



Learning Disability and Autism Programme

Friday 22nd May 2020

Frequently Asked Questions

Thank you for your questions and comments. We have focussed on questions which summarise a key theme from stakeholders. If you do not think we have answered your question, or if we have missed anything, please do come back to us at: england.learning.disability@nhs.net

We will provide an update on questions and answers each Friday for the next few weeks.

To support collaborative working across the voluntary and independent sector, health and social care there is a weekly webinar to raise and discuss key issues for people with a learning disability and autistic people with representatives from NHS England and Improvement, the Department for Health and Social Care, Public Health England and voluntary and independent sector organisations taking part.

To receive details about the webinar or to suggest agenda items please contact: england.learning.disability@nhs.net

We have set up a [Future NHS Collaboration workspace](#) to support the work of NHS England and Improvement Mental Health, Learning Disability and Autism Covid-19 Response Cell. We use this platform to share guidance and information, and encourage mental health, learning disability and autism leads and providers to share advice and feedback on how best to look after patients and staff during these difficult times. The resources on this workspace are open to those working in mental health, learning disability and autism services and will include the voluntary and independent sector.

If you currently have a FutureNHS account, you can access the workspace directly through the homepage (<https://future.nhs.uk/MHLDAcovid19/grouphome>). Those without a FutureNHS account can either self-register to the platform if they have an nhs.net or nhs.uk email account, or directly request access by emailing our generic mailbox if they are from other organisations at: MHLDAcovid19-manager@future.nhs.uk

Key topics this week

- Access to non Covid related healthcare
- Help us help you
- Publication of data
- Testing
- Personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Children and young people
- Funding

Access to Healthcare for non Covid related issues

The following information was included in the NHS Primary Care bulletin sent to all GP practices on the 19th May:

“As we restore critical services, we would like to remind practices of the importance of proactive health checks for people with a learning disability particularly during this critical time. On average men with learning disabilities die 23 years earlier than men without a learning disability and for women it’s 27 years earlier. Practices are reminded that the Directed Enhanced service (DES) has not been suspended. And that they should continue to offer this proactive service to their patients.

Healthcare Professionals should discuss with the patient (if considered to have mental capacity), their carer or their advocate the most suitable and safe way to conduct a health check. Where this can be delivered safely on a face to face basis this should continue. Where this care cannot be delivered safely face to face or where the patient has other medical conditions which require them to shield or socially isolate the review could be conducted remotely, with as much of the physical review completed as is practicable in these circumstances. Practices should use their clinical judgement and knowledge of the patient, together with the advice of family or other carers, in determining whether they would be able to participate in a remote review. Reasonable adjustments should be made to accommodate the needs of patients and carers as well as considering the capacity and capability of the GP practice whilst working in different ways. We will continue to work with a range of stakeholders to help provide further best practice advice”

Help us help you campaign

In previous FAQs we have mentioned the NHS launched a “help us help you” media campaign to remind people that they should still contact health services for non-Covid related health concerns. The message is that there is capacity in NHS services for people to get the care they need.

Working with the learning disability and autism coproduction group to accessible resources for people with a learning disability and autistic people on how to access services during the pandemic have been developed. Links to an easy read version and a plain English version of the campaign can be found in the published resources section below

If you need to use the NHS for reasons other than coronavirus, in the first instance call your GP or call 111. If it’s a medical emergency when someone is seriously ill or injured and their life is at risk call 999

Publication of data

There have been constructive discussions with Public Health England today (Friday 22nd May 2020) and we expect to provide more detail about publication next Wednesday.

The question about the “r” number by region has been forwarded to PHE and DHSC.

Response from Care Quality Commission

Supported by ONS we are doing further work on our care home deaths data so that we can better understand the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) on specific groups of people, including people with learning disabilities. This will form part of our reporting moving forwards. We are also identifying the best approach to capture the impact on autistic people as part of this. This work is a priority for us and will be published as soon as possible

Testing

From the Department of Health and Social Care;

From Tuesday 19th May all individuals aged five and over with symptoms are eligible for a coronavirus test which can be accessed via the NHS testing site. A link to the site is in the published resources section below

We have worked hard to improve turnaround times and approximately 90% of people now receive a result within 48hrs of their test. Expansion of testing to other care settings and towards the retesting of care homes will be guided by clinical advice on relative priority and available testing capacity.

Links to a video from Public Health England on how to take a combined nose and throat swab and to an easy read resource from Bristol North Somerset and South Gloucestershire CCG can be found in the published resources section below:

Personal and Protective equipment (PPE)

Response from the Department for Health and Social Care;

We are considering how the use of face masks are impacting on people with learning disabilities and autism and what reasonable adjustments are possible whilst still ensuring the safety of staff and the person they are supporting from the risk of infection. We will provide further advice in due course.

Our priority is to ensure the safety of people supported in care settings and of the staff. We are working with PHE and care sector representative bodies to ensure it is clear how guidance relates to different care settings. We will keep under review what other forms of training, support or guidance may be required locally to ensure safety and respond to the needs of staff working in the sector. We welcome your feedback on how we might improve this guidance further.

Children and Young People

Response from the Department for Education:

Return to school:

We are working up and expect to publish shortly more detailed guidance on supporting children & young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), which will include and update our guidance on risk assessments for Children and Young People with SEND.

