

Health Profile

Guidance Notes for Families and Carers

Background

The Health Profile has been developed to support people from vulnerable groups, such as those with a learning disability, autism or dementia, when they are accessing healthcare and to assist healthcare staff in providing them with safe and timely care.

The Health Profile has been kept brief to encourage health professionals to take the time to read the information it contains. The feedback we received when we asked people about how long it should be was no more than four pages. It has also been structured so they will know exactly where to look in the document to find key information. For example, key medical information can be found on page 2. A separate set of guidance notes has been developed to assist them to understand the importance of the document and how it can enable them to provide better care. In addition, guidance notes have been developed for people with learning disabilities who may wish to complete their own Health Profile or who want to work with support to do this.

The specific needs of individuals vary – for example whilst some may be able to eat with no support, others may require high levels of support and/ or be at risk of choking. Similarly, some individuals may have particular requirements in terms of supporting their communication, others are able to both verbally communicate and understand others well. For this reason the document contains broad headings to allow you to include what is most important for the individual you are supporting when completing the document and the following information is offered as guidance as to what you may like to include in the various sections accepting that this will vary according to individual needs.

General Advice

The Health Profile needs to provide healthcare staff with accurate and up to date information. It is important, therefore, that it is regularly reviewed and updated.

- It should be reviewed a minimum of at least once a year.
- **It must be updated whenever there is a change in medication as incorrect information in that section of the form could result in incorrect medication being given to the individual.**
- Some people may have such frequent medication changes it may not be practical to re-write a profile each time. Therefore in these cases it is important to have the most up to date meds chart or prescription attached.

- Each time you complete a new version of the Health Profile please destroy the previous one or (if you want to retain it for your records) write a large cross over each page of the old version. This will help to ensure that you always use the most up to date version.
- Try to be as clear and concise as possible – this will help health professionals (particularly in an emergency situation) process information quickly and accurately.
- You might want, for example, to list key points as a series of bullet points to make them easier to read.

The First Page

On the first page you are asked to provide the key information regarding the individual you are supporting. Space has also been provided for inclusion of a photograph of the individual (if they are happy for it to be included) as a further safety measure to ensure that it is the right Health Profile for the person.

On the front page there is also space to record the date the Health Profile was completed for the reasons mentioned above.

About My Health

This section should contain the key information relating to an individual's health that will enable healthcare staff to provide safe and effective care particularly in an emergency setting. This section does have specific sub-headings to ensure that essential information is provided.

My health needs (medical history):

In this section you should include the following information:

- Any medical / health conditions that an individual has (for example epilepsy, dementia or diabetes).
- Any health problems that they are prone to / at risk of. For example, it may be that an individual has regular chest infections.
- Details of any major operations should also be listed.

Things I am allergic to:

This should include (for example):

- An allergy to specific medications such as penicillin.
- Any other allergies such as an allergy to nuts or latex.

Tablets or medicines that I take:

This should list:

- All medicines, tablets and injections that the person currently takes.
- Information about the **dose**, the **route** by which the medication is taken (for example by injection, by mouth or via PEG), **when** the medication is taken and **how often** it is taken.
- **If an individual has frequent medication changes, please attach most up to date medication/prescription chart.**

The support I need to take my tablets or medicine:

Here you should provide:

- Information about how the individual takes their medication and the support they require. For example, if they are given their medication are they able to take it without assistance, do they require reminding or do they need someone else to give them their medication.

How I will show or tell you that I am in pain or unwell:

Some individuals are able to tell others that they feel unwell by using words whilst others may not be able to communicate verbally. Some may communicate pain through other changes in their behaviour. It is important that you include information here about:

- How the person you are supporting usually communicates that they are unwell or in pain
- What the healthcare staff can do to support them (for example using a special assessment tool such as the DisDat, the Abbey Pain Scale or just asking the individual to point to where they are feeling pain).

How I need you to support me (including and reasonable adjustments I may need):

The Equality Act 2010 places a legal duty on services to make reasonable adjustments to the way such services are provided in order to ensure that disabled people receive healthcare specific to their needs. Examples can include things such as longer appointment times, the provision of easy read information or providing a quiet space for people who experience sensory overload. In this section you should, therefore, list any reasonable adjustments that are required in order to ensure that the individual receives appropriate care and support.

People's needs, and the support they require, are very individual in this section you should include:

- Information that is going to assist the healthcare staff provide effective and timely support. Some examples of areas you need to consider include any support needed with eating and drinking, attending to their continence needs, mobility, personal care, their oral health and any difficulties they may have with their memory. You might want to include information regarding their usual sleep pattern.
- You should also note down any particular safety concerns that staff need to be aware of when supporting the individual. Examples of such concerns might include a risk of falls, a risk of choking, a risk of wandering off or risks that arise from seizures. Where such risks are noted then you should also note how they are usually managed (this may either be in this section or in a more detailed risk management plan that can be mentioned here and attached to this document).

How we can best communicate:

This section has been left broad for you to provide information that you feel is most important in relation to the person you are supporting. However, here it is important that

you consider how they communicate, how they understand the communication of others and how other people may need to adapt their communication.

You should mention things such as:

- Any hearing or sight impairments, whether an individual requires any specific forms of communication support (for example the use of Makaton), whether they require additional time to process information, and how they usually communicate their needs.
- The need to check for understanding and repeat/ rephrase if necessary if it is likely that the individual will appear to have understood what is said to them when they don't
- Information about whether the individual's communication needs change if they become anxious or upset and what can be done to support them. For example, some people may start shouting if they are anxious, but reassurance or distraction can help to calm them.
- If there are certain words or phrases that can cause the individual to become upset, then these should also be noted.

Other important things I want you to know:

This section has been included to enable you to include what you feel is key information that has not been covered in other sections. Examples might include:

- Information about religious beliefs where these are important to an individual
- Whether an end of life care pathway is in place.

It also provides a space that can be used to refer the reader to any other information that accompanies this document such as:

- A behavioural support plan.
- An epilepsy management plan.
- A specific risk assessment).

Finally, it can be used to provide the contact details of any key individuals such as health specialists who regularly work with the person, key family members or key support workers.

Using the Health Profile

Having completed the Health Profile it is important that it is used to support individuals to access safe and effective healthcare. **It therefore needs to accompany the individual when they attend any healthcare service and staff within that service need to be made aware of it and how it can help them to provide better care and support.**

As already mentioned, separate guidance has been developed for healthcare staff and work has been undertaken to make sure that they are both aware of the Health Profile and how it can assist them. However, if they do not ask to see the Health Profile please make sure that you mention it to them, give it to them and stress how it can assist them.