



How people with learning disabilities are supported by GP services in Hertfordshire

healthwatch
Hertfordshire



Easy
Read

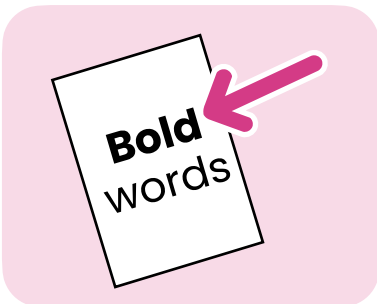
Easy Read



This is an Easy Read report of some information. It may not include all of the information but it will tell you about the important parts.



This Easy Read report uses easier words and pictures. You may still want help to read it.



Some words are in **bold** – this means the writing is thicker and darker. These are important words in the report.



Sometimes if a bold word is hard to understand, we will explain what it means.



Blue and underlined words show links to websites and email addresses. You can click on these links on a computer.

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About this report



Healthwatch Hertfordshire helps people to speak up about health and care services in Hertfordshire.

The people who run the NHS in Hertfordshire and West Essex want to find out about what people with learning disabilities say about:



- Getting to see their doctor.



- How well their doctor helps them to live in a healthy way.

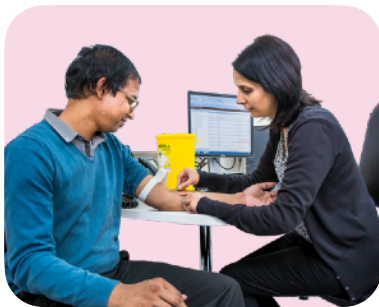


We looked at what people with learning disabilities said and came up with ideas about how doctor's surgeries can help them to be healthy and well.

Why we wrote this report



There are about 21,000 people with learning disabilities in Hertfordshire.



People with learning disabilities often have more health problems than other people.



This means that they might not live as long as other people.



Lots of these problems might not happen if people had better healthcare.



Sometimes people with learning disabilities do not get the healthcare they need.



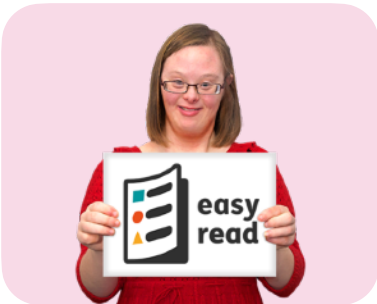
It can be difficult for people with learning disabilities to stay fit and healthy.

What we wanted to find out:

We wanted to find out:



- What makes it difficult for people with learning disabilities to go to the doctor.



- If doctor's surgeries make sure people with learning disabilities have information in a way they understand.



- What else doctor's surgeries could do to keep people with learning disabilities healthy.

What we did



We talked to people with learning disabilities, on their own and in groups.



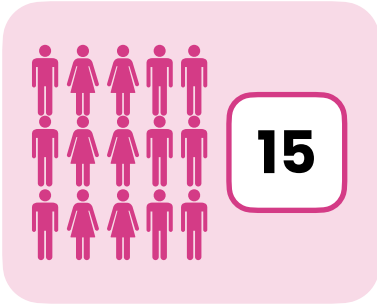
We also talked to people who support and look after people with learning disabilities.



Herts People First is a local self-advocacy group that helps people with learning disabilities speak out about things that are important to them.



They helped us to find people to talk to and to talk to them in the right way.



We talked to 15 people, including:



- 9 adults with learning disabilities.



- 2 carers.



- 4 support workers.

What should change



People with learning disabilities had good and bad stories about going to the doctor.



We think some doctor's surgeries could do more to help people have better health and live longer.

Using services



Doctor's surgeries should make changes to their phone systems so that people do not have to wait so long to talk to someone.



Doctor's surgeries should let people with learning disabilities choose the time and date of their appointment.



Doctor's surgeries should have a **Care Coordinator**.

In Hertfordshire, a **Care Coordinator** is someone who works at the doctor's surgery to help people with learning disabilities see a doctor or nurse.



If a doctor's surgery has a Care Coordinator, they should tell all their patients with learning disabilities about them.

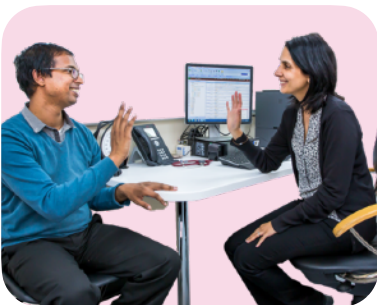
Giving people choices



Doctor's surgeries should see people with learning disabilities face-to-face.



If a doctor has to phone a person with learning disabilities, they should tell them exactly what time they will phone.



Doctor's surgeries should make sure that people with learning disabilities see the same doctor or nurse each time.



This is so they get to know them and feel safe talking to them.

Giving information



The [law](#) says that doctor's surgeries have to give people information in a way they will understand.



There is more information about this here:

<https://www.mencap.org.uk/easyread/accessible-information-standard-ais>



Doctors should ask people with learning disabilities how they want to get information.



Doctors and nurses should make a note of how people with learning disabilities want to get information on their medical records.

Speaking and listening to patients



Doctors and nurses should talk directly to people with learning disabilities about their health and care.



They should not act as if the person with a learning disability is not in the room.



It is also important that doctors and nurses talk to carers and support workers as well, if the person with a learning disability wants that.

Doctors and nurses should be aware that some people with learning disabilities:



- Want to be given information when they have someone there to support them.

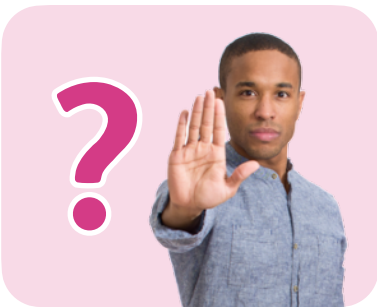


- Do not like to be given information over the phone.

All staff who work in the doctor's surgery should:



- Be kind and respectful.



- Not question people when they say they have a learning disability.

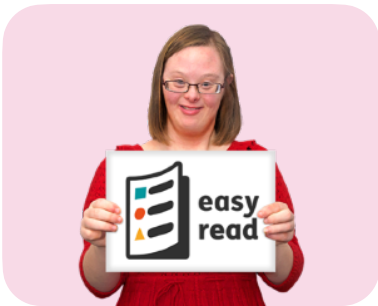


- Help people in the way that they need.

Support with staying healthy



Doctors and nurses should give clear information about how to live in a healthy way.



The information should be in Easy Read, or in the way the person likes to get information.



The information should include things like meal plans and exercise plans.



Doctors and nurses should talk to people with learning disabilities about their health, including:



- Mental health.

- Sexual health.



- Drugs.

- Alcohol.



- Smoking.

- Cancer and cancer screenings.



Other services that a doctor or nurse suggests should know how to work with people with learning disabilities in the right way.

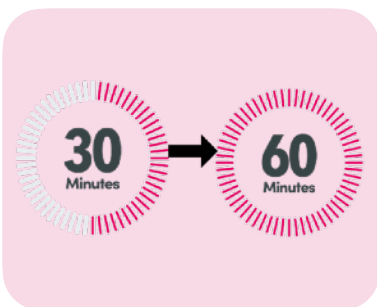
Annual Health Checks



An **Annual** Health Check is when a doctor or nurse checks your health and gives you some advice.



Annual means that it happens every year.



Doctors and nurses should take 30 minutes to 1 hour for an Annual Health Check.



Doctors and nurses should do an Annual Health Check at the doctor's surgery, not on the phone.



Doctors and nurses should check if both the body and mind are healthy.

Doctor's surgeries should:



- Tell people with learning disabilities about the Annual Health Check.



- Remind people when it is time to have an Annual Health Check.

What has happened and what is next



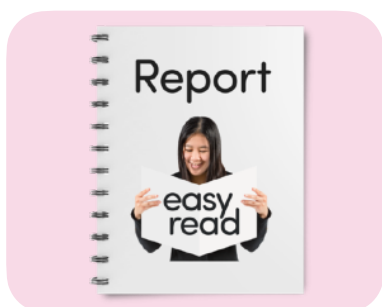
Thank you for telling us what you think.



We have used what you think to tell the NHS what they should do in the future.



The NHS will use what we have told them to make healthcare services better for people with learning disabilities.



If you would like a paper copy of this report, please contact us using the details on the next page.

Find out more

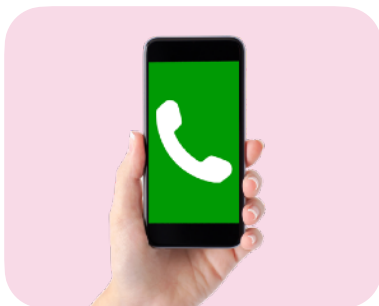


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