

# Help individuals with a learning disability stay well this winter

## Communications pack 2022-23

This pack contains a wealth of practical communications messaging and resources to support individuals with a learning disability gain access to, and receive the best health care this winter and beyond.

It has been developed to be used by Communications Leads, Learning Disability commissioners, Local Area Contacts, Learning Disability nurses, wider health professionals, social care workers, families/carers, and advocacy groups.

In the South East, we want to make every contact count for individuals with a learning disability. Please use this communications pack to maximise engagement with your stakeholders and ensure this group of people, who often face significant health inequalities, receive the very best health care and outcomes this winter and beyond.

## Make Every Contact Count

As well as making sure individuals with a learning disability receive the vaccinations they are entitled to, we want to stress the importance of ensuring every contact is used to maximise their health and wellbeing now and in the future.

For example, when inviting those on the GP Learning Disability Register to attend their Flu/COVID-19 vaccines, can enough time be given to allow an [Annual Health Check](#) (AHC) at the same appointment?

## Barriers to Primary Care faced by individuals with a learning disability

Use this hard-hitting video which focuses on the challenges people with a learning disability experience when accessing primary care. Individuals with a learning disability often experience worse physical and mental health and are three times more likely to die from avoidable causes. Good access to Primary Care and Annual Health Checks are proven to help improve health outcomes and reduce health inequalities.

[Animation around the challenges of people with learning disabilities in primary care - YouTube](#)

## How to stay well this winter

Access and share the latest stay well this winter Easy Read leaflet '[We are here to help you stay well this winter](#)', which covers:

- What to do if you think you have coronavirus
- COVID-19 booster vaccine
- What to do if you are feeling ill and it is not coronavirus
- Flu vaccine
- Keeping warm
- Keeping active
- Taking care of your mental health
- Making sure you have the right medicines
- What you can do at home if you are ill
- Handwashing
- Prescriptions
- Looking out for other people
- Getting help from NHS Volunteer Responders
- 6 things to remember:
  - Get a flu jab
  - Get your coronavirus booster jab when it is offered

- Heat your home to at least 18C if you can
- Find out about help to pay for your heating at [www.simpleenergyadvice.org.uk](http://www.simpleenergyadvice.org.uk)
- If you start to feel ill contact NHS 11 by phone or online
- Check on other people who might need extra help in the winter
- Where to get the right medical help
  - Contacting NHS 111
  - Contacting your doctor or pharmacy
  - How to get a coronavirus test
  - How to find out more

## Key messages

**These are the key messages that you should be sharing widely to reach individuals with a learning disability, their families, and carers this winter:**

1. Getting your flu and COVID-19 vaccines are two of the most important things you can do to keep yourself and others around you safe this winter.
2. Contracting COVID-19, flu or both can be very serious, particularly for those considered at risk.
3. Having the COVID-19 and flu vaccines will also reduce the chance of you spreading COVID-19 and flu to other people who may be more at risk of serious problems from the viruses.
4. Flu and COVID-19 spread easily, even from people who show no symptoms. The best way to protect yourself and others around you is by getting the flu and the COVID-19 booster vaccinations.
5. The COVID-19 and the flu vaccine can be given on the same day. For people that are eligible for both, there may be opportunities to get the two vaccines at the same time.
6. You should be invited for an Annual Health Check if you are on the GP Learning Disability Register
7. It is important to get your Annual Health Check every year to help you stay healthy and well.
8. If you care for someone with a learning disability, they are entitled to an Annual Health Check.

## Flu vaccine

### Resources

These resources around the flu vaccine are aimed at people with a learning disability, their families, and carers, and encourage the uptake of the flu jab this winter:

- NHS Easy Read Poster: [Get your free flu jab](#)
- NHS Easy Read Leaflet: [Protect yourself from flu](#)
- NHS Flu vaccination [video](#) for people with a learning disability
- NHS Flu vaccinations [video](#) for carers
- Misfits Theatre Company [video](#) tackles flu vaccination misinformation
- Camilla attends her flu jab appointment in this [video](#)
- A number of [simple text resources](#) are available for downloading/ordering
- This [easy read poster](#) is to encourage people with a learning disability to be vaccinated against flu this winter. A supporting easy read leaflet from [UKHSA agency](#) is available.
  - Flu film edits for use on social media – [Here](#)
  - Accessible social media cards – [Here](#)
  - A short film about the importance of the [flu vaccination for people with a learning disability and autistic people with certain health conditions](#). The film covers why it is important, who is eligible for a free vaccine, where you can get the vaccine and reasonable adjustments.
  - There is also a similar film for [carers of people with a learning disability](#).

