

The Adults and Health Committee
Cambridgeshire County Council
New Shire Hall
Emery Crescent
Enterprise Campus
Alconbury Weald
Huntingdon
PE28 4YE

12th December 2023

Dear Chair and members of the Adults and Health Committee,

I understand that on the 14th December you are holding a health scrutiny session on improving health outcomes for people with learning disabilities.

I discussed this with the Learning Disability Partnership Board at their meeting on 7th December 2023.

The Learning Disability Partnership Board is an Adult Social Care Partnership Board which Healthwatch facilitates on behalf of both Cambridgeshire County and Peterborough City Councils.

I was approached on the 28th November about this meeting.

The Learning Disability Partnership Board felt that there was insufficient time for a member of the Partnership Board with lived experience of learning disability to:

- Arrange to attend – travel to Alconbury Weald by public transport is not the easiest.
- Arrange any support that they may need to attend the meeting.
- Think about what they wanted to say.
- Prepare for any questions that the Committee might have for them.

There were two areas that the Learning Disability Partnership Board wanted to bring to your attention which have an impact on their health and wellbeing.

Annual Health Checks

People with learning disabilities should be invited for an annual health check, the Partnership Board wanted you to know that this does not always happen.

When it does people with learning disabilities have told us:

- They don't know why they have a doctor's appointment.
- They are asked questions in a way that they don't understand.
- They have tests done which they don't understand.
- They are not always told the results of these tests.
- They are not always being given health advice based on the results of tests, eg cholesterol, blood pressure, diabetes type 2 – which can be treated by lifestyle changes and medication.
- They are not always asked about health issues that are worrying them.
- They are not asked about different aspects of their life, such as relationships and the need for sexual health checks.
- They are not told about, or invited for, other health checks, such as screening for breast, cervical, and prostate cancers.

The Learning Disability Partnership Board has raised these concerns with the Integrated Care Board and Social Care.

Members of the Learning Disability Partnership Board have been working with the Preparing for Adulthood Team to produce a film that better informs people with learning disabilities about their annual health checks.

Accessible Information

The Learning Disability Partnership Board were clear that information is not always provided to them in a way that works for them.

Since 1st August 2016 all organisations that provide NHS care and/or publicly funded adult social care are legally required to follow the [Accessible Information Standard](#) (this link takes you to the NHS England website which has more information about this).

The Learning Disability Partnership Board have regularly discussed how they are told by people with learning disabilities that they don't receive the following in Easy Read:

- Letters about appointments.
- Information about health conditions.
- Information about medications that they are taking.
- Information about what side effects they should be looking out for when they start a new medication.
- What to do if they experience side effects.

People with learning disabilities also tell us about being spoken to in places, such as waiting rooms, corridors, rooms with lots of audible and visual distractions, which make it difficult for them to focus on what they are being asked or told.

The Learning Disability Partnership Board and Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Peterborough have regularly raised this with the relevant aspects of the NHS – Integrated Care Board, Hospitals, Primary Care etc.

Our Healthwatch has published reports that focus on the Accessible Information Standard:

In 2017 we published the [Accessible Information as Standard](#) report and in 2020 we published the [Giving GP websites a Check-up](#) report.

Thank you for this opportunity to tell you about the concerns of people with learning disabilities that have been raised with our Healthwatch and the Learning Disability Partnership Board.

Yours sincerely,

G Lewis

Graham Lewis

Partnership Development Manager

Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Peterborough