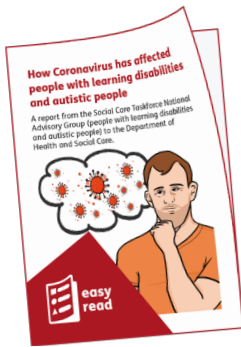


How Coronavirus has affected people with learning disabilities and autistic people

A report from the Social Care Taskforce National Advisory Group (people with learning disabilities and autistic people) to the Department of Health and Social Care.



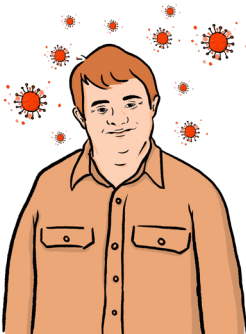
Introduction



This report comes from the Social Care Taskforce National Advisory Group: People with Learning Disabilities and Autistic People.

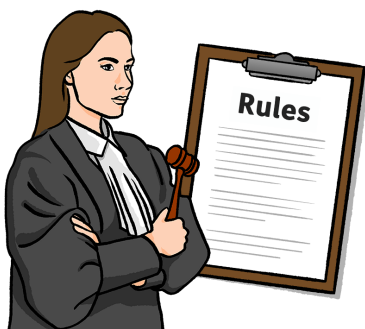


The group gives the Government advice about services for people with learning disabilities or autistic people.

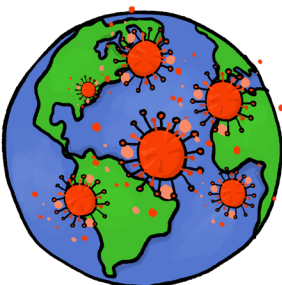


This report explains:

- how **Coronavirus** is affecting people with learning disabilities and autistic people



- what the Government should do to keep people safe.



Coronavirus is a new illness that is spreading around the world. It affects your lungs and breathing.

How Coronavirus is affecting people with learning disabilities and autistic people



Not enough information

We don't know how many people with learning disabilities have been affected by Coronavirus.



But we do know that many people have died.



We are worried that some people with learning disabilities may be more likely to die if they get Coronavirus than people who don't have learning disabilities.



We want more research to be done to understand if this is true and why.



Services in difficulty

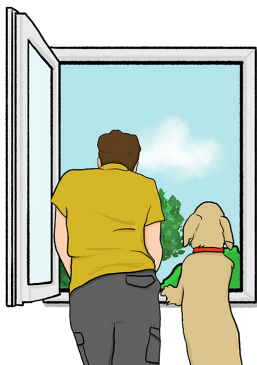
Services were already in difficulty before Coronavirus. For years they have been managing with less money.



Coronavirus has made things more difficult.



During the **lockdown** many people have been on their own.



Lockdown was when we all had to stay indoors and away from other people.



Families have not been able to get support.



Many services have reduced or stopped.



Where other people have been doing things online, some people with learning disabilities have been left out.



We think that people's physical and mental health have got much worse during lockdown.

What needs to happen

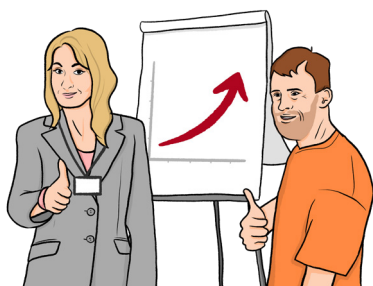


New ways of working

We need to change the way we do things.



We need to involve people in decisions about the services they use.



Working together will make services better and save time and money.



The Government should give more money to **self-advocacy** and community organisations.



Self-advocacy is support to speak up about things that are important to you.



Accessible information

The Government should:

- provide information that is accessible to people with different needs



- provide easy read information about Coronavirus and the rules for staying safe



- make sure people can access information online, at home.

This means giving people training and making sure they have the right equipment



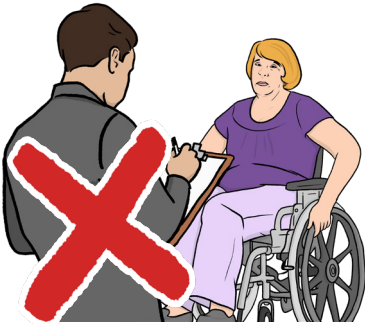
- help local councils to support local self-advocacy and community groups.