## Coronavirus autumn booster vaccine

### Key messages

**These are the key messages that you should be sharing around the coronavirus autumn booster vaccine for individuals with a learning disability this winter:**

You should be invited for your coronavirus booster vaccine if -

- You are on the GP Learning Disability Register
- You are registered as a carer with your GP
- You are in a high-risk group for coronavirus
- If you have not been invited and you think should have been, you can contact your GP to book an appointment.

### **JCVI advice – who is eligible?**

**The government have accepted final JCVI advice which states the following people should be offered a COVID-19 booster vaccine this autumn:**

- residents in a care home for older adults and staff working in care homes for older adults
- frontline health and social care workers
- all adults aged 50 years and over
- persons aged 5 to 49 years in a clinical risk group, as set out in the Green Book
- persons aged 5 to 49 years who are household contacts of people with immunosuppression
- persons aged 16 to 49 years who are carers, as set out in the Green Book.

### **What does this mean for people with a learning disability and autistic people?**

- This update confirms that you are eligible for an autumn booster if you are aged 5 years or above and are on the GP Learning Disability Register.
- Your carers are also eligible.
- Invitations for the COVID autumn booster have started to go out. Easy read letters for people aged 16+ on the GP Learning Disability register landed around 29<sup>th</sup> September.
- In addition, invitations for children are being sent to their parents and guardians as they become eligible.

- If available, you may be offered a flu and COVID vaccination at the same time when you attend your appointment.

## Not received an invite letter

### What if you believe you are eligible and haven't been invited?

Contact your GP practice and ask if you are on the GP Learning Disability Register.

If you aren't, ask to be added. This will ensure that you are invited for the COVID-19 autumn booster and for your Annual Health Check.

If your GP practice does not think you should be on the GP Learning Disability Register, ask to speak directly to your GP about this.

If you have ongoing concerns around accessing a COVID-19 autumn booster for yourself or someone you look after, contact the Ask Listen Do team – [england.asklistendo@nhs.net](mailto:england.asklistendo@nhs.net)

## Resources

**These resources around the COVID-19 vaccine are aimed at people with a learning disability, their families, and carers, and encourage the uptake of the flu jab this winter:**

- Governments' Easy Read leaflet [COVID-19 Booster](#)
- NHS Easy Read letter [Autumn booster invitation letter](#)
- NHS Covid-19 vaccination [video](#). This is a short film which talks about coronavirus and the coronavirus vaccine. It describes how important it is to have the vaccine and what you should do after you've had the vaccine.
- COVID-19 autumn booster easy read invitation letter – [Here](#)
- Accessible social media cards - [Here](#)

## Green Book update reminder

**Eligibility of people with a learning disability for the COVID-19 autumn booster vaccination:**

As outlined in the recent [Autumn COVID-19 booster and flu system letter](#), this update confirms that people aged 5 and over on the GP learning disability register are eligible for the COVID-19 autumn booster vaccine following updated Green Book guidance.

Please offer the COVID-19 autumn booster vaccination to everyone on the GP learning Disability Register and their carers. Those eligible can [book online](#) or phone 119 as long as it has been three months since their last dose.

## Annual Health Checks and Health Action Plans

As well as working towards increasing vaccination uptake this winter, there has been a lot of working going on in the South East to increase the uptake of Annual Health Checks.

Annual Health Checks are a very important part of care for people with a learning disability, who often face poorer health outcomes and premature mortality when compared to the rest of the population. Evidence shows that Annual Health Checks can identify undetected health conditions early, ensure the correct treatment is being received, and encourage the uptake of screening and immunisation which in turn helps to keep individuals healthy and well.

The Long Term Plan commitment is that by March 2024, 75% of people aged 14 and over on a GP learning disability register will have had an Annual Health Check.

In September 2022 data showed that the South East region was exceeding the national target for Annual Health Checks, which is reflective of a **49% increase** on performance when compared to September 2021.

This rise in number indicates that more people with a learning disability across the South East have accessed an Annual Health Check, however it is acknowledged that there is more work to be done to ensure that 100% of people who are entitled to both an AHC and Health Action Plan get them.

### Key messages

**These are the key messages that you can be sharing in relation to Annual Health Checks:**

- You should be invited for an Annual Health Check if you are on the GP Learning Disability Register
- It is important to get your Annual Health Check every year to help you stay healthy and well
- If you care for someone with a learning disability, they are entitled to an Annual Health Check.

## Guidance

**This guidance refers to improving the identification of people with a learning disability in general practice:**

Practices should review this guidance and update their registers to ensure that eligible patients are offered a flu vaccination and flagged for a health check.

