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## **Press Statement from Respond regarding the ending of the North Devon Atlas care home abuse trials**

We are pleased that this investigation has broken new ground through bringing charges against not just those direct care workers abusing the people in their care, but all the way up to owners, directors and senior managers, who allowed a culture of abuse to exist.

It is all too easy for people with learning disabilities and or autism to be treated differently to the rest of us, losing entitlement to their Human Rights. This case has highlighted how abuse can become an insidious part of the system, where abuse becomes a normal part of everyday life. The trials and subsequent convictions of the owners and staff of Atlas have begun the difficult task of indicating to society that this is not acceptable.

Our continued concern is for the emotional and psychological wellbeing of the people who lived within these institutions and their families who have suffered at the hands of Atlas run 'care homes'. We already know there is a lack of support for families and their loved ones who have gone through the type of trauma that has been unveiled in this case and how important it is in helping people move on with their lives. There is an attitude that people with a learning disability don't have an emotional life which simply is not true.

We need to make sure all people with learning disabilities and or autism who are victims of systemic abuse and their families get the right support so that this trauma does not continue to affect the rest of their lives.

Dr Noelle Blackman

CEO Respond

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Patron: Professor Sheila the Baroness Hollins

Challenging vulnerability, trauma and abuse in the lives of people with learning disabilities