

## Frequently Asked Questions for Parents and Carers

### *GP Learning Disability Registers and Annual Health Checks for Children and Young People with a Learning Disability*

<b>Q</b>	<b>My child has so many appointments, why is this one important?</b>
<b>A</b>	<p>Children with Learning Disabilities are just like any other children and can get all the usual childhood illnesses and infections. However, they can be very difficult to identify as people with a learning disability are not always able to express their ill health/pain, which can lead to more difficulties if they are not well known to their GP. Having an annual health check means you child is more likely to get timely, targeted additional support to stay healthy.</p> <p>If your child is known to a paediatrician, it can be tempting to go straight to the specialist support throughout their childhood and make little or no contact with the GP. However, when the child becomes 18, this specialist support will stop, and the care is handed over to the GP.</p> <p><b>It is so very important</b> to build a relationship with the GP from an early age. It is particularly important when your child is approaching transition to adulthood, especially if the GP does not know your child.</p> <p>The Annual Health Check, which is offered from the age of 14, is an ideal opportunity for the GP to become involved in your child’s care. Annual Health Check are there to try and minimise the health inequalities many people with a learning disability experience.</p>
<b>Q</b>	<b>What is a Learning Disability Register?</b>
<b>A</b>	<p>GP learning disability registers are a record of all the people registered with the practice that have a learning disability. This is different to the Register of Disabled Children that all local authorities are required to keep.</p> <p>You can be added to the Learning Disability Register at any age and from the age of 14 be offered an annual health check by your GP surgery.</p> <p>The GP learning disability register enables practice staff to identify children, young people and their families who may need extra help or support to access healthcare. Anyone with a learning disability can ask to go on it.</p>

	<p>By being on the Learning Disability register your child will be able to get a free</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual Health Check from the age of 14 upwards together with a Health Action Plan</li> <li>• Annual NHS flu vaccination</li> <li>• NHS Covid-19 vaccinations/boosters</li> <li>• If you are their main carer, you can also be registered as a carer in order to make sure that you can support them to attend appointments</li> </ul>
<b>Q</b>	<b>What's the difference between a Learning Disability and Learning Difficulty?</b>
<b>A</b>	<p>A learning difficulty is different. It is a type of special educational need, such as dyslexia, or other condition which affects only one area of learning like reading, writing, spelling and maths etc. Dyslexia, for example, may be considered a general disability but is not considered a Learning Disability.</p> <p>If your child has a learning difficulty like Dyslexia or similar like ADHD, it is likely your child will be on the school's SEND Support register as they may need additional support. If you have any concerns, please speak to your school's Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities Coordinator (SENCo).</p> <p>Alternatively, your child may have a diagnosis of Autism and is Autistic. But they may not have a learning disability, as their overall ability to learn may be similar, or better compared to other people.</p> <p>Autistic people who do not have a learning disability are unable to have a free Annual Health Check, though this may change in the future.</p>
<b>Q</b>	<b>Who should be on a GP Learning Disability Register?</b>
<b>A</b>	<p>Anyone with a learning disability!</p> <p><b><i>Questions to help you think about whether your child could have a learning disability</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is your child on the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Support Register at their school or do they get extra help with their learning?</li> <li>• Does your child attend a special school?</li> <li>• Do they have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a diagnosis of a learning disability, or mention of “global developmental delay” or “intellectual disability” in any reports you have received about your child?</li> <li>• Is your child known to the Children’s or Adult’s Learning Disability Service?</li> <li>• Do they see a consultant psychiatrist for learning disabilities?</li> <li>• Has anyone ever told you that your child may have learning difficulties, a learning disability or global developmental delay?</li> <li>• Is your child entitled to Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or a Personal Independence Payment (PIP)?</li> </ul> <p>If you answered yes to some of the questions, it’s really important you contact your local GP Practice. You should ask them whether your child is on or should be added to the GP’s Learning Disability Register. This can be done at any age.</p>
<b>Q</b>	<b>How do I put my child on the Learning Disability Register?</b>
<b>A</b>	<p>A first step would be to have a conversation with your GP as not all children and young people who have a learning disability will have a specific diagnosis, even though they may have other disabilities.</p> <p>The official definition of learning disability is someone who has all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>a significantly reduced ability to understand new or complex information, to learn new skills (impaired intelligence), with</i></li> <li>• <i>a reduced ability to cope independently (impaired social functioning)</i></li> <li>• <i>• which started before adulthood (under the age of 18), with a lasting effect on development.</i></li> <li>•</li> </ul>
<b>Q</b>	<b>What is a Learning Disability Annual Health Check?</b>
<b>A</b>	<p>It is a yearly check-up for people with a learning disability at the doctor’s surgery. It is a good way of helping your child to stay healthy. Having a health check can help identify if there are any health problems your child or young person needs help with.</p>
<b>Q</b>	<b>What are the benefits on an annual health check?</b>
<b>A</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your child/ young person can build their confidence of going to the surgery, and their familiarity with practice staff.</li> <li>• Identification of any previously undetected health needs or health conditions.</li> <li>• Health needs are acted upon, for example, referrals to other health care practitioners.</li> <li>• GP’s and practice staff can get to know the person better when they are not unwell.</li> <li>• Development of a Health Action Plan.</li> </ul>

<b>Q</b>	<b>What Happens before the Annual Health Check?</b>
<b>A</b>	<p>You may be asked to prepare for your child or young person's annual health check by filling in a questionnaire. This is called a 'pre health check questionnaire'. This will give you the opportunity to highlight anything you or your child or young person would like to discuss, or if there might be any elements of the health check that they may find difficult or distressing. It also helps the GP to know as much information as possible prior to the appointment. Please also let you GP surgery know about any reasonable adjustments you may need in place prior to your child or young person's visit to the surgery.</p>
<b>Q</b>	<b>What's a Reasonable Adjustment?</b>
<b>A</b>	<p>Reasonable adjustments are changes people must make so that someone with a disability can use or access something just as easily as everybody else. Some examples of what a 'reasonable adjustment' might be are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>making sure there is wheelchair access</i></li> <li>• <i>having a 'quiet' waiting room</i></li> <li>• <i>providing easy read appointment letters</i></li> <li>• <i>giving priority appointments or first appointments</i></li> <li>• <i>longer appointments if more time is needed</i></li> </ul>
<b>Q</b>	<b>What will happen during an annual health check?</b>
<b>A</b>	<p>During the health check, the GP or practice nurse will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• do a general physical check which may include weight, heart rate, blood pressure and taking blood and urine samples</li> <li>• ask about things that people with a learning disability often have problems with, such as epilepsy, constipation or problems with swallowing</li> <li>• review medicines</li> <li>• check any existing health problems such as asthma or diabetes</li> <li>• discuss any other health appointments</li> <li>• ask about the support you are getting</li> <li>• discuss transition planning</li> <li>• discuss how to stay healthy and offer general healthy living advice where appropriate</li> <li>• discuss and agree the Health Action Plan.</li> </ul>

<b>Q</b>	<b>What's a Health Action Plan?</b>
<b>A</b>	Health Action Plans (HAPs) are care plans that detail what is needed to keep your child or young person healthy. This should include actions by the GP and other health practitioners, and can also include actions for you and your child or young person
<b>Q</b>	<b>What's mental capacity and why do I need to know about it?</b>
<b>A</b>	<p>In childhood, a parent can make decisions and give consent for health treatments for their child but once they reach adulthood, unless someone has Lasting Power of Attorney or Deputyship for their health, every medical decision needs the persons consent and if they are unable to understand, then a 'best interest' decision will be made weighing up the risks and benefits.</p> <p>As a family carer you know your relative very well and are used to the various, often subtle, ways in which they communicate, their likes and dislikes, needs and wishes. It can feel strange or even hurtful that other people become more involved in decisions about your relative once they become adults. This is not because your views are no longer important, but because the law says your relative must be treated as an adult. Part of this involves following the principles of the Mental Capacity Act. The act says some important things about how to decide whether adults are able to make their own decisions (often described as having capacity).</p>
<b>Q</b>	<b>What to do if my child does not get offered an annual health check?</b>
<b>A</b>	<p>If your child or young person has not had an annual health check:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speak to the GP surgery in the first instance</li> <li>• check that they are included on the Learning Disability Register</li> <li>• ask their GP if they will do an annual health check</li> </ul> <p>If you are still unable to access an annual health check and your child is over the age of 14 you can contact the Learning Disability Liaison Team who may be able to help. The Learning Disability Liaison Team can also help and support with reasonable adjustments and desensitisation, to find out more please contact:</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:liaison.nursesld@nsft.nhs.uk">liaison.nursesld@nsft.nhs.uk</a>  Phone: 01284 733300</p>