Keep supporting people

Local councils and health services should:

- restart any support that has stopped



- stop doing reviews for now, unless someone asks for one



- give people an independent **advocate** to help them when their support is being reviewed.



An **advocate** is someone who will help you to speak up, or speak on your behalf.



Help services

The Government should give money to local councils and health services so they can help services:



- that may run out of money because of Coronavirus



- that have problems getting enough staff



- get the **PPE** they need.



PPE stands for Personal Protective Equipment. It is the special clothing that people wear to stay safe, like face masks and gloves.



Help lonely people

The Government, NHS and local councils should:



- make sure volunteers are including people with learning disabilities and autistic people when they give support



- tell more people and community groups about how to include people with learning disabilities and autistic people.

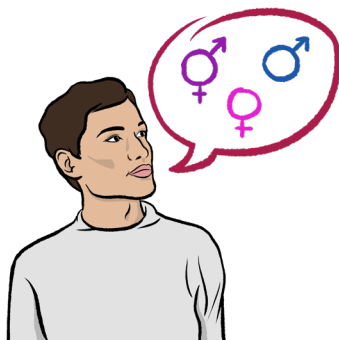


People who are often left out

Local councils and health services should check for people without any support, who are having problems on their own.



The Government, local councils and health services should check for people who aren't getting access to the services they should.



These may include:

- people with more than one disability or mental health problem
- people from black and minority ethnic communities
- families that are caring for someone without getting paid
- young people
- people in large care homes
- people who haven't needed support before
- people from **LGBTQI+** community.

The **LGBTQI+** community includes people who are gay and lesbian or something else. It also includes people who have changed their gender since they were born.

Other things that need to be done



The Government has given £4 billion to adult social care services. But this is not enough. The money must get through to all the services that need it.



Services should support people to be able to communicate online.



The Government should create accessible information that covers all the changes to rules about keeping safe from Coronavirus.

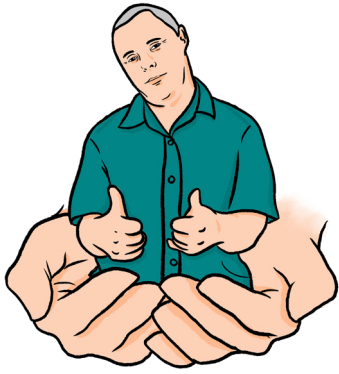


Services should do more work to understand the problems of people with learning disabilities or autistic people who are part of:

- the LGBTQ+ community



- black and minority ethnic communities.



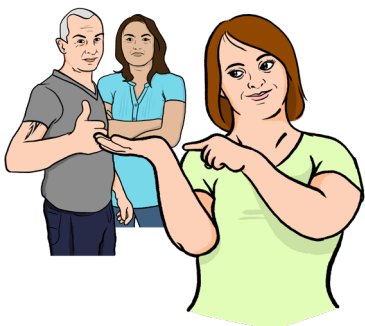
The Government needs to look at how to keep people with learning disabilities and other disabilities safe from Coronavirus.



The Government should also do the things in this report for children and young people with learning disabilities or autistic children and young people.



The Government should look at whether people in long stay care are being kept safe from Coronavirus.



They should be helped to have contact with friends and family.

Health issues



We have heard that some doctors are asking people to sign forms to say they won't have treatment if they get seriously ill. We think this is wrong.



Health services should:

- look into the cause of death of any person with a learning disability



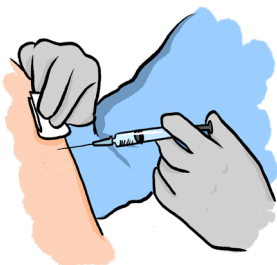
- work to reduce problems with weight and diabetes in people with learning disabilities



- reduce certain drugs that are supposed to keep people calm



- stop doctors saying that a learning disability or autism is the cause of death



- make sure people with learning disabilities, autistic people, families and support workers get flu vaccinations.

Accessible planning



The Government should pay for a group of people with learning disabilities and autistic people to help them make plans.



Plans work better when they are made together with the people they affect.



This group should be linked with local self-advocacy groups and community groups.