

Health Profile

Guidance Notes for Health Professionals

Background

This Health Profile has been developed to provide you with key information you need to help you to provide safe, and person-centred healthcare for people with learning disabilities. People with learning disabilities themselves, their families and carers as well as a wide range of health professionals have been involved in its development and have informed the content and format.

One of the key messages from the development stage was that the Health Profile needed to be brief so that health professionals are able to access information quickly particularly in emergency situations. For this reason, it has been kept to four pages. However, it is possible that there will be additional information that you will need to know so please do look carefully at the final page which should direct you to such information and/ or to people who can provide such information.

Using the Health Profile

Ideally people with learning disabilities and/ or those who support them should bring their Health Profile with them whenever they access healthcare and should offer this to the healthcare staff that are working with them. If the Health Profile is not offered, then please ask the individual and those who accompany them if they have one.

Should the individual not have a Health Profile then please download one from (insert hyperlink) and complete as much of it as you can with them. This will then assist you, the individual and your colleagues if (for example) they are transferred to a different area or department.

The Health Profile has been designed so that key information is grouped together on each page and further information has been provided in the sections below as to what you might expect to find where. It is hoped that this will assist you with being able to find key information quickly rather than having to search through a large document. When reading the Health Profile **please check the date on which it was completed (first page) and that it is the most recent version.**

Please:

- Use the information in the Health Profile to assist you with providing high quality care for those people with learning disabilities that you work with. It can make a huge difference not only to your ability to provide such care but, most importantly it can also assist you to ensure their safety, their health and well-being and to improve their experience of healthcare.
- Make sure that your colleagues are aware of the information contained in the Health Profile and also if an individual is transferred either temporarily or permanently to another department or area that you ensure the Health Profile goes with them and that you make the receiving staff aware of its existence and importance.
- If any changes have been made whilst the individual is with you (for example in relation to the medication they are prescribed) then this should be noted on the Health Profile and accompanied by initials and the date of change.

The First Page

This page provides you with key personal information regarding the individual – their name, what they prefer to be called, their date of birth and who is their emergency contact.

- This contact person may accompany the individual when they attend health settings, but this may not always be the case. For example, a support worker may accompany an individual, but the key contact may be the individual who manages the supported living setting in which the individual lives.
- Alternatively, an individual with mild learning disabilities may attend on their own without support.
- The key contact should be someone who is able to provide you with additional information.

There is also space on the first page for inclusion of a photograph of the individual. This has been included for safety reasons – in particular to assist you with ensuring that you have the right information for the right individual.

Finally, on the first page there is space for the **date on which the Health Profile was completed to be noted. Please check this carefully** – individuals and their families have been advised to update the Health Profile on an annual basis as a minimum. **You should therefore check that you have the most recent version.**

About My Health

This page has been designed to provide you with key information regarding the health of the individual and, in particular, to provide you with the key information you need when an individual is unable to provide such information themselves. It should be remembered, however, that some people with learning disabilities have very complex health needs and hence you may need to access further information. The final section of the Health Profile should therefore direct you to such information.

My health needs (medical history):

In this section you should find:

- Information regarding any medical / health conditions that an individual has (for example epilepsy, dementia or diabetes).
- Information regarding 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.

Things I am allergic to:

This should include specific medications such as an allergy to penicillin. It should also include 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 by PEG), when the medication is taken and how often it is taken.
- **If the medication an individual takes changes then a new Health Profile should be completed.**

When discussing medication with an individual you might find it helpful to refer to 'tablets' 'medicines' and 'injections' rather than just referring to 'medication' as this may be misinterpreted as meaning just 'medicine' and hence key information may not be given.

The support I need to take my tablets or medicine:

Here you should see 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?

Some people with learning disabilities may be able to take medication independently but others will require support – it is important not to make assumptions.

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. In this section you should find information about:

- How the individual usually communicates that they are unwell or in pain
- What healthcare staff can do to support them (for example using a special assessment tool such as the DisDat or Abbey Pain Scale [part of the All Wales Pain Assessment Tool], 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 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, see details of any reasonable adjustments that are required in order to ensure that the individual receives appropriate care and support.

People's support needs are very individual and therefore in this section those completing the form have been asked to include information that is going to assist healthcare staff provide effective, safe and timely support. This might 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. If relevant to the individual information regarding their usual sleep patterns may be included.
- Any particular safety concerns that you 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.
- Information as to how such concerns/ risks 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:

It is essential that we remember communication is a two-way process and that for it to be effective healthcare professionals may need to adapt the way in which they communicate to effectively identify and meet the needs of people with learning disabilities.

Individual communication needs will vary widely and hence this section has been left broad to enable such needs to be most accurately reflected. Those completing the form have been asked to provide the following information where relevant to the individual:

- How the individual usually communicates, how they understand the communication of others and how other people may need to adapt their communication.
- Any hearing or sight impairments and 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.
- Whether there is a need to check for understanding and to repeat / rephrase as necessary (remember an individual may appear to understand but this may not be the case)

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- 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 provide 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.
- Other information that accompanies this document (for example a behavioural support plan, an epilepsy management plan or specific risk assessment).

The contact details of any key individuals such as health specialists who regularly work with the person, key family members or key support workers