

Supporting Reasonable Adjustments for people with a learning disability coming into hospital

Reasonable adjustments are a statutory duty, which says health and social care providers must “remove any barriers – physical or otherwise – that could make it difficult for disabled people to use their services or prevent them from using them altogether.” (Equality Act 2010).

10 helpful tips



1: Always ask the person or find out from those who know the person well what is the best way to communicate with them.



2: Speak clearly and use simple words. **Don't be patronising, but do check understanding.** Ask the person to repeat back to you to confirm understanding.



3: Take your time. People with a learning disability may need a bit longer than other patients to be able to understand information they are given and to make themselves understood. Just ten extra minutes can make a big difference to many people.



4: Work with supporters. This could be a support worker or family member. Supporters can be really important, particularly for people with profound and multiple learning disability, but remember to talk to the person directly and support them to make decisions – supporters are there to help you do this!

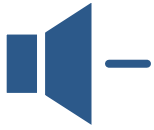


5: Be flexible with appointment times. Many people with a learning disability will find it easier coming to hospital when it is quieter at the very beginning or very end of the day, or at a time when their supporter is able to accompany them.



6:

Reduce physical barriers, ask yourself and the person how they will get around the hospital. Make sure signs in the building are easy to understand.



7:

Provide a quiet place to wait. Hospitals are often busy, noisy places and this can be overwhelming for many people with a learning disability. Having a quiet place to wait can prevent people getting anxious and having to leave the hospital. Many people also find waiting a long time very difficult.



8:

Most hospitals have learning disability liaison nurses who know lots about reasonable adjustments and can help you. Ask the acute liaison nurse to help if you know you are seeing a person with a learning disability.



9:

Use hospital passports. These are a patient-held, personalised record of what **the person needs, how they communicate, what they like and don't like**. Lots of people with a learning disability have hospital passports and reading them will make your job a lot easier!



10:

Provide information in an accessible format. This means people are much more likely to read and understand information about their appointments, procedures and results. This is also a requirement of the NHS's own Accessible Information Standard.

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