How to support people with learning disabilities

A guide for GP practice staff

Patient Online and CHANGE

www.changepeople.org

Organisation

CHANGE, a charity led by people with learning disabilities.

Information about people with learning disability

In England there are more than one million people with a learning disability. A person's learning disability might be judged as being mild, moderate or severe. Some people have a learning disability and a physical disability, for example a visual or hearing impairment.

While everyone with a learning disability is different, people with a learning disability might find difficult:

- everyday activities

- communicating with other people

- learning new things when they haven't been given enough time.

What people who have a learning disability need

Each person with a learning disability will need a different kind of help. Some people have a learning disability and a physical disability, for example a visual or hearing impairment.

A person with a learning disability might need:

- More time to learn new things

- Support to learn new skills

- Help to understand difficult information

It is best to ask each person what their communication needs are and what support they need.

How practices can help people with learning disabilities

The option to book appointments, order repeat prescriptions or get test results online can help people with learning disabilities.

### *Help people to use computers, tablets and mobile phones*

Most people with a learning disability can use these things in the same way as everyone else, but there are special apps, computers, tablets and phones that are easier for people with a disability to use. This includes special apps such as screen readers.

Make information more accessible for people with learning disabilities

GP surgeries should make information accessible for everyone. This will help people remember the information and make their experience better.
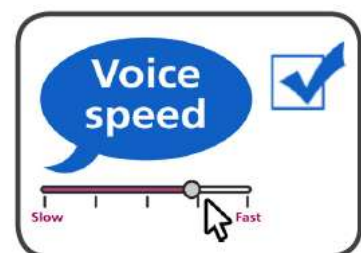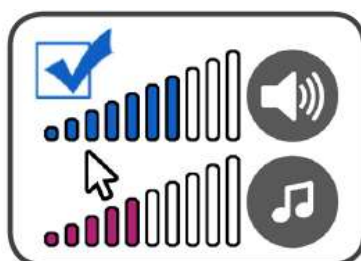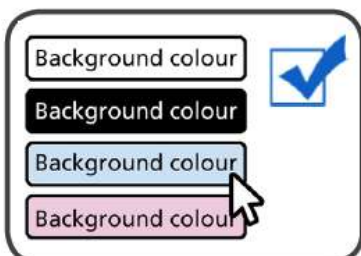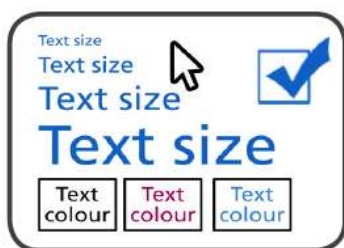
Things to keep in mind to make websites and information more accessible
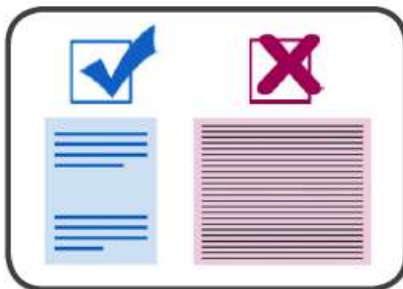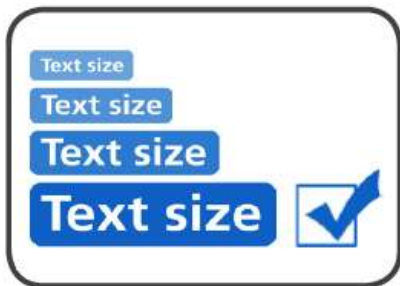
Don't forget to use:

- Large text

- Signs to help people move around the website

- Simple language

- Clear layout and clear buttons

- Pictures to describe what is written

Make it possible for people to change or choose:

o Text size and colour

o Back ground colour

o Volume and tone

o Speed of voice for audio or video information

For more help, read *How to Make Information Accessible* which is available at http://bit.ly/2koxkTA

Support for practice staff

Staff need to know about the Accessible Information Standard www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/accessibleinfo which gives advice on how to make information more understandable for everyone. All written information needs to be very clear and in plain English. All healthcare staff should have training in how to support and communicate well with people with learning disabilities.