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By email to Healthwatch – response to Speak Up

Dear colleagues

Many thanks for the really detailed information contained in the reports that you sent to us for consideration. These have been through members of the Mental Health Commissioning Team who lead on learning disability commissioning to see how we can incorporate learning into the work that they do. We apologise that we have not replied sooner.

We value hearing the experiences and opinions of people with learning disability and their families and carers, as this really helps us to target changes and service improvements, in our to commissioning work.

The information has helped to feed into work with GPs and Primary Care Networks aimed at increasing the numbers of people accessing Annual Health Checks. We are working with Sheffield Mencap to assist us to target people who have either not attended or not been offered a health check. This additional support has started to increase both the numbers of people who benefit from the check and the quality of the check. This service offers the individual support or encouragement that the person needs to attend – e.g.

- spending time reassuring the person / their family or explaining about the importance of the check
- liaising with the patient/practice to understand what reasonable adjustments are needed/possible
- help with practical arrangements to help the person get to the Surgery and/or 'attend' a telephone appointment
- offering additional support to help the patient understand their health action plan after the check

GPs have been given recent training by experts by experience to support them in understanding the needs of people with learning disability when delivering the health checks, and the majority of surgeries have attended this training over the last year.



We have also worked with Primary Care Networks to better identify and therefore increase the number of people who are eligible for the checks. This work started in 2021, but we now have dedicated support from a Community Disability Nurse working for NHS Sheffield to support practices, and so the reports can really help to guide her work with practices, individuals with learning disability and their families.

We saw an increase from 58% to 63% of the eligible population receiving checks last year and are working hard to achieve the national target of 75% this year.

We are working with Supported Living Providers alongside Sheffield City Council, to raise awareness and offer support regarding health checks and health passports, so again, your feedback is invaluable to us in targeting learning to these organisations. We are involved in citywide work to improve the use and quality of health passports, working with Sheffield Health and Social Care Trust and Sheffield Teaching Hospitals on this.

In addition to the report on Annual Health Checks, we were grateful for the wider report on people's experiences of pandemic lockdown, which we recognise nationally now, differentially impacted on disabled people.

As a CCG we offered the vaccination to people with learning disability earlier than most other cities in the country, as we were concerned to make sure that this group of people were able to benefit from the protection that the vaccination offered as soon as possible, so that they could get back into daily life.

We tried to ensure that information about covid was available in Easy Read format, especially as this has not been provided at a national level, which we published on Sheffield Flourish's website and circulated to providers and the LD Partnership Board. [Sheffield Covid-19 Information Leaflets | Sheffield Flourish](#) as part of wider pandemic information work that we delivered through Sheffield Psychology Board [SPB LD A4 \(digital\) \(sheffieldflourish.co.uk\)](#) to produce information to different groups.

We have since then been working with family carers and people with learning disabilities, VAS, Sheffield Teaching Hospitals, and GPs over the last year to help us to produce more accessible information and videos relating to a range of health issues (for example: [Mouth care for people with learning disabilities: Brushing your Teeth - YouTube](#); [Sheffield CCG - learning disabilities and vaccinations - YouTube](#); [Improving healthcare for people with autism and/or LD - A Family Carers Story - YouTube](#)), and have benefitted from this expertise in helping us to shape information as part of our commissioning activities.

We have worked with Sheffield City Council, Disability Sheffield, and Sheffield Mencap to improve the offers of accessible support for people with learning disabilities around physical activity and healthy living, including weight management.

A new Sheffield web resource about improving the physical health for people with learning disabilities and autism is now live on the Sheffield Mental Health Guide website.

The learning disability pages focus on annual health checks, as well as other health related information. As well as pages that are aimed directly at people with learning disabilities <http://www.sheffieldmentalhealth.co.uk/learning-disabilities-your-health/gps->



[learning-disabilities-and-autism](#)) and autistic people, there is also a section aimed at GPs and other health care professionals [Learning disabilities: your health | Sheffield Mental Health Guide](#).

We acknowledge the feedback that this can be improved even more and would be happy to incorporate the findings and insights that your reports reveal. We have commissioned Disability Sheffield/Sheffield Voices to carry out further engagement over the next 2 years, about people with learning disabilities experiences of health care. This will help us continue to make sure that we are aware of the views and experiences of people with learning disabilities in Sheffield.

We note the position that when disabled people raise concerns about service providers, these should be thoroughly reviewed, and have worked with Sheffield Health and Social Care Trust in the case of Firshill Rise, to see how services can be improved for the future. We will be seeking the views of experts by experience, family carers and other stakeholders to progress development of the services that we commission later this year.

We have a Physical Health Improvement Group, which has a range of providers and partners, and would welcome a presentation on the two reports at this group, as this is where we target planned work on access to health care, screening, Health Passports and Annual health Checks.

Heather Burns, Deputy Director of the Mental Health Commissioning Team and Liz Tooke, Project Manager for the Physical Health Group will be in contact to arrange the invitation.

May I thank you once again for this really invaluable feedback and we look forward to working more with you to ensure that this helps to shape our work over the coming year.

Yours sincerely



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