

Find out more about the Learning Disability Register

Does your child get extra help at nursery, school or college as they find it hard to learn or do things for themselves at home?

If yes, they may be able to get extra health support from your GP Practice, including an Annual Health Check from the age of 14 onwards.
So, read on!



If your child is struggling to learn, there can be different reasons for this. One of these reasons could be because they have a learning disability. There are hundreds of thousands of people with a learning disability in the UK.

This leaflet helps you think about whether your child or someone you care for could be considered to have a learning disability and should be on your local GP practice's Learning Disability Register to help them get the help they need, **including a free Annual Health Check from the age of 14¹.**

If your child has a learning disability, it's important they get the right support so they can live their best life and have the same opportunities as everyone else. And organisations like the NHS are here to help.

This leaflet does NOT make a firm diagnosis for your child, and your GP is unlikely to make a formal diagnosis either, if one hasn't been made already. It is designed to help you have a conversation with your GP team about your concerns and whether your child should be on their Learning Disability Register.

What is a learning disability?

There are three things which help us decide if someone has a learning disability.

These are if:

- They have a significantly reduced ability to understand new or complex information and to learn new skills and
- They have a reduced ability to cope independently, reduced social ability/ability to adapt
- This started before the age of 18 with a lasting effect on development.

A learning disability can also be referred to as an intellectual disability or global development delay. If you think the above applies to your child, please read on.



¹Learning disabilities - Annual health checks - NHS (www.nhs.uk)

How does a learning disability differ to a learning difficulty?

A learning difficulty is different to a learning disability. A learning difficulty is a type of special educational need, such as dyslexia, or other condition which affects only one area of learning like reading, writing, spelling and maths etc. Dyslexia, for example, may be considered a general disability but is not considered a learning disability.

Alternatively, your child may have a diagnosis of autism and is autistic. But they may not have a learning disability as their overall ability to learn may be similar, or better compared to other people.

Autistic people who do not have a learning disability are unable to have a free Annual Health Check, though this may change in the future.

Questions to help you think about whether your child could have a learning disability

- Is your child on the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) support register at their school or do they get extra help with their learning?
- Does your child attend a special school?
- Do they have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)?
- Is there a diagnosis of a learning disability, or mention of 'global developmental delay' or 'intellectual disability' in any reports you have received about your child, or has anyone told you your child may have one of these conditions?
- Is your child known to the Children's or Adult's Learning Disability Service?
- Do they see a consultant psychiatrist for learning disabilities or someone from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)?
- Is your child entitled to Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or a Personal Independence Payment (PIP)?



If you answered yes to some of the questions, it's really important you contact your local GP practice and ask them whether your child is on or should be added to the GP's Learning Disability Register. This can be done at any age. You can make an appointment with your GP practice to discuss this and can print this leaflet and bring it with you or download it to show them. If you have any reports, letters or documents which say your child has a learning disability, developmental delay or intellectual disability for example, then bring some of these with you to show your GP.

Think about the points you want to raise with your GP before the appointment and write them down if this helps. The GP can often use their own clinical judgement to make a decision. Or in a few cases, your GP may want to get specialist advice or additional supporting information.

If they agree that your child has or is likely to have a learning disability, they should add your child to their GP practice's Learning Disability Register and you can be noted as their carer.

What is a GP Learning Disability Register?

A GP Learning Disability Register is an 'all ages' list including babies, children, young people and adults registered at their local GP practice who have a learning disability (not a learning difficulty).

What are reasonable adjustments?

The register makes the GP practice aware that a person has a learning disability and helps them to put in place small changes to make it easier for that person to attend appointments and offer any check-ups needed. The small changes are known as reasonable adjustments. For example:

- Offering longer appointments or appointments made for quieter times of the day
- Information in more accessible formats such as easy read
- Having a carer attend
- Having a choice of a face to face or virtual appointment.



What are the benefits of being on the Learning Disability Register?

As well as helping health and care staff offer your child reasonable adjustments, the benefits of being on the Learning Disability Register and for example, having an Annual Health Check, means that your child is more likely to get timely and targeted additional support to help them stay healthy. Your child may already be seeing other health professionals. Seeing your GP is also important.

Sometimes children and young people with a learning disability also have additional health conditions. Being on the GP Learning Disability Register will help everyone understand these and make sure that the right care and support is put in place if your child needs it.

By being on the Learning Disability Register your child will be able to get a free:

- Annual Health Check from the age of 14 upwards together with a Health Action Plan
- Annual NHS flu vaccination
- NHS COVID-19 vaccinations/boosters
- If you are their main carer, you should also be registered as a carer, in order to make sure that you can support them to attend appointments
- You would also be entitled to a free NHS carer's health check.

Having an annual health check also helps your child to get used to going to the GP practice and knowing how to get help and support if they are worried about their health, as they get older.

The Health Action Plan that is discussed and agreed at the Annual Health Check appointment also helps them understand what they need to do to stay healthier.

- Use these links to find out more about having an Annual Health Check:

[Improving the uptake of Annual Health Checks for people with learning disabilities - NDTi](#)

[Don't Miss Out - Annual Health Checks Mencap](#)

[Learning disabilities - Annual Health Checks - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)



What should I do now if I think my child has a learning disability?

If you think your child may have a learning disability, show this leaflet to your GP surgery and book an appointment to discuss this with them

Where can I get further information?

If you have any questions around services available for your child, you can look these up on your local council's website under 'Local Offer' or speak to your school or college Special Educational Needs and Disabilities co-ordinator (SENCo) or lead.

If you would like to discuss this further, there are a number of organisations who can help, such as:

[Contact helpline](#)

[Your local SEND IAS Service \(Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service\) team](#)

[Healthwatch](#)

[Your local parent carer forum](#)

[Mencap](#)

[NDTI](#)

