

Dear Parent / Carer,

I am writing to ask you to make sure that if your child has a learning disability it is flagged on their electronic record with the GP. This will enable your child to be called for their annual health check from the age of 14.

People with learning disabilities often have difficulty in recognising illness, communicating their needs and using health services. Regular health checks can detect treatable illnesses and help prevent more serious ones, as well as familiarising the young person with the GP practice which they may use throughout their adult life.

There are over one million people of all ages in England who have a learning disability. Only 200,000 of these currently appear on GP registers. **Nearly one million people are missing from this register and not getting the health check to which they are entitled.**

Health services have a duty to make changes to their services (reasonable adjustments), so that they are easier for people with learning disabilities to use. Unless a patient's learning disability status is registered on the GP systems then reasonable adjustments to care for that individual cannot be anticipated and made. People with learning disabilities have poorer health than the rest of the population, but some of this ill health is preventable.

The benefits of being on the register are:

- Better and more person centred health care for those individuals;
- Better information about the health needs of people with learning disabilities in a given locality;
- Better planning of health and care services for people with learning disabilities;
- An ability to anticipate an individual's needs before they attend health or care settings;
- Better understanding and integration of needs across health, care, education and employment; and
- Better transition planning for young people with learning disabilities who are leaving school or college and approaching adulthood.

You can ring up or use the letter template below and ask that your child's learning disability is flagged on their electronic medical record.

Please note that not all GPs have signed up to deliver the annual health check from the age of 14 but it is worth following up with your GP to make sure the ongoing health needs of your child are anticipated.

The following weblinks contain more information on the annual health check for people with learning disabilities.

NHS Choices:

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Childrenwithalearningdisability/Pages/AnnualHealthChecks.aspx>

Public Health England – Improving Health and Lives:

<http://www.improvinghealthandlives.org.uk/projects/annualhealthchecks>

Mencap leaflet on what the health check should consist of:

https://www.mencap.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Annual_health_checks_Standard.pdf

Please do not assume that your GP will have automatically registered your child on the learning disability register. Contact them now to make sure that our children receive the best possible health care now and in the future.

Yours Sincerely

Community Learning Disability Nursing Team
0121 746 4436

Letter from parents to GPs

[parent address]

[address of GP practice]

[date]

Dear Dr [named GP or practice partner]

Re: [Name of child]
[DoB]
[NHS number]
[Address]

I am writing to ask you to include [name of your child] on your learning disability register so they are considered for an annual health check from when they reach the age of 14.

You will be aware that [name of child] has been diagnosed with [include diagnosis if available].

I have enclosed a copy of [name of child] statement/ Learning Difficulty Assessment / Education, Health and Care plan which gives details of their special educational need and disability and the support they need. If you require additional information please contact [name of paediatrician, consultant or other medical professional who knows your child – include telephone number].

Please can you ensure that this information is flagged in the Electronic Medical Record, and that [name of child] is included on the practice's register of patients with learning disabilities.

This will act as a prompt so that [Name's] needs can be met and that the highest quality and most appropriate health care can be provided at all times and in all settings. It will also act as a prompt for annual health checks.

With thanks and very best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Parent / carer