental health hospital staff have many skills to help people at home and should do this more often.



- Getting good local care for people takes time.

Who plans care well?



The people who plan and pay for care in Salford do this well.

Salford has:

- Put all the money used for caring for people with a learning disability together – so money isn't wasted and everyone gets good care.

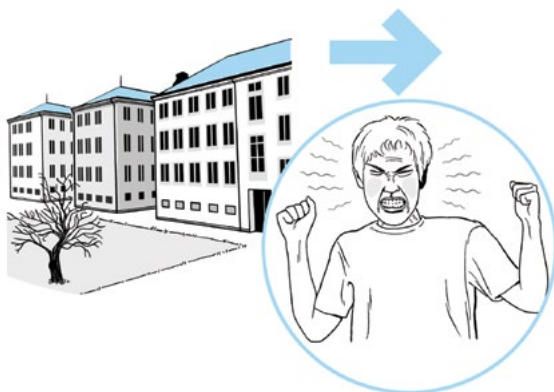


- Good teams who share their skills and work together, to help people at home so they don't have to go into hospital.



- But Salford has taken a long time (over 10 years) to get it right.

Our last thoughts



Helping people with learning disabilities, that have challenging behaviour, move out of hospital is the right thing to do. But it is difficult.

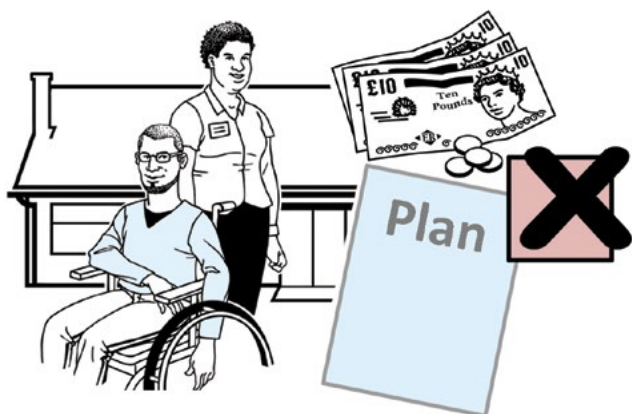


Many people need to work together, to make this happen.



The government:

- Met some of its promises, but not its biggest one.

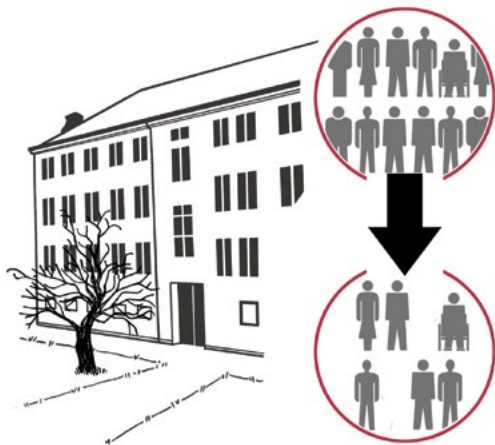


- Had no plans or money to help care for people properly when they went home.



The government has 3 difficult jobs to make care better. They need to:

- Decide the right place (hospital or a person's home) to assess peoples' needs.



- Put fewer people with learning disabilities in hospital, when they should not be there.



- Help people more, so they don't have to go to hospital so much.



The government has made a slow start to this work.



They are starting to check the number of people who are ready to leave hospital, even if they can't stop so many people going in.



People who pay for care must work together, and make changes more quickly, for the government to keep its promises.
