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Date : 19 July 2007

Mr Peter Coles
Chief Executive
Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust
Chief Executive's office
Sussex House
1 Abbey Road
Brighton BN2 1ES

Dear Mr Coles

**My Claim under the DDA against Brighton and Sussex
University Hospitals NHS Trust
Your Ref: PC/MLS/NL7/150**

Thank you for your letter dated 13 June 2007 and attachments. I am sorry that you are disappointed that I have entered into litigation. I did this very reluctantly but I felt it was necessary as I have endured so many meetings and written so many letters to the Trust about perceived discrimination against people with sensory loss without much visible impact. I do feel that the Trust does discriminate against people with sight and/or hearing problems and that it needs to pull its socks up. I believe that this discrimination is not wilful but results from a failure to address problems. I believe that the Trust pays lip-service to people with sensory loss, calling meetings, producing documents and appointing people but without ever taking decisive action.

I draw your attention to the letter I wrote to Mrs Melinda Stone on 7 June 2007 together with all the attachments to that letter. I do hope that she makes available all that

paperwork to you. You must understand my frustration at not having received any reply from your staff to the letter I wrote on 26 September 2005 to Mr Derek Lewis Chairman of Patientline. I know you are a very busy man but I feel someone should have taken note of that letter which could have assisted the Trust to meet its obligations. Likewise, you can understand that I feel disappointed that even now I have received absolutely no response from anyone in the Trust to my letter dated 16 May 2007 to you concerning the format of communications from the NHS such as appointment letters to be sent to me in the future. Since that letter I have received an appointment letter which I was not able to read. The Trust is holding itself wide open to a claim under the DDA that it is discriminating against people with sight problems. Such a claim would of course mention the fact that I had had no response to my letter of 16 May 2007 and would cite the appointment letter. Naturally, I do not wish to embark on another DDA claim against your Trust. I would much prefer your Trust to stop ignoring the issue I raised.

These words have been removed to preserve the "without prejudice" data of Document 11

I want to get across to you that I have the best interests of the NHS at heart and want to improve the way it treats disabled people. I am afraid that the bureaucracy and 'political correctness' seem to get in the way of this.

I am eager to discuss with an appropriate staff member what your Trust should do by way of improving matters for hearing-impaired people. The first thing is that all the

boardrooms of the Trust should have in situ induction loops or infra-red systems. They should be real, working and understood by the appropriate staff. It is not helpful for the Trust to produce sheets of paper detailing where equipment should be. I suspect that much of this equipment is unsuitable, cannot be found, does not work and is totally mysterious to nearly all your staff. I suggest they were ordered in a mechanical way and that no-one has ever tested them. Certainly, I have never been asked to test them and I come very cheap i.e. free.

There is a slight problem in that I am corresponding with two people, yourself and Mrs Melinda Stone. No man should have two masters. It would be helpful if I was in correspondence with just one person.

Besides the Defence submitted by Mrs Stone I have had a telephone conversation with her. She told me that she is not a lawyer but she did sound rather imperious. I don't know why people think that that attitude works.

When I know whom I should conduct 'negotiations' with I will explain more about the circumstances that faced me on 12 February and 8 May 2007. Mrs Stone is quite mistaken in attributing to me how much I was able to comprehend matters at those meetings. Surely, it is for me to say how I got on. I have never knowingly met, spoken to or been addressed by Elma Still, a name hitherto unknown to me.

I give you an example of how I think the Trust is not seriously taking on board the issue of meeting the needs of disabled patients or staff. At the meeting of 8 May 2007, I heard a voice saying that the NHS should accept the fact that some patients are homosexual and that a patient's

'partner' might be of the same sex. I think we know this, certainly we do in Brighton! Also, this is not a disability issue and was not relevant to that meeting. I heard another voice saying that more and more Turkish and Armenian (I think she meant Albanian) people are moving to Brighton and that the Trust should produce literature in those languages. This is PC codswollop and has no relevance to a meeting on disability. You probably know that it is a matter of great public debate the practice of public bodies producing literature in foreign languages and the employment of translators at public expense for those who choose not to speak English in the UK. Senior Ministers have made speeches urging the public sector to cut back the use of public funds in this way.

To conclude, I assure you that I would like resolved this DDA claim without going to trial or without even going to a case management conference meeting. I contemplate agreeing Consent Order whereby the Trust undertakes to take specific steps to help hearing-impaired people who are patients or staff of the Trust. I act in good faith and I urge you to push the Trust along the route of seriously dealing with disability issues rather than countless meetings and paperwork. I'm quite happy to talk to anyone on the telephone: I can hear well on my own phone.

Yours Sincerely

Colin B. Bennett