We have already published a suite of guidance relating to 1 June, including through the guidance on vulnerable children and young people (link in published resources section below) which confirms that for all children and young people with Education Health and Care (EHC) plans, we are asking local authorities to follow the guidance to conduct a risk assessment - in consultation with educational settings and parents/carers - to determine whether children and young people's needs can be met as safely or more safely in the educational environment. We are asking local authorities and educational providers to keep risk assessments under review, in case circumstances change and a different decision is more appropriate.

For children and young people with an EHC plan in mainstream settings and alternative provision:

- those in year groups specifically targeted for return* should return to school, where medical advice suggests they are not clinically vulnerable to coronavirus, informed by their risk assessments, and are not shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as clinically extremely vulnerable
- those in other year groups should continue to attend or not depending on their individual risk assessments
- Schools, colleges and local authorities have latitude to use special educational needs and disability (SEND) risk assessments also for children and young people who have SEND without an EHC plan, where they feel it would be beneficial, for instance for children on SEN support who have complex needs. This means they can use this as a mechanism to bring back pupils and students with SEND who need it, in other year groups, even if they do not have an EHC plan.

For all children and young people with an EHC plan in special educational settings, such as special schools, special post-16 institutions and hospital schools, settings should encourage attendance based on the child's risk assessment and on the ability of the setting to provide for their needs, and not using the child's year group as a primary deciding factor, both because all children and young people in these settings are considered vulnerable and because year groups may not be indicative of key transition points. In line with the guidance on implementing measures in education and childcare settings and the guidance for special schools, specialist colleges, local authorities and any other settings, special schools and special post-16 institutions should:

- consult risk assessments conducted and where children and young people are attending their specialist setting, they should continue to do so
- work with local authorities and families to continually review risk assessments and bring children and young people back to face to face

education where circumstances change, for example where it is becoming unsustainable for a family to care for a child week-round

- consider how to increase the numbers of children and young people accessing on-site education from the week commencing 1 June, including where appropriate by considering what the key transition points are, and ensure that as many children as can be safely catered for are able to attend their setting
- consider a range of options to enable as many children as possible to benefit from attending their setting, such as creating part-time attendance rotas

We have also confirmed that Hospital Schools should

- aim to provide educational services for as many pupils in these settings as is possible, in line with risk assessment and social distancing guidelines and where headteachers agree with medical practitioners that it is safe and feasible to do so
- use their discretion in considering how to provide education services - taking into consideration issues of safety, capacity and so on - and how to prioritise pupils if this is required, including through a phased return approach
- work closely with hospitals and NHS trusts so that children and young people in hospital schools are able to receive their education, including through access to classrooms where appropriate

*Nursery, reception, year 1, year 6, in primary.

Support at home:

We are committed to ensuring that all children and young people, including those who are vulnerable, are able to access home learning resources and education support during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. We have already published a list of high quality online educational resources to support home learning, including materials for children and young people with special educational needs and disability (SEND) of all ages. We will be publishing a second wave of home learning resources within the next few days and weeks

To support the hard work of schools in delivering remote education, the Oak National Academy (ONA) was launched on 20 April. This brand-new enterprise has been created by 40 teachers from some of the leading schools across England. It will provide 180 video lessons each week, across a broad range of subjects from maths to art to languages, for every year group from Reception through to Year 10. The ONA also launched its Specialist Curriculum for children and young people with SEND on 4 May, which is providing remote educational support to children and young people with profound needs who would normally receive their education in specialist settings

We have also worked with the BBC to support them in developing Bitesize Daily, which is providing new lessons every weekday for pupils from Year 1 to Year 10. It has been created in collaboration with teachers and educational experts and

consists of videos and interactive activities which cover core subjects and other topics on the school curriculum. The content is available for free on television, online and through BBC iPlayer.

In addition, we have published detailed guidance for parents, teachers and schools on how to best provide educational support at home. This includes specific guidance for parents and carers of children and young people with SEND, which provides links to further specialist home learning resources for a range of ages and needs, from those in early years to further and higher education settings.

Update from MOJ re parole

We are still awaiting a reply and will share as soon as received.

Funding

From Department for Health and Social Care;

As part of the overall £750m funding programme, the Government's new Coronavirus Community Support Fund will open for applications at 10am on Friday 22nd May. This new funding stream makes available £200m in Government funding that will be aimed primarily at small to medium voluntary sector organisations in England. Further details can be found at [Statement about the coronavirus community support fund](#)

Links to published guidance and resources

Help us help you campaign resources

- [help us help you plain English version](#)
- [help us help you easy read version](#)

Asking for a Test

- [link to ask for a test for coronavirus](#)

Taking combined nose and throat swabs

- [Public Health video on taking a combined throat and nose swab.](#)
- [Easy read resource about taking a combined throat and nose swab.](#)

Guidance

- [Legal guidance for mental health, learning disability and autism, and specialised commissioning services supporting people of all ages during the coronavirus pandemic](#)
- [Covid 19 guidance on vulnerable children and young people](#)

- [Implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings](#)
- [SEND risk assessment guidance](#)

Other resources

Resources by NWTDT / Pathways relating to Trauma

- [Trauma Grab sheet 1](#)
- [Trauma grab sheet 2](#)
- [Trauma grab sheet 3](#)

[Videos to support people with a learning disability during the Covid 19 pandemic by the Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Trust](#)

Hot topics for future webinars

- Working together and planning for the future

Additional information

Public Health England weekly updates [sign up here](#)