

Annual health check exemplars for people with a learning disability

Overview

People with a learning disability have poorer physical and mental health than other people. Many of the conditions people with a learning disability die from are potentially treatable.

Every year, people with a learning disability die sooner than they should.

Only 37% of people with a learning disability live beyond 65. For the general population that statistic is 85%.

NHS England and NHS Improvement are calling for systems across the country to become learning disability 'exemplars', to drive forward improvements in care, reduce health inequalities and help to put the health of people with a learning disability firmly on the agenda.

The ambition is that there will be one exemplar in each of the seven NHS England and NHS Improvement regions that will trailblaze improvements in access to care and reducing health inequalities – key priorities for the NHS – their focus will include the uptake of annual health checks, ensuring health action plans are of a high quality and are understood and increasing the number of people with a learning disability getting their flu jab. They must also ensure reasonable adjustments are implemented across all their settings, with their learning being shared at place and STP/ICS/CCG/PCN level.

Working beyond organisational and professional boundaries, exemplars will work locally with wider partners for example, bring together the NHS, local authorities, voluntary and the community sector and experts by experience and self-advocacy groups to design, test and implement different ways of working to help address complex issues known to adversely impact the health of people with a learning disability.

The outcomes of this work will be;

- To ensure everyone with a learning disability is known to their GP practice and is on the GP QOF register.
- ensure the uptake of annual health checks to at least 75%.
- see high quality action plans being produced for all learning disability patients aged 14 and above.
- prioritise the number of people with a learning disability getting a flu vaccination.

NHS England and NHS Improvement



- ensure reasonable adjustments are being recognised and implemented, a requirement of the Equality Act (2010).

Contact us

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Annual health checks for people with a learning disability

Annual health checks are vital to making sure that any problems people with a learning disability have with their health can be identified early and appropriate action taken to address these needs. As part of this, GP practices need to have an accurate and complete register of patients with a learning disability.

The policy driver

The NHS Long Term Plan set an ambition that by 2023/24, at least 75% of people aged 14+ with a learning disability will have an annual health check.

In 2020/21, this was supported by increased investment for GP practices and primary care networks.

NHS England and NHS Improvement offer and support

This project offers seven STPs/ICSs an opportunity to work with local, regional and national partners to develop and test approaches improving access and support for people with a learning disability. The national exemplars are one part of a broader national transformation project and includes;

- i. £35K funding to each of the successful STPs/ICSs.
- ii. Dedicated network and peer learning group to share learning throughout the programme.
- iii. Access to support from the national learning disability and autism programme and wider internal and external expertise to need.
- iv. Developing shared understanding of the challenges and opportunities and sharing good practice across integrated care systems in England.

The benefits

- Annual health checks and action plans help to detect and manage conditions earlier, improving health and well-being, and save lives.
- Supports the development and strengthening of local partnerships and multi professional working.

What's in it for the system?

- Working together, colleagues across the system can use this funding in any way they like to ensure an increase in the number of people on their registers

and an increase in the percentage of people receiving an annual health check to at least 75%

- CCGs will be able to work with colleagues to better identify people not on their registers and follow up on patients who do not attend, coordinate services more effectively to ensure that patients who haven't been offered an annual health check access them, review the quality of the learning disability register, improve the quality of health action plans for all patients aged 14 and over, reach out better to people from BAME communities, offer reasonable adjustments, and prioritise the number of people with a learning disability being offered a flu vaccination.
- This project should demonstrate developing co-production across the system.
- Networking and sharing learning with other systems, to support spread of best practice.

Case study

Offered as an example to show how to find missing patients

NHS North Lincolnshire, Rotherham, Doncaster and South Humber Community Learning Disability Team

Focused on identifying people who should be included on the learning disability primary care register – so that they can be offered and access an annual health check. The team identified people who were often missed, that is people with a mild to moderate learning disability.

The primary care liaison nurse suggested to practices that they review their clinical coding to find people who should be on the registers but were not.

As a result of this, more than 300 people were found who should have been included on registers – people who could really benefit from inclusion. The team are also working with children's services to identify children from the age of 14 so that they are offered annual health checks. This work also supports reasonable adjustments so that if someone with a learning disability attends A&E, their needs will be recognised.

This means that people on the register in need of healthcare are more likely to be on the correct care pathway and be better supported throughout.