

PRESS RELEASE

(Insert date)

(Insert contact name), (insert email address), (insert phone number)

Outrage as (insert name of town) carers forced to change disabled loved ones on dirty toilet floors

(Insert number) local people have signed a Mencap petition calling for fully accessible disabled toilets to be installed in (insert town name) so disabled people, including people with profound and multiple learning disabilities, do not have to be changed by their families and carers on dirty toilet floors.

The petition, which calls for Changing Places toilets to be installed in the town, will be presented to (insert council name e.g. London Borough of Croydon) by (insert local group name e.g. Anytown Mencap) today (insert date).

A Changing Places toilet is different to a standard accessible toilet. It is a room equipped with an adjustable changing bench and a hoist to allow people to use the toilet with assistance or have their continence pads changed. Without access to Changing Places toilets carers are often forced to change disabled family members on a dirty toilet floor with little or no privacy. The alternative is to limit outings to a couple of hours or to not go out at all.

There are currently (insert number) Changing Places toilets in (insert town name). (Insert name of carer) from (insert name of town carer is from) who cares for her (insert relationship e.g. son or daughter) with profound learning disabilities, said: (insert quote e.g. “We can only travel a short distance from our home and every outing we make is like a military operation because we have to get home in time to change (insert name of son/daughter)’s continence pad./ “Having a Changing Places toilet in the town centre would mean we could go into town as a family and enjoy a day out together. We just want to do normal family things without worrying all the time.”)

(Insert name of Mencap spokesperson), (insert local group name), said: (insert quote e.g. “It’s outrageous that in this day and age, carers have to change their loved ones on filthy toilet floors/ “It is unacceptable that people with profound and multiple learning disabilities who live in (insert town name) don’t have the right facilities and have to suffer the indignity of being changed on dirty toilet floors or become prisoners in their own home.”)

The petition formed part of the activities organised by (insert local group name) for Learning Disability Week in June. Mencap is calling for all (in England, insert local authorities, in Northern Ireland insert public bodies) to install Changing Places toilets in public places, and for the government to change building regulations to require Changing Places toilets.

For more information and to sign an online petition, go to

www.mencap.org.uk/changelives

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Case studies, Mencap spokespeople and copies of the full research findings available.

Notes to editor

¹ *Changing Places Toilets: Estimates of potential users* (June 2009), University of Dundee, Professor James Hogg

Total	Total users of Changing Places toilets by disability group							No. of Changing Places toilets in UK	Ratio of number of people who need Changing Places toilets to the number there are
	Profound and multiple learning disabilities	Cerebral palsy	Spina Bifida	Motor Neurone disease	Multiple sclerosis	Traumatic brain injury	Older people		
230,252	36,782	30,947	8,000	500	8,500	13,437	132,086	85	2,709 : 1

- Groups who need Changing Places toilets are people with profound and multiple learning disabilities, cerebral palsy, spina bifida, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis, traumatic brain injury and older people affected by incontinence.
- There are 100 Changing Places toilets in Britain. For a full list of locations please visit http://changing-places.org/find_a_toilet.aspx
- The Changing Places campaign was launched in 2006 by the Changing Places Consortium, of which Mencap is a member.
- Learning Disability Week is Mencap's annual awareness week. Learning Disability Week 2009 runs from 22 – 28 June.
- Mencap works with people with a learning disability and their families and carers.
- 1.5 million people in the UK have a learning disability.
- A learning disability is caused by the way the brain develops before, during or shortly after birth. It is always lifelong.
- Learning disability affects someone's intellectual and social development all their life. People with a learning disability find it harder than others to learn, understand and communicate.
- People with a learning disability don't get an equal chance in life. Mencap fights to change laws and services and to provide better access to education, employment and leisure facilities, supporting thousands of people with a learning disability to live their lives the way they want.

- It is not a mental illness and should not be confused with mental health issues. It is not dyslexia or aspergers syndrome.
- It used to be called mental handicap but we don't use this term anymore because most people with a learning disability find it offensive.
- For information about learning disability issues please call the Learning Disability Helpline (England) on 0808 808 1111 or visit www.askmencap.info