

Core Values & Principles: Prevention of Adult Not Brought

The Prevention of Adult Not Brought strategies are underpinned by a core set of values and principles which are around:

- Communication
- Reasonable adjustments
- Mental Capacity Act

Communication

Everyone communicates in a variety of ways, and people with learning disabilities are no exception. Communication can take many forms; verbal, including via a communication aid, non-verbal such as facial expressions and gestures, or a combination of both.

Most people with a learning disability have difficulty communicating, with half having significant difficulties. This can be difficulty understanding what is being said, difficulty expressing themselves to others, or both.

There is a wide range of communication difficulties, but successful communication can be improved by changes to the environment, provision of the right support and the right approach by other people.

It is the responsibility of health and care staff to understand, recognise, and take steps to address the challenges of communication.

The physical environment and how the person with a learning disability is feeling can enhance or limit effective communication, and consideration must be given to both.

Families are usually the main support for their loved one with a learning disability and can help staff and services to communicate effectively with their loved one. Involvement of family carers in health appointments should always be a consideration for secondary care staff.

Some people with learning disabilities, including people with profound and multiple learning disabilities, use only nonverbal methods of communication such as vocalisations, eye gaze, and changes to facial expression. It is essential that when people who communicate in this way attend appointments, that they are supported by someone who knows them well, understands them and can translate their communications to others. This may be a family member or paid support staff who knows the person well.

Clear and accessible information is essential and supports access to safe, effective and person-centred healthcare. People working in health and care need good listening skills and awareness of their own non-verbal communication to ensure people with learning disability get everything they should from their health care appointments.

It is worth noting that all behaviour, including behaviours that challenge are a form of communication.

Mental Capacity & Best Interest

The '[Mental Capacity Act 2005](#)' is an important law for people with a learning disability. It protects rights to help people to make their own choices. Where they are not able to make their own decision, the Mental Capacity Act says a decision must be made that is in their 'best interests'.

The [Mental Capacity Act 2005](#) is a law that protects vulnerable people over the age of 16 around decision-making. It says that: *Every adult, whatever their disability, has the right to make their own decisions wherever possible* Capacity is time and decision dependent.

People should always support a person to make their own decisions if they can. This might mean giving them information in a format that they can understand (for example this might be easy read information for a person with a learning disability) or explaining something in a different way.

But if a decision is too big or complicated for a person to make, even with appropriate information and support, then people supporting them must make a 'best interests' decision for them.

They are **5 main principles** around Mental Capacity:

1. Always assume the person is able to make the decision until you have proof they are not.
2. Try everything possible to support the person make the decision themselves.
3. Do not assume the person does not have capacity to make a decision just because they make a decision that you think is unwise or wrong.
4. If you make a decision for someone who cannot make it themselves, the decision must always be in their best interests & well documented.
5. Any decisions, treatment or care for someone who lacks capacity must always follow the path that is the least restrictive of their basic rights and freedoms.

It's also important to remember that a person may have capacity for some decisions but not others, or they may not have capacity right now but may regain it in the future with support. This means all capacity decisions should be regularly reviewed to make sure they still reflect the person's ability to make decisions.

Reasonable Adjustments

Under the [Equality Act 2010](#), all disabled people have the right to reasonable adjustments when using public services, including healthcare. These adjustments remove barriers that disabled people would otherwise face in accessing these services. Making reasonable adjustments means ensuring disabled people have equal access to good quality healthcare.

Reasonable adjustments can be simple changes made by one healthcare professional, or they can be more complex and need multiple teams to work together. Making reasonable adjustments can mean removing barriers that people with a learning disability face or providing something extra for someone with a learning disability to enable them to access the healthcare they need.

Here are the [Mencap 'Treat Me Well'](#) top 10 reasonable adjustments:

1. Speak clearly and use simple words. It is important not to make assumptions that someone has understood information they have been given.
2. Take your time. People with a learning disability may need a bit longer than other patients to be able to understand information they are given and to make themselves understood. Just ten extra minutes can make a big difference to many people.

3. Work with supporters. This could be a support worker or family member. Supporters can be important, particularly for people with profound and multiple learning disability, but remember to talk to the person directly and support them to make decisions - supporters are there to help you do this.
4. Be flexible with appointment times. Many people with a learning disability will find it easier coming to an appointment when it is quieter, so an appointment at the very beginning or very end of the day might make their appointment go more smoothly. They may also need an appointment at a time when their supporter is able to accompany them.
5. Make sure people can get into and around the building. This includes ensuring there are no physical barriers for people using wheelchairs or with mobility issues, but also making sure signs in the building are as easy to understand as possible.
6. Provide a quiet place to wait. Health and care settings can be often busy, noisy places and this can be overwhelming for many people with a learning disability. Having a quiet place to wait can prevent people getting anxious and having to leave. Many people also find waiting a long time very difficult.
7. Listen to your learning disability acute liaison nurse. They know lots about reasonable adjustments and can help you to support your patient.
8. Use healthcare passports if your patient has one. These are a patient-held, personalised record outlining a person's communication needs and reasonable adjustments.
9. Provide written information in Easy Read format. This means people are much more likely to read and understand information about their appointments, procedures and results. This is also a requirement of the NHS's own Accessible Information Standard.
10. Always ask the person what they need. Reasonable adjustments are about what the person in front of you needs and they know that better than anyone and any family or carers with them and do your best to provide the support they need.