- [Improving identification of people with a learning disability: guidance for general practice \(england.nhs.uk\)](https://www.england.nhs.uk/guidance/improving-identification-of-people-with-a-learning-disability-guidance-for-general-practice/)

## Resources

**These resources are aimed at people with a learning disability, to encourage the uptake of Annual Health Checks:**

- Watch videos of [Harshi](#) and [Charlotte](#) talk about their Annual Health Checks and health action plans, to help them keep healthy.

### Resources for healthcare professionals

- [Introduction to Annual Health Checks for Primary Care](#)
- [Conducting Annual Health Checks remotely for people with a Learning Disability](#)
- [Mental Capacity Act - how it can support people with a learning disability at Annual Health Checks](#)
- [Reasonable adjustments for people with a learning disability](#)

### Resources for carers, families, and people with a learning disability

- [Introduction to Annual Health Checks for people with a Learning Disability for carers and families](#)



- [Oral Health for people with a learning disability](#)
- [Introduction to Annual Health Checks for people with a Learning Disability](#)
- [Health Action Plans to support people with a learning disability](#)

## Reasonable Adjustments

The NHS should make it as easy for disabled people to use health services as it is for people who are not disabled by making reasonable adjustments.

**Here are some resources to support this:**

- Watch this short film on [Kareem's experience of reasonable adjustments](#) and find out about the sort of support you could ask for.
- Find out more about [reasonable adjustments](#) on the NHS England webpage.

## Making sure people have the right medicine

It is important that people get the right medicine at the right time. Too much medicine can make you ill. There's lots of work being done to help people get the right medicine called STOMP and STAMP:

- STOMP means- Stopping over medication of people with a learning disability and autistic people
- STAMP means- supporting treatment and appropriate medication in paediatrics (children)

## Resources

**These resources are aimed at people with a learning disability, their families, and carers, and talk about STOMP/STAMP and ensuring people get the right medicine at the right time:**

- Watch [Ethan's story](#) about how he's been able to reduce his anti-epileptic medicine and is enjoying life a lot more.

- Watch [Shane's story](#) about how he's been able to reduce the medicines he is on and now is less anxious, has a lot more energy and lives the life he wants.
- There is [free online training](#) for families, carers and staff to help STOMP out over-medication. Find out about how to get the right support and medicine.
- There is a [guide to stopping over medication for autistic people](#), from the National Autistic Society.
- There is an [easy read guide to stopping over medication](#)
- The [easy read guides are in 8 different languages](#).
- [Find out more about the STOMP STAMP work](#) on the NHS England website (not easy read)

## Knowing the signs of sepsis

Sepsis is an illness when your body reacts very badly to an infection. It's sometimes called blood poisoning. Severe sepsis can be more prevalent in winter, so it is important to know the signs. If you think you might have sepsis, it is important that you go to hospital straight away.

### Resources

**These resources are aimed at people with a learning disability, their families, and carers, and supports them to recognise the signs of sepsis:**

- [Signs of sepsis](#)
- [How to avoid sepsis](#)
- [After you've had sepsis](#)
- This [video shows you how someone might behave differently if they have sepsis](#)
- This [video has a really catchy song about the signs of sepsis- to help you remember](#)

## Children and Young People

**Resources and initiatives to help the most vulnerable Children, Young People, and their families this winter:**

- [Child poverty facts and figures | CPAG](#)
- [Hot Topics presents #PovertyKillsChildren Tickets, Fri 9 Dec 2022 at 09:30 | Eventbrite](#)
- [Family hubs and start for life programme: local authority guide - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- [National Centre for Family Hubs](#)
- [FareShare - Getting Food](#) [Food redistribution - Tesco PLC](#) [Asda launches £1 cafe meal deal for over 60s to help with cost of living](#)
- Contact helpline [Contact - for families with disabled children | Contact](#)
- [Help if you have a disabled child: Overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- Benefits [Benefits - Citizens Advice](#) [Where to get debt and benefits advice - Shelter England](#)

## Mental Health

We all need a bit of help with our feelings from time to time, but this can be especially true over the colder, darker, often more isolating winter months.

### Resources

**These resources are aimed at people with a learning disability, to help with their mental health:**

- [An easy read leaflet from MIND](#), which gives ideas we can all try to improve how we feel.
- [An easy read factsheet from Rethink](#), which gives advice on how to access mental health support.

## Cost of living

With the cost of living rising and the energy crisis continuing into winter, it is important that people with a learning disability understand how to stay warm, well and know where to access financial help should they need it.

## Resources

**These resources are aimed at people with a learning disability, to help during the cost of living crisis:**

- Learning Disability England has created a selection of [useful resources](#), including information on energy bills, staying warm and well, financial help and more.
- My Life My Choice 'Our Champion's' has produced an [Easy Read guide](#) to help individuals.

