

North East & Cumbria Learning Disability Dysphagia Network Bulletin

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Welcome

The North East and Cumbria Learning Disability Network has a vision the North East and Cumbria will be the best place in England to live if you have a learning disability. Through the work we are doing with the North East & Cumbria Learning Disability Mortality Review (LeDeR) steering group and an analysis from reviews undertaken in the region, a recurring theme is identified around deaths relating to aspiration pneumonia and dysphagia. A wider piece of work took place to understand this in more detail and it was agreed a region wide dysphagia network (supported by the Learning Disability Network) would be established to move forward with the work programme.

In September 2019 a North East and Cumbria Dysphagia Network was launched, and a scoping event took place to map out issues, challenges and solutions. The network is still in its early stages (& delayed further due to pandemic) but is now quickly gaining momentum and part of its role is to share advice, support and information to families and health and social care services to reduce variation, improve quality and ultimately save lives.

Video supported remote communication

Co – vidspeak is a free web-based resource built for people who are unable to communicate verbally. The software uses symbols and video conferencing to allow people to connect. More information can be found here: <https://www.covidspeak.org/>

Supporting communication during covid-19 whilst wearing PPE

Tees Esk & Wear Valley NHS FT have developed some guidance.



communication and
PPE information she

Clear face masks and communication

Through our networks, discussions have been arising over the use of Personal Protection Equipment and how it could affect some people with a learning disability who rely on facial interaction to be able to communicate effectively with health and social care services and families. We have been discussing the benefits a clear face masks (to be used as part of social distance support) and how they could help in overcoming some of these challenges for some groups of people as long as they had the right level of protection. The Royal Collage of speech and language therapists have released their position on the use of clear face masks which can be found here: <https://www.rcslt.org/learning/covid-19/covid-19-faqs> and

More information on clear face masks can be found here: <https://www.theclearmask.com/product>

We will share further information about clear face masks in the coming weeks & months.