

A scoping review:

Safe care for people with learning disabilities in hospital

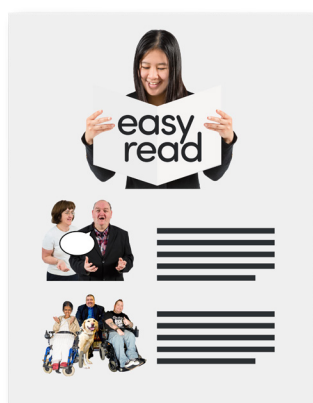


Easy Read Summary
October 2021

About this Document



This document is about research into hospital care for people with a learning disability.



This is the Easy Read Summary.

You can see the full document on this website:

<https://bit.ly/3y4jqZ5>

Why is this Research important?



Many people with learning disabilities die earlier than other people.

Sometimes people with learning disabilities do not receive good quality healthcare in hospital.



Quality in healthcare means providing the right care for a patient at the right time.

Healthcare services need to do better for people with learning disabilities.

About this Research



We looked at lots of research and information about the safety and quality of healthcare for people with learning disabilities in hospital.



Our scoping review looked at:

- Research and reports.
- Information on websites.

A scoping review is a summary of research and reports that have been done before.

Our topic:



1. We wanted to find out if people with learning disabilities receive safe care in hospital.



2. We wanted to find out about things that might help keep people with learning disabilities safe in hospital.

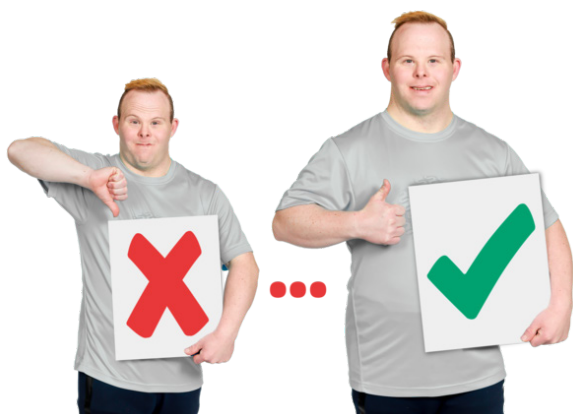
Section 1: Safety in hospital. What we found:



People with learning disabilities are sometimes not as safe as they should be in hospital, compared to people without learning disabilities.



Hospitals do not always have good systems in place to make it clear that someone has a learning disability.



This makes it difficult to learn from when things have gone wrong for people with learning disabilities in hospital.



Some hospitals have better systems in place to support and care for people with learning disabilities, compared to other hospitals.

Section 2: Mums and babies. What we found:



Women with learning disabilities are more likely to:

- Experience pre-eclampsia.
- Have a pre-term birth.
- Have a smaller baby.

Pre-eclampsia is high blood pressure in pregnancy which can affect the health of the baby and the woman who is pregnant.

Pre-term birth is when a baby is born too early.



Women with learning disabilities are more likely to be induced, and are more likely to have a caesarean birth.

Induced is when you are given help to start labour.

A caesarean birth is when a baby is born through a cut in a women's tummy.

Reports showed that training for healthcare professionals to better support parents with learning disabilities is very important.

Section 3: After an operation. What we found:

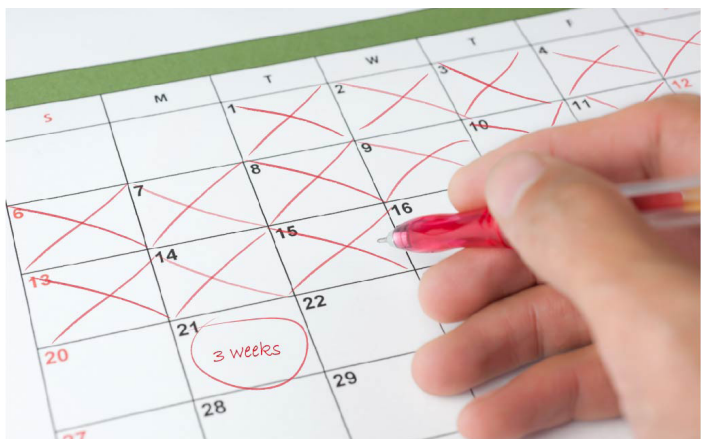


People with learning disabilities are more likely to have complications after an operation, compared to people without learning disabilities.

It is not always clear why this happens.



Complications are problems that can happen after an operation.



People with learning disabilities are more likely to stay in hospital for longer after an operation, compared to people without learning disabilities.



Many studies found people with learning disabilities are not more likely to die after an operation, compared to people without learning disabilities.

Section 4: Family and carers. What we found:



Many families and carers help to make sure people with learning disabilities receive safe care in hospital.



Sometimes reasonable adjustments are not made when they should be.



A reasonable adjustment is changing the way something is usually done to make sure people have better access to health services.



Families and carers of people with learning disabilities are relied on a lot.

Sometimes there is confusion about the roles of healthcare professionals, families and carers.

Section 5: Understanding people's needs. What we found:



It is very important that healthcare professionals understand learning disabilities as well as the needs of individual patients.



The NHS needs to improve its understanding of the needs of people with learning disabilities.



Healthcare professionals should receive training on how best to support people with a learning disability to make sure they receive the best care.



Communication is a very important issue, because sometimes people with learning disabilities have difficulty communicating their needs.


Section 6: Things that might help. What we found:

Research and reports found many things that might help support safe care for people with learning disabilities in hospital.


For example:


- Helping healthcare professionals assess risks better,
- Hospital passports,
- Specialist learning disability teams,
- Education and training for healthcare professionals.





Hospital Passport





A hospital passport is a document that gives healthcare professionals important information about a person when they go into hospital.

There are lots of different versions of hospital passports available, so it is important they are all made the same to make sure they are useful.

Section 7: Recommendations from our research



Our scoping review showed that more research is needed to better understand how people with learning disabilities are cared for in hospital.

It also showed common recommendations from previous research and reports that need to be acted on:

- The need for better systems to identify people with learning disabilities in healthcare settings.
- The need for better communication and information sharing between healthcare organisations.
- The need for education and training in caring for people with learning disabilities.



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You can find out more about the NIHR YH PSTRC here: <https://yhpstrc.org/>

For more accessible information please contact



11-12 Eldon Place
Bradford BD1 3AZ
Telephone: 01274 848150
SMS / Text: 07535 120222
E-mail: enquiries@btm.org.uk

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