

# LEARNING DISABILITIES NEWS

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough CCG LD Team

## How one young man went from severe anxiety to calmness and independence

Oliver is a man in his twenties who has a mild learning disability. He lives at home with his parents. He has a day placement several times a week at a social enterprise and a support worker who takes him into his local town weekly. He is known to both the Social Care and health clinicians in the Learning Disability Partnership.

Oliver reported that he was experiencing flashbacks and significant anxiety from a historic sexual assault. He had also experienced bullying at school and reported that he felt anxious when separated from his parents. Oliver would often report to professionals 'I'm going to kill myself' or tell them 'I'm going to do something I'll regret'. After an MDT discussion, Oliver was referred to the Art Therapist for psychological support and to the Psychiatrist, who diagnosed him with PTSD. In his therapy, Oliver explored his feelings around the assault and thought about how it had impacted his life and relationships. When words were too difficult to find, Oliver organised his thoughts within his images. He also explored what it meant to say he was planning to kill himself, reporting that he felt unable to ask for help but found that saying that he would harm himself had been an effective way to summon support. Through the therapy it became apparent that the family were very fearful following the assault and found it hard to let Oliver be independent.

The family were seen by the Clinical Psychologist for several months of family therapy, during which they were able to find ways to express their fears and allow Oliver to become more independent. By the time Oliver had finished his Art Therapy he reported he no longer experienced flashbacks and his anxiety was significantly reduced. He became better at tolerating distress, showing more emotional resilience, and was more able to ask for help when he needed it.



Oliver now does not take any medication and no longer meets the criteria for PTSD. He is now working with a Social Worker and an Occupational Therapist to think about his skills and whether he would like to move from the family home to a place of his own. Oliver is able to travel independently and has looked at a local work placement. Recently Oliver became lost when travelling on a bus alone, an achievement in itself, and instead of panicking was able to navigate his way to his father's place of work. Through his own perseverance and support from staff in the LD multi-disciplinary team, Oliver has made significant changes to become an independent young man with plans for the future.

## LD Annual Health Check mid year figures

Peterborough - 24 GP surgeries - Health check attendance - 23%

Hunts - 19/22 surgeries - Health check attendance - 17% (2 surgeries yet to share data)

Fenland - 10 surgeries - Health check attendance - 25%

Cambs - 41 surgeries - Health check attendance - 21%

The national target is 75%. Avoid missing out on £140 per check done and the chance to make an impact on the life of your patients with LD by booking in your remaining checks soon. We encourage phoning carers, as this is what surgeries maximizing their revenue with high LD check rates are doing.

## Who is eligible for the LD Annual Health Check...what we are getting wrong

The definition of a Learning Disability differs from that of a Learning *Difficulty* (e.g. *dyslexia*) and comprises of 3 components:

- a significantly reduced ability to understand new or complex information, to learn new skills (impaired intelligence), with;
- a reduced ability to cope independently (impaired social functioning);
- which started before adulthood, with a lasting effect on development.

The presence of a low intelligence quotient, for example an IQ below 70, is not, of itself, a sufficient reason for deciding whether an individual should be provided with additional health and social care support and assessment of social functioning and communication skills should also be taken into account when determining need.

### What about Autism?

Autism and Aspergers are not learning disabilities. Whilst someone with one of these conditions may also have learning disabilities, many of our patients with Autism or Aspergers are highly functioning individuals and an invite for health check would be inappropriate. Whilst some of our patients with Autism without LD may benefit from an annual health check, this is currently not part of the DES.

### Why is Down's Syndrome not automatically coded as a Learning Disability?

People with Down's Syndrome will typically have a learning disability but there may be rare exceptions.

### Why focus on the health and wellbeing of people with learning disabilities?

People with learning disabilities die younger and have poorer health than the general population. These differences are, to some extent, avoidable. As such, they represent health *inequalities*. These inequalities are the result of the interaction of several factors including increased rates of exposure to common 'social determinants' of poorer health (e.g., poverty, social exclusion), experience of overt discrimination and barriers people with learning disabilities face in accessing health care. The LD Annual Health Check represents an evidence based reasonable adjustment to try to combat these inequalities.

## GP - Hospital Interface

Whilst getting different providers (or even GP surgeries) on the same computer system is often as difficult as GP partners agreeing on the colour scheme for their new waiting room (I hear lilac is calming?!) we at the LD CCG team are trying to make the GP-Hospital interface a little better for our patients. From now on LD diagnoses will be extracted from the patient record with all referrals so that our helpful LD Hospital nurses are aware of the patient's pending arrival in hospital and can attend to them and hospital staff, providing the reasonable adjustments necessary for optimal consultations!



When admitting someone with LD as an emergency we'd encourage you to try to provide as much information as possible about a patient's Learning Disability so staff can make the necessary reasonable adjustments - printing out their last Annual Health Check to accompany the patient summary would be a perfect solution to this as well as ensuring the person has their LD Hospital Passport with them!