

**Supporting the delivery of
good practice in maternity
services for parents with
learning disabilities.**



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Together Project Guidelines

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NIHR | National Institute for
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Together Project Guidelines



To support maternity care for parents with learning disabilities

IDENTIFYING NEED

All health and social care professionals engaging with maternity services require an awareness of what a 'learning disability' is and the differences between learning disabilities, neurological conditions, autism, mental health conditions and learning difficulties but recognising the need for reasonable adjustments could be similar across these groups

The need for reasonable adjustments should be ascertained respectfully at the booking in appointment

The process should be transparent and enable the individual to propose options and solutions

A strengths-based approach should be adopted, acknowledging the person's learning disability but shifting focus to the potential of the individual to parent their child rather than a focus on limitations

Details of reasonable adjustments required should be recorded in the maternity notes.

PREPARING FOR PARENTHOOD

Local maternity pathways for parents with learning disabilities should be developed and followed
The scheduling, length and environment of future appointments should be considered around the needs of the parent to ensure sufficient practitioner time/contact to enable full explanations and to check understanding

Verbal explanations or demonstrations about aspects of pregnancy and care should be given using various resources matched to parent/s' needs

Antenatal information should be provided in an appropriate format

Appropriate antenatal education/preparation classes should be discussed with parent/s

Postnatal information should be provided in an appropriate format

Appropriate postnatal/parenting classes should be discussed with parents

Information on safeguarding and reducing risk should be provided in an appropriate format.

SUPPORTING JOURNEY TO BABY & BEYOND

Adopt a proactive and enabling approach to ensure the parent/s receive sufficient and appropriate support
Consider interprofessional relationships and communication systems, aspire to a common agenda that recognises the support needs of the entire family

Discuss the need for and the availability of specialist support within the trust and the community and reach out as required

Discuss the potential involvement of children's social services to support the parent/s to prepare for parenthood

Identify a named midwife and how to contact them

Identify a single point of specialist support and how to contact them

Provide the parent/s with information on who to contact in different circumstances

The value of an antenatal appointment with a Health Visitor should be considered for parents with learning disabilities, and action taken to support this as necessary

Advocacy needs should be discussed and considered. This should focus on both the support required of the parent/s as vulnerable adults and the support required to safeguard their child

Consider whether third sector support (voluntary/charity groups) is appropriate and necessary and direct parent/s accordingly.



