Dr Matt Hoghton

Doctors can discriminate against patients. I think normally it’s not done consciously. I think it mainly happens through indifference.

We are all guilty of making assumptions about people we see in front of us. We make assumptions about their life and what happens with them, but we don’t realise they are actually someone’s son, someone’s daughter, someone’s friend.

And once you look in to see how rich their life is, then you realise your assumptions were completely wrong.

Professor Baroness Sheila Hollins

I think all of us have prejudices but we perhaps don’t know what they are, that’s one of the difficulties, we don’t, we aren’t aware of the ways in which we are prejudicial and the risk that we might discriminate against somebody because of that lack of awareness. So I think we have to be sensitive about it. And we aren’t going to get it right all the time.

[Extract from Wood for the trees]

Dr Matt Hoghton

One of the ways I use to prevent any discrimination is, I imagine the person is a member of my family and I try to say, if this person was a member of my family, would the
Baroness Sheila Hollins  
So there will be times when we realise afterwards that perhaps we've done something which wasn't right. And I think it's about being vigilant and constantly trying to learn and, you know, be in touch, and to get feedback, to get feedback from patients, to get feedback from other staff, to make sure that your practice is observed and that you do honestly seek feedback from patients and colleagues about what you've done.

Beverley Dawkins  
We were told about somebody who lives in one of our Mencap houses actually, that they'd gone into hospital with some quite bad sort of stomach pains.

So they'd gone in to see what was going on. And they'd only been in the hospital for a couple of hours when one of the staff was sort of looking at his notes at the end of the bed, and found that he'd got a DNR notice on his notes. Do Not Resuscitate. And that's pretty bad anyway, to do that without consulting the staff and they hadn't consulted the person's sister, so nobody who supported the person had been involved in that decision anyway.

But the thing was, also, that it turns out that this person was only constipated. So it seemed incredibly awful that somebody could go into hospital with constipation and have a Do Not Resuscitate notice put on them.