## Spread the word!

**We would love for you to utilise the messages in this signposting document and share it far and wide to help support people with a learning disability in your area:**

### Join the conversation on social media

Twitter - [@NHSsoutheast](#) and [@NHSability](#)

Facebook group – [NHS England Learning Disability and Autism Engagement](#)

### Downloadable social media graphics

Download the suggested social media graphics via the [South East Learning Disability and Autism Future NHS platform](#) or if you do not have access, please email Lauren Hammond to receive them.



**NHS**

**Be safe from coronavirus.**

**Book your booster vaccine  
when you are invited.**

Image copyright @LYPFPT



**NHS**

**Remember to book your coronavirus  
vaccine appointment if you have  
been invited.**

**You can have it at the same time as  
the flu vaccine, or one at a time.**

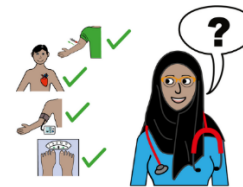
Image copyright @LYPFPT



**NHS**

**The flu and coronavirus  
vaccines can help keep you  
safe and stop you getting  
very unwell.**

Image copyright @LYPFPT



**NHS**

**You should be invited for an Annual  
Health Check if you are on the GP  
Learning Disability Register.**

**Having an Annual Health Check can help  
you stay well.**

Image copyright @LYPFPT


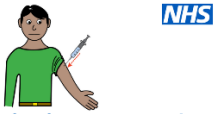


**NHS**


**If you care for someone with a learning  
disability, help protect them this winter.**

**They are entitled to both the flu and  
coronavirus booster vaccines and can have  
them at the same time.**

## Suggested copy for social media

Please find suggested copy for Twitter below which you may wish to use. This can also be adapted for use on other channels such as Facebook, Instagram, in newsletters, blogs, and on websites, and used in conjunction with the links to resources highlighted in this document:

Image	Copy
 <p><b>Be safe from coronavirus.</b></p> <p><b>Book your booster vaccine when you are invited.</b></p> <p><small>Image copyright: GLL/PTM</small></p>	<p>You should be invited for your autumn coronavirus booster vaccine if you have a learning disability and are on the Learning Disability Register. Contact your GP if you have not been invited <a href="#">#LearningDisabilityRegister</a> <a href="#">#CovidVaccine</a> <a href="#">#Coronavirus</a> <a href="#">#LearningDisability</a> <a href="#">#BoosterVaccine</a></p>
 <p><b>Remember to book your coronavirus vaccine appointment if you have been invited.</b></p> <p><b>You can have it at the same time as the flu vaccine, or one at a time.</b></p> <p><small>Image copyright: GLL/PTM</small></p>	<p>If you have received an invitation for the autumn coronavirus booster vaccine, please book an appointment at your GP practice. You can have your coronavirus vaccine at the same time as the flu vaccine, or one at a time. <a href="#">#CovidVaccine</a> <a href="#">#Coronavirus</a> <a href="#">#LearningDisability</a> <a href="#">#Fluvaccine</a></p>
 <p><b>The flu and coronavirus vaccines can help keep you safe and stop you getting very unwell.</b></p> <p><small>Image copyright: GLL/PTM</small></p>	<p>Having the coronavirus autumn booster vaccine and flu vaccine this winter can keep you safe and stop you from getting very unwell. You can have them at the same time. <a href="#">#learningdisability</a> <a href="#">#fluvaccine</a> <a href="#">#covidbooster</a></p>
 <p><b>You should be invited for an Annual Health Check if you are on the GP Learning Disability Register.</b></p> <p><b>Having an Annual Health Check can help you stay well.</b></p> <p><small>Image copyright: GLL/PTM</small></p>	<p>You should be invited for an Annual Health Check if you are on the Learning Disability Register. Having one can help you stay well. Speak to your GP practice if you haven't had an Annual Health Check yet. <a href="#">#annualhealthcheck</a> <a href="#">#learningdisabilityregister</a> <a href="#">#learningdisability</a></p>

<p> If you care for someone with a learning disability, help protect them this winter.</p> <p>They are entitled to both the flu and coronavirus booster vaccines and can have them at the same time.</p>	<p>Do you care for someone with a learning disability? Help protect them this winter by encouraging them to get their covid booster and flu vaccines. These vaccines can be given at the same time. <a href="#">#LearningDisability</a> <a href="#">#Vaccine</a> <a href="#">#CovidVaccine</a> <a href="#">#FamilyCarer</a></p>
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## Any questions?

If you have any questions about this comms pack or its contents, or require support in pushing this vital messaging out locally, please contact South East Learning Disability and Autism Communications Lead, [Lauren Hammond](#).