



How social care staff can use reasonable adjustments to support the health of people with learning disabilities

Reasonable adjustments and why they are important



Reasonable adjustments are the changes the law says people or services must make so disabled people can use services as easily as everybody else.

Putting reasonable adjustments in place can help people with learning disabilities get better healthcare and live longer.

How can I find out more about reasonable adjustments?



There are lots of websites where you can find examples of reasonable adjustments and resources you can use.

The Learning Disability Observatory has published a series of reports¹ looking at reasonable adjustments in specific service areas.

What can I do?



Annual health checks are a reasonable adjustment to the health care that people with learning disabilities can get from their GP. People with learning disabilities often don't realise that problems they are having could be helped by their GP, or don't know how to arrange to see them.

Everyone with a learning disability can have an annual health check from the age of 14. Help the person you support to have an annual health check.

There is an information sheet about annual health checks.²

Use websites like Easyhealth³, A Picture of Health⁴ and BILD⁵ to find easy-read information and videos about health issues to help the person you support understand more about their own health.





Ask the GP if the person you support has information about their learning disability in their summary care record. This is a special record anyone can have which gives key extra medical information to hospital doctors and nurses if they have to treat the person in an emergency.

Extra information for a person with learning disabilities could include the best way to communicate with them, how they show pain or particular things that worry them as well as key conditions and medicines. This extra information can help all medical staff treating the person you support to find out about what reasonable adjustments might be helpful for them.

This needs to be done with the person's consent or in their best interests. You can speak to their GP about this. This can be done during an **annual health check**.⁶



Hospital passports can help hospital staff by giving them information about the person when they are admitted to hospital. This will include information about their health, what they like and dislike, how to communicate with them and how to make them comfortable and relaxed.

This information needs to be up to date. It should be checked at least once a year or if any major changes happen.

There are **examples you can use**.⁷

Thinking about what reasonable adjustments someone might need

T.E.A.C.H. is a way of learning and remembering how to make reasonable adjustments. Each letter of the word T.E.A.C.H. is the first letter of a key word to think about when supporting someone to access healthcare:

T

Time: This might be offering a double appointment with the GP or an early morning appointment when the waiting room is quieter

E

Environment: This might mean the dentist visiting at home or the operating theatre nurses meeting the individual in casual clothes rather than in gowns and masks

A

Attitude: This means treating everyone with dignity and respect and as an individual

C

Communication: This means using accessible information to ensure it can be understood, eg easy read leaflets, pictures, symbols or sign language

H

Help: This means listening to others (family carers/supporters) and knowing where to get specialist help when needed (community learning disability nurse, acute liaison nurse, social worker, safeguarding teams)

Key messages:

- you need to think about the individual when thinking about the reasonable adjustments they might need. What is helpful for one person will not necessarily help another person
- think about who can help with reasonable adjustments. This might be community learning disability nurses or acute liaison nurses
- use summary care records to let medical professionals know more about the person
- You need to raise things like adding information to summary care records, or making reasonable adjustments with health staff, to make sure the person you are supporting can access healthcare

This is the second in a series of health factsheets for social care staff. You can find others and more [guidance](#) for social care providers.

There is a [supporting set of slides](#) for this document that can be used by social care staff as a training resource.

The pictures in this factsheet are from Photosymbols: www.photosymbols.co.uk

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PHE supports the UN
Sustainable Development Goals



¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reasonable-adjustments-for-people-with-learning-disabilities>

² https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/655374/Social_care_staff_supporting_annual_health_check_in_learning_disabilities.pdf

³ <http://www.easyhealth.org.uk/>

⁴ <http://www.apictureofhealth.southwest.nhs.uk/>

⁵ <http://www.bild.org.uk/resources/easy-read-information/health-easy-read-links/>

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<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20160921135209/http://systems.digital.nhs.uk/scr/additional/sleaflet.pdf>

⁷ www.easyhealth.org.uk/listing/hospital-passports-%28leaflets%29