

Always Event "Those aspects of the patient and family experience that should always occur when patients interact with healthcare professionals and the health care delivery."
Aim Statement: Primary Care staff will always consider reasonable adjustments before meeting their patients for the first time in attempt to make this a positive experience.

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Project introduction: What matters to patients with learning disabilities?

People with learning disabilities and their carers report that meeting a doctor for the first time can increase their anxieties especially when they have not been consulted about reasonable adjustments required.

This can have a negative impact on the communication and interaction between all parties and affect the quality of the consultation. For example, patients may struggle to answer questions, actively listen or remember what was being said, some information or concerns can then be missed.

One person with lived experience said: "I get really anxious when meeting a new doctor. I worry about whether they will be friendly, will they listen to me and will they understand my needs? I would like to know some things before the appointment, this would help my anxieties. I think everyone should think about reasonable adjustments, they are important. He then added: I don't like to say some things out loud as I don't want to upset the doctor."

Consulted carers stated that person centred reasonable adjustments can have a real impact on the quality of the consultation so these should always be considered.

Findings and learning:

Some people with learning disabilities are happy to see any doctor at any time but this is not common.

Some people with learning disabilities would like to know certain things before seeing a new doctor for example, their name, whether it is a male or female and what they look like.

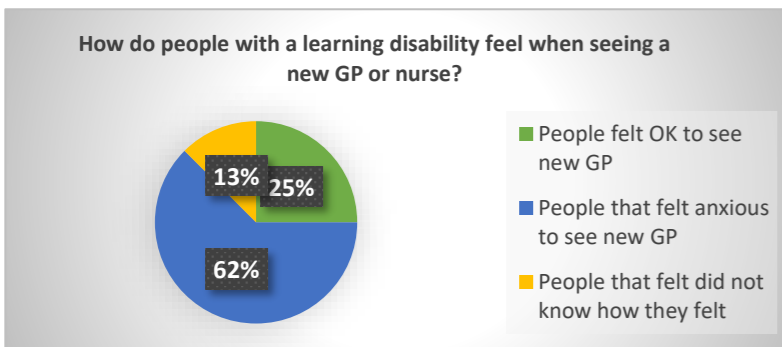
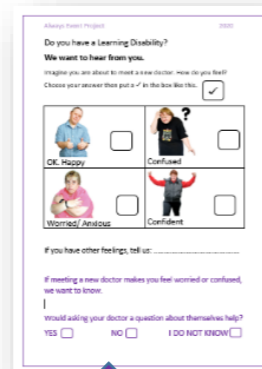
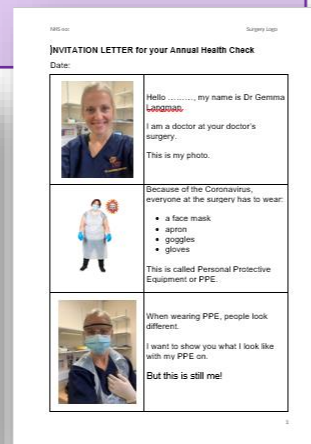
Some people with learning disabilities would like to ask their doctor a question at the beginning of their consultation but this was not an option for everyone. Some people may need help to identify what to ask.

Some people would like to tell the doctor how they feel; how anxious they may be. A use of "My Feelings card" was discussed.

Some people with severe learning disability may not be able to participate in above but they or their carers may still require reasonable adjustments to make their first contact of best quality.

One doctor sent her patient's letters with her photos within and said: When I arrived at Paul's home, he was very excited that it was really me! I have no doubt this made a difference to him."

Reasonable adjustments need to be personal; sharing learning between all involved is a key.



What's next?

I have created a website (To be finalised) where I can collate and share feedback about reasonable adjustments and best practice for next 9 months.

I will share the website with clinicians, carers and people with learning disabilities to get more data from testing different reasonable adjustments. (The pandemic can be a barrier)

I will use anonymous best practice examples in training I provide to GP Practices.

I will liaise with people with learning disabilities and carers to agree actions to "test" different ideas also.

I will discuss examples of reasonable adjustments including the use of "My feelings card" with 3 clinicians who offered to support this project and I will review the outcomes of this.

Every 3 months I will create a poster of most commonly reported reasonable adjustments and share this within my area of work.

Method:

I asked people with learning disabilities how they felt before meeting a new doctor via a questionnaire.

I also asked whether asking their doctor a question about themselves would help them to reduce their anxieties.

I asked a group of family carers about their experiences of meeting their loved one new doctor for the first time; we discussed variable reasonable adjustments.

I worked with GP's on how to ensure that their first contact with someone with a learning disability is successful. eg. Easy read letter.

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