

North Shields Primary Care Network

Learning Disability Support Service

Progress Report

April 2023 - March 2024



Learning Disability Support Team

People with a learning disability have poorer physical and mental health than the general population. They experience health inequalities that affect life expectancy and deaths that can often be avoidable. People with a learning disability are less likely to access healthcare reviews, health appointments, and national screening and vaccinations programmes. There are numerous reasons and barriers that people with a learning disability face when accessing health care settings.

These include:

- Correspondence which is not accessible
- A lack of reasonable adjustments in healthcare settings
- Anxiety and fear about attending health appointments
- Limited support available to help people recognise symptoms and understand their health issues

What we do

LD:NorthEast's Primary Care Support Service offers personalised support to patients who have a learning disability within the North West Primary Care Network. Our team works in the GP practices, working to identify and assist patients who would benefit from additional support.

This support includes:

- Identifying patients who would benefit from support
- Identifying and implementing reasonable adjustments
- Providing accessible materials
- Coordinating appointments
- Supