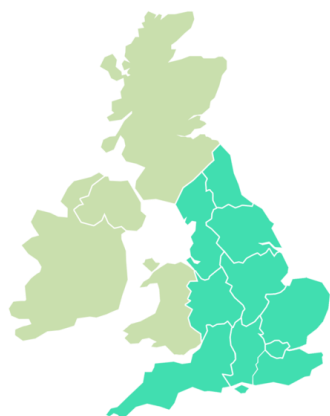




Getting support with your health



This easy read is for England only



It is important to get help with your health when you need it



If you have a problem with your health, it is important to get checked out.



Some health problems can get worse if you don't get help quickly.



Healthcare workers like your GP or the hospital doctors can find out if anything is wrong, and get you treatment if you need it.



You might have seen stories in the news about people who have had problems using health services, like the hospital or the GP.



Some people have had problems getting the support they need.



The NHS has had to make lots of changes to how healthcare works since coronavirus came.



But your doctor and the people at the hospital are still working, and they are there to help you.



This easy read is to help you to feel safe using healthcare services and to help you get the support you need.



People with a learning disability might need extra help to use NHS healthcare services.



Some people with a learning disability can find it harder to use healthcare services.



Sometimes the way the NHS does things for everyone else, does not work well for people with a learning disability.



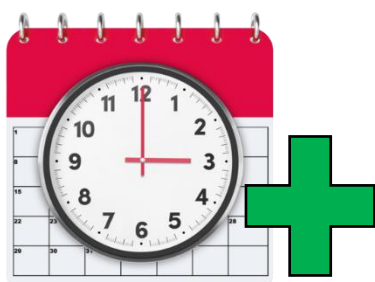
You might need the NHS healthcare services to make a change to the way they do things to make it easier for you.



This is called making a reasonable adjustment.



For example – you may need someone to stay with you overnight.



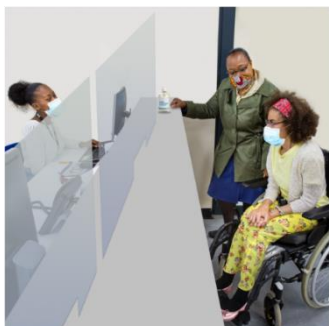
Or you may need to have extra time in your appointment.



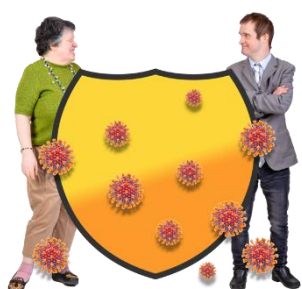
You may need someone to explain things to you in a way you can understand or give you easy read.



You may need a different way to get in touch if you find it very hard to use the phone, or the internet.



The NHS is doing things differently because of coronavirus.



This is because they are trying to keep everyone safe from coronavirus.



They are trying to stop too many people going to hospital at the same time.



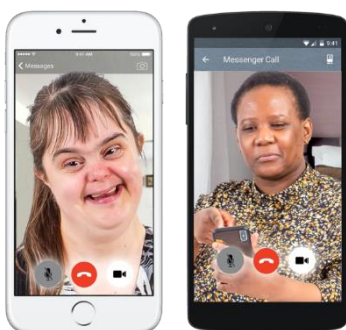
The hospital or GP surgery might ask people to come by themselves for appointments.



They are trying get patients to leave hospital as quickly as they can.



There are more things being done on the phone and on the computer.



Most appointments are not face to face anymore – they may be on the phone or over video.



Health care workers have to wear Personal Protective Equipment or PPE, like face masks, which can look strange or make harder to communicate.



If something makes it harder for you, it is ok to ask for help.



Some of the helpful things that used to be easy to do, are now things you may need to ask for as a reasonable adjustment.

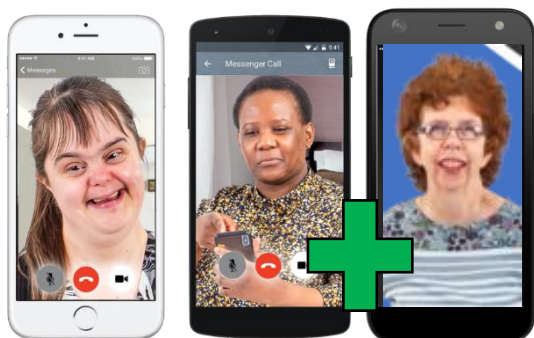


For example:

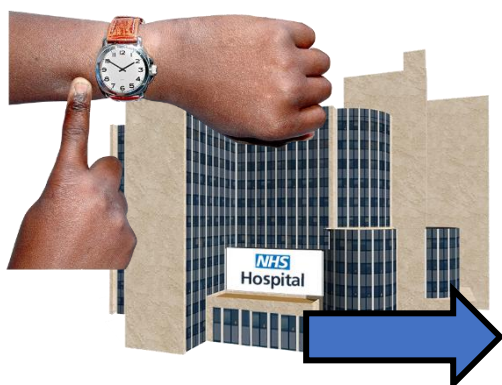
You might need to ask to bring a supporter with you to hospital now.



You might need to ask to speak to someone face to face, or over video, if speaking to someone on the phone is very difficult.



You might need to ask to have an extra person on a call, so they can support you in an appointment.



You might need them to give you more time to get ready when it is time to come home from staying in hospital (discharge).



Ask for the support you need



Healthcare workers may not know that you need support, or that you have a learning disability.



Always tell them you have a learning disability.



You may need to explain this more than once to different people.



Tell them if you need help or are finding something hard.



Ask for a reasonable adjustment if you need it.



If you know what support you need, you can ask the people who work in the GP surgery or hospital.



For example: I have a learning disability, and I need to bring someone with me to my appointment



Or, if you do not know what support you need, you can explain to them what the problem is and ask how they can help.



For example: I have a learning disability, and I cannot come to my appointment on my own, what can you do to help me?



A hospital passport can be a helpful way to explain the support you need in hospital.



It is ok to remind people to look at your passport.



Looking at your hospital passport is important because it explains the support you need because of your disability.



Hospital passports can get lost easily in hospital so it is a good idea to have spare copies.



Do ask for help if your passport gets lost, or if you need support to make sure people read it.



**There are people who
can help you**



Any healthcare worker in the NHS
should be able to help you.



But we know that lots of health
care workers still need training.



If you speak to one person, and
they do not seem able to help,
find someone else.



Keep asking for help until you
get it.



If you have someone that supports you, ask them to help you speak up about what you need.



Learning disability nurses are one of the best people to ask for help because they know lots about supporting people with a learning disability.



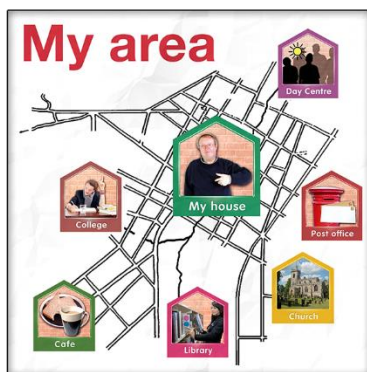
If you want to see the learning disability nurse, it is important to ask.



The GP surgery or hospital may not know that you need them.



The next bit of this booklet will tell you more about learning disability nurses.



Learning disability nurses in the community



There are learning disability nurses in your local Community Learning Disability Team.



They can also work with other health services, like the GP, or the hospital to help them meet your needs.



They can work with you to make sure you get the healthcare you need.



Your GP, social worker or the council should be able to help you get in touch with your local community learning disability team.



Learning disability nurses in the hospital



Most hospitals have learning disability nurses that work there.



Their job is to help people with a learning disability who come to the hospital for healthcare.



The learning disability nurses can help you get the right support in hospital.



If you have to go to hospital, and think you might need support, it is a good idea to get in touch with the learning disability nurse before you go.



Since coronavirus came, some learning disability nurses have had to work from their home instead of in the hospital.



The hospital should be able to tell you how to get in touch with the learning disability nurse at this time.



If you need support in hospital, remember to ask to see the learning disability nurse.



If there is not a learning disability nurse in the hospital, you can still ask for help from the person in charge of safeguarding, or the community learning disability team.



Learning Disability nurses in the GP surgery



Some areas have learning disability nurses who work with GP surgeries.



Their job is to help you use the GP surgery, and get the care you need.



Ask your GP surgery if they work with a learning disability nurse.



If they do not have one, then the Community Learning Disability Team can help you.



Sorting out problems with healthcare services



The next part of this easy read will help you know what to do if you have any problems getting the healthcare you need.



You can get help to sort out problems using health care services



It is important that you can get the health care you need.



It is important that you have the support you need and that you understand any instructions you are given.



It is important that you are involved in decisions about your care.



If you have a problem with any of these things, it is important to ask for help.



It is always ok to ask any questions you might have, even if you have questions after an appointment.



It is a good idea to ask the healthcare workers who you should speak to if you have any questions or problems afterwards.



If you have a problem, or you are finding something hard, it is ok to tell **the person who is treating you** and ask them to help you.



If you do not feel you can speak to the person treating you, it is ok to speak to **another healthcare worker**.



If you are in hospital you can ask to see the **learning disability nurse**. They may not be at work at weekends or at night.



In hospital you can speak to the **Patient Advice and Liaison Service**, they are called **PALS** for short.



PALS are there to help patients sort out problems. They may not be at work at the weekends or at night.



If you are at home or in hospital, you can speak to the **community learning disability team**, they may not be at work at weekends or at night.



If you have a **support worker, or a support team**, they should be able to help you sort out a problem.



Do not wait to ask your supporter for help if you have a problem getting the healthcare you need.



It is ok to contact your support provider to ask for help as soon as you need it.



For advice and support you can phone the **Learning disability helpline** from Mencap on **0808 808 1111** on weekdays.



The Learning disability helpline will do our best to get you the help you need.



If you are worried you may miss out on the care that you need, and you need help to sort it out, you can ask for help from **safeguarding**.



If you are at home, you can phone the **council's duty social worker** and tell them you have a safeguarding worry – they work at the weekend and at night.



If you are in hospital, and are worried that you may miss out on the care or support you need, you can ask to speak to the **person in charge of safeguarding**



There is always someone in charge of safeguarding at the hospital or the council, even at the weekend and at night.



You may be able to get extra support from social care to help you look after your health



It is harder for some people to use health care services at the moment, because of coronavirus and all the changes.



You may need extra support from a support worker or a care worker to look after your health at the moment.



If you think you may need more support then **Speak to your community learning disability team, your social worker or call the council and ask to speak to the duty social worker.**



They may be able to make some changes to your support plan to help you look after your health.



Making a complaint



The most important thing is to get the problem sorted out and make sure you can get the healthcare you need.



Hopefully you are able to sort your problem without needing to make a complaint.



But, sometimes making a complaint may help you get the help you need.



Or you might want to make a complaint to make sure the hospital find out what happened.



To find out more about making a complaint, [click here to read our booklet.](#)



For more information, advice or support about anything in this booklet, call the Learning Disability Helpline on 0808 808 1111

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