

# LEARNING DISABILITIES BIG HEALTH WEEK

Friday 5<sup>th</sup> November 12.45 - 1.30pm

## Health checks: A session for Carers

A session for carers on Health checks, providing guidance and support on how you can help a person with Learning Disabilities with their health checks including a Q&A session with Health Care Professionals

This session was delivered;

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### **1) Summary of annual health checks for people with a learning disability:**

- People with a learning disability often have poorer physical and mental health than other people, and often find it hard to talk about their health or know when they are unwell.
- An annual health check can improve people's health by spotting problems earlier.
- This health check is offered to people 14 years and over every year. All parts of the health check are voluntary.
- The GP surgery will create a health check' register and offer people an annual health check, which will include producing a health action plan.

- People can be offered a video call/telephone or face to face appointment.
- A preparation form should be sent to the person to complete before the appointment. This form comes in easy read.
- The surgery should make reasonable adjustments if needed, these can be:  
Using pictures, large print or simpler words to say what's happening,
- Booking longer appointments. The surgery should offer people a double appointment for every appointment,
- Putting an appointment at the beginning or end of the day, if it is hard to be in a busy waiting room,

Surgeries have a template of a health check to complete, the GP or practice nurse will:

- do a physical check-up, including weight, heart rate, blood pressure and taking blood and urine samples
- talk about staying well and if any help is needed with this they will signpost
- ask about things that are more common if you have a learning disability, such as epilepsy, constipation or problems with swallowing (dysphagia)
- talk about the prescribed medicines
- check to see if vaccinations are up to date
- if there is a health problem such as asthma or diabetes, the GP or nurse will check how it's going
- check to see if there are any other health appointments, such as physiotherapy or speech therapy

- ask if family and/or carers are getting the support they need: carers assessment referral
- help make sure that things go well when children move to adult services at the age of 18
- If the learning disability has a specific cause, the GP or practice nurse will often do extra tests if there are any other health risks.
- For people with Down's syndrome, for example, they may do a test to see if the thyroid gland is working properly.
- They should ask consent (permission) to share information with other services that provide care. This will help get the right support if the care for person goes to a hospital, for example.
- The GP or practice nurse will also give out health information, such as advice on healthy eating, exercise, contraception or stopping smoking.
- BLACK BOOK / PERSONAL HEALTH PROFILE: Available to Greenwich, Bexley and Bromley people who access the Community Learning Disability Teams.
  - Developed by Oxleas.
  - They are a handheld size.
  - They hold peoples Health records.
  - They are the persons book to use as they wish.
  - They were updated in 2015
  - There are various section such as:
    - Medication
    - Mental/physical health
    - End of life.
  - You can take the pages you won't use out.

## **2) How to support /prepare someone with LD with their health checks (TOP TIPS):**

- Pre warn the GP so that people are not waiting too long.
- Sometimes not telling people know about the appointment too early, as it makes some people anxious but some people like to know way in advance so they can put the appointment in their calendar to plan their day.
- Explain what is going to happen at the appointment. Remind people that they had their BP done before and it did not hurt, explain well.
- Provide easy read information, if useful for that person, to discuss prior to the appointment.
- Obtain a photo of the person completing the health check and room ahead of the appointment.
- If required book home visits so that they are in safe place respond well to their own environment.
- Have a good rapport with the practice nurse a familiar face knows everyone well/ building up trust/being patient/ give reassurances.
- Get urine samples and weights done before hand.
- Book in and wait outside if need be.
- Do the appointment over a few appointments if need be so they aren't rushed and the person doesn't feel rushed.
- Ensure the appointment keeps to time so they don't have to wait in the waiting room.

- Take an iPad with you so you have a way of encouraging the person (I played Abba for one service user at an Annual Health Check to relax them).
- Suggest to the nurse to complete the observations on the carer first so they know what to expect.
- Make sure they are supported by someone who knows them.
- Make sure the supporter knows how the person communicates.
- Give the client time at the appointment so they don't feel rushed.
- Make sure that any issues that need to be followed up will be dealt with either by the CLDT nurse or a family member or carer.
- Go out after the appointment meal /shopping

### **3) What can you expect when visiting the GP:**

What to expect when you attend a LD health check where I work;

- May differ to your local GP
- We will call you to have a chat and decide the safest way to do the Health Check
- Tell us what the person would prefer – by phone or in person
- Before the appointment the surgery should send a Health Check Questionnaire, please fill this in with the person you care for before the appointment and have it with you for the consultation. This helps us to focus on what their needs are

## Over the phone

- Make sure you are available at the arranged time
- Make sure the person you care for is actually with you and try to include them as much as possible
- Ensure that your phone has enough reception, signal and power
- Take the call somewhere quiet and where you can talk in private
- Check weight and BP readings in advance if possible
- Complete the Health Check Questionnaire and have any readings to hand

## If you have access to a smart phone you could do video call

- Need to have a camera, microphone and speaker
- Connect to Wi-Fi or have enough data in your mobile plan
- Then a nurse will call you on your mobile then send you a SMS link to click on which opens up the video calling feature (like Zoom or Face Time)
- You need to click to accept video for it to work

## If you attend in person for a face-to-face appointment, they will be very strict on time.

- This is to avoid too many people being in the waiting room at the same time, so if you arrive very early you may be asked to wait outside until it is your turn to go in. If you're more than 5 minutes late they might not let you in.
- The front door will be locked – the receptionist will wait by the front door and check that you have an appointment and make sure you do not have any symptoms of coronavirus before letting you in.
- They will then take the persons temperature, ask you to gel your hands with hand sanitiser and ask you to wear a mask
- If the person you care for can't tolerate wearing a mask, let the receptionist know

- You won't have to wait too long in the waiting room and will then be called in to see the nurse or doctor who will also be wearing a mask, gloves and an apron.
- The nurse will try to find out what matters to the person you care for
- We will go through the questionnaire with you to identify any health needs that we could help with
- They will then do some simple tests such as checking blood pressure, pulse or weight. If the person you are with cannot tolerate these tests I can refer them to CLDT who can try to support by offering home visits or desensitisation work.
- Together we will then work out a plan of what needs to be done, provide info, including any referrals for further assessment or signposting to relevant services.
- You will be given a copy of this plan.

#### **4) Stay Safe**

Follow public health guidelines

- Hands – wash your hands regularly for 20 seconds
- Face – wear a face mask
- Space –keep 2 metres apart from people you don't live with
- Avoid unnecessary journeys
- You can attend medical appointments or seek help in an emergency
- If you have any medical concerns please call your GP. We are working in different way, but are very much still open for business
- Or NHS 111 if you need help urgently or out-of-hours (can even book A&E)
- If you or the person you care for has COVID-19 symptoms (new cough OR temp OR loss of taste/smell) book a test and self- isolate. If you have concerned you are deteriorating or have worsening symptoms call your GP or 111
- Get your flu immunisation

- Nourish your body with healthy food
- Avoid overusing alcohol or smoking
- Stay active
- Protect your mental health
- Stay connected

## 5) Resources:

**OXLEAS**                      [www.Oxleas.nhs.net](http://www.Oxleas.nhs.net):

1. Click on services,
2. then click on GP's,
3. then click on learning disability services.

**NHS ENGLAND**            [www.england.nhs.net](http://www.england.nhs.net):

1. Type in the search tab annual health checks learning disability.

**MENCAP:** Don't miss out campaign.

<https://www.mencap.org.uk/advice-and-support/health/dont-miss-out/dont-miss-out-annual-health-checks>

For more information about annual health checks, please contact:

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