

Information sheet for patients and professionals

Community Nurses Team for Children/Young People with a Learning Disability

Who are we?

We are a small team of professionals who are either qualified nurses or who have had extensive training and experience of working with people with Learning Disabilities. We aim to work with families and agencies to improve health outcomes for children and young people with a learning disability.

What can our service offer you?

- We enable families to work on difficulties they are experiencing with their child/young person's behaviour, toileting or sleep through an individual care plan.
- We see children/young people in various settings to help us understand which areas they need help with.
- We liaise with other professionals to help enhance your child/young persons overall experience of services.
- Provide families with information and advice, or sign post you to other resources and services when needed.
- Support the child/young person and their families through transition into adult services.
- On request from schools we work with groups of children /young people around growing up and health promotion.

How referrals are made to us

Any professional who knows your family can make a referral to us on your behalf, but it is important that your child meets the eligibility criteria.

Eligibility

- ✓ We are commissioned to work with any child/young person aged 0 -19 years who is formally diagnosed as having a learning disability.
- ✓ Children/young people aged between 5-16 years who are diagnosed with a learning disability who have continence difficulties – usually referred to us via their Health Visitor.
- ✓ The child/young person must be registered with a General Practitioner in Buckinghamshire.
- ✓ We can work with children/young people placed in residential settings, but this must be for no more than 38 weeks per year.
- ✓ The family requires social support exclusively for housing or respite and not for a health focussed need, as above.

What will happen next?

When we receive a referral, we will arrange an initial assessment with you, this is either a face to face or a telephone consultation. This will provide more information and ensure that the referral is appropriate. We will then agree and prioritise each child's/young person's level of need, a named nurse will then be allocated to work with you on an individualised care plan, enabling you to work on strategies to help with your child/young person. We usually plan to work with families for about six months, we will then review progress and look to discharge.

What is a learning disability?

Different types of **learning disability** can differ hugely. Someone with mild learning disabilities may be able to live independently with minimal support, whereas someone with severe and profound learning disabilities may require 24-hour care and help with performing most daily living skills.

A **learning disability** is defined by the Department of Health as a “significant reduced ability to understand new or complex information, to learn new skills (impaired intelligence), with a reduced ability to cope independently (impaired social functioning), which started before adulthood”.

A **learning difficulty** constitutes a condition which creates an obstacle to a specific form of learning, for example dyslexia is classed as a learning difficulty, in that it only affects an individual's relationship to the processing of information, usually manifested in problems with reading, writing, and spelling but does not affect the overall IQ of a child/young person, so is very different to a learning disability.

Sometimes, the term '**Global Developmental Delay**' (GDD) is used to describe a learning disability. GDD describes a condition that occurs that prevents a child from reaching key milestones of development like learning to communicate, processing information, remembering things and organising their thoughts. The word “delay” may also suggest that the child/YP may “catch up” we ask that you check with the child/young person's Paediatrician as to whether this is the case or whether the child has a life-long learning disability.

Children/YP with **autistic spectrum disorder (ASD)** can also have a learning disability, however this should not be assumed to be the case. Children/YP with ASD may require minimal support to lead an active life through to those children/YP requiring lifelong, specialist support but in order to meet our criteria they must be diagnosed as having a learning disability.

Please remember that this leaflet is intended as general information only. We aim to make the information as up to date and accurate as possible, but please note that it is subject to change. Please therefore always check specific advice on any concerns you may have with your doctor.

How can I help reduce healthcare associated infections?

Infection prevention & control is important to the well-being of our patients and for that reason we have infection prevention & control procedures in place. Keeping your hands clean is an effective way of preventing the spread of infections. Please follow our infection prevention and control guidelines when visiting our healthcare sites. Further information is available on our website.

Patient Advice Sheet

If you would like a copy of this information on audiotape, in **large print** or translated, please call the Patient Advice Liaison Service on 01296 831120 or email bht.pals@nhs.net

Contact Details

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