

Learning Disability

Strategy 2020 to 2023

Learning disabilities, which can be defined as a reduced intellectual ability, difficulties in the learning of new information, and of engaging in everyday or social activities (Mencap, 2019) is a label given to a cluster of conditions that present themselves prior to the age of 18.

Whereby learning disabilities exist on a spectrum, those at the more severe end of the spectrum are likely to require significant support across all areas of their levels of care across the lifespan (Fletcher et al., 2018). Unfortunately, people with learning disabilities are subject to inadequate levels of care within healthcare (Brown et al., 2019). People with learning disabilities in the UK experience health inequalities from an early age as a result of the many barriers that they face in accessing timely and effective health care interventions.

The Learning Disability Strategy promotes a co-ordinated approach to carer and treatment for patients living with a learning disability, their families and their paid carers. As a trust we recognise patients with a learning disability have far greater health needs than the general population. Patients with learning disabilities are more likely to die younger, have greater health inequalities and poor access to care provision which can lead to premature deaths.

This strategy recognises the diverse needs of patients living with a learning disability, the vulnerabilities they face and the difficulties in ensuring their holistic needs are all met. This strategy aims to provide all staff and services within Doncaster and Bassetlaw Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust an approach to planning effective care pathways from admission to discharge.

This strategy supports the overall trust vision of being the safest trust in the country, outstanding all we do. It is aligned to breakthrough objective 1 for 2020/21: Achieve measurable improvements in our quality standards and patient experience and also supports delivery of the true north objective to provide outstanding care and improve patient experience.

- **Objective #1:** Clearly identify children, young people and adults with learning disabilities attending our hospitals by ensuring appropriate flagging systems are in place.
- **Objective #2:** Ensure timely referrals to our adult acute learning disability nursing teams for all patients when admissions / appointments are known.
- **Objective #3:** In conjunction with patients, partners and patient families/carers, ensure all patients accessing our services have an up to date hospital passport.
- **Objective #4:** Make reasonable adjustments to support access to services including easy read resources to ensure a person centred approach to care and treatment.
- **Objective #5:** Develop systems to communicate with patients or their carers prior to planned admissions and appointments.
- **Objective #6:** Develop specialist system to support staff recognising risk of malnutrition for patients with learning disabilities and empower patients to make appropriate food choices suitable for their individual needs
- **Objective #7:** Be compliant with the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards.
- **Objective #8:** Facilitate access to all healthcare services for children, young people and adults with learning disabilities.
- **Objective #9:** Embed a learning disability care pathway to support learning disability patients

through their entire hospital journey (inpatient and outpatient) and to audit this for its effectiveness.

- **Objective #10:** Continue to benchmark ourselves against the learning disability NHS improvement standards and ensure we can demonstrate improvements and learning from local and national research and development to continually improve services for patients with learning disabilities.
- **Objective #11:** Involve children, young people and adults with learning disabilities and their families/carers in planning and delivering services to ensure we improve the health, safety and wellbeing of all patients with learning disabilities entering our hospitals.
- **Objective #12:** Have procedures in place to support effective and seamless transition from children to adult services.
- **Objective #13:** Provide accessible patient information to include as a minimum, information relating to complaints, treatments and appointments.
- **Objective #14:** Learn from deaths in learning disability patients from national and local data sets.
- **Objective #15:** Train and develop a support network of learning disability champions across all areas within Doncaster and Bassetlaw Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.
- **Objective #16:** Develop and implement a training programme to provide staff with skills and training to identify early support needs and deliver holistic care for adults and children with learning disabilities and learning disabilities and autism.
- **Objective #17:** Ensure resources are available in all departments and inpatient areas to support staff caring for patients living with learning disabilities.
- **Objective #18:** Develop and understand internal and external partnership to ensure effective interventions and care.



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