



## Somerset Learning Disability Review Newsletter

February 2019 – Number 2



Hello, my name is Paul Townsend. I am the Director of Mental Health and Learning Disabilities Care at Somerset Partnership NHS Foundation Trust.

It's been a busy time finding out about Somerset and the services we provide.

I went to a meeting about 'Delivering quality care for people with Learning Disabilities'. Robert Tunmore, who is the LeDeR regional co-ordinator, talked about the LeDeR report. The report said that people with a learning disability are three times more likely to die from health conditions that can be treated and that women might die when they are a lot younger than people without a learning disability. Hearing these numbers was shocking and I am passionate about raising awareness of the needs of people with a learning disability, and making things better. The day also showed me good practice. Things like Reasonable Adjustments being made for people with a learning disability (more about Reasonable Adjustments later in the newsletter). I also saw how different parts of the country are using LeDeR to change things for people with learning disabilities.

We still need a better understanding of the health needs of people with a learning disability in Somerset.

## National update



The [NHS long-term plan](#) was sent out on 7 January 2019. The NHS will continue to fund the LeDeR programme. The plan says we will do more to make sure that all people with a learning disability, autism, or both can live happier, healthier, longer lives.

## Reasonable adjustments



A law tells all organisations they have to make changes to make their services accessible for disabled people, the law is called the Equality Act. Things organisations have to do are called Reasonable Adjustments. LeDeR reviews look at reasonable adjustments that have been made to make it as easy for someone with a learning disability to use health and care services as anyone else.

Reasonable adjustments are things like:

- sending easy read appointment letters, for things like Annual Health Checks
- appointments that help someone if they find it hard waiting at their GP surgery or hospital, this can be at times when the surgery or hospital is quieter.
- making sure someone has support to access tests and screenings, like blood tests.

Public Health England has information on reasonable adjustments for people with learning disabilities. Click on this link to find out:

[www.gov.uk/government/collections/reasonable-adjustments-for-people-with-a-learning-disability](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/reasonable-adjustments-for-people-with-a-learning-disability)

What LeDeR reviews have found about Reasonable Adjustments

**Good things:**

Where easy read letters are sent out

GPs who make it easier for someone to have a blood test

Care staff that helped someone get used to having

A special sort of scan so they weren't worried

Hospitals that give appointments at a time of day best for the person

When a hospital offers a side room for the person if this would help their stay in hospital

**Things to make better:**

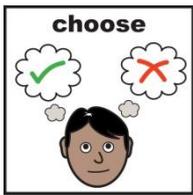
Making sure people have health and cancer screenings and who can help them

Annual Health Checks which are too short and don't help in the way they should to improve health

Hospital staff who don't understand about learning disability and how to speak to someone to make sure they understand

There needs to be support for people who don't like things like blood tests and won't have them, as this means health problems and infections might be missed.

## Best Interests



The law says that sometimes someone might find it hard to understand and make big decisions about health and care.

So someone will make a decision or choice for them, this is called Best Interests and means thinking about what is best for the person and not about what anyone else wants. This might be a doctor as something needs to be done right away to make sure you get better. Or family and friends who support you, or an advocate who is a person who speaks up for you.

Sometimes people with a learning disability aren't asked in the right way about making decisions, so they don't understand. Most people can make decisions about some things and the law says everyone must have information given to them in a way that helps them to understand, this might be easy read or using other things like pictures and giving people time.

## Dying for a poo



Constipation is when your poo (stools) becomes hard and you find it difficult or painful to go to the toilet. People with learning disabilities often have constipation. If it is not treated it can make you feel poorly and can become serious, sometimes it can lead to someone dying.

It is important that if you find it hard to go to the toilet to have a poo you tell someone, this might be your staff, family or doctor. Having a good diet with lots of fruit and vegetables helps and taking exercise. If it doesn't get better you might be given some medicine to help.

## Annual Health Check video



There is a new video talking about Annual Health Checks. [Click here](#) to watch Dr Amelia Randle's interview with Kiah Durham from Somerset County Council.

## Contact details

The local area contact at Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group is:

Karen Taylor

[karen.taylor38@nhs.net](mailto:karen.taylor38@nhs.net)

01935 384101

The LeDeR Programme contact details are:

[LeDeR-team@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:LeDeR-team@bristol.ac.uk)

0117 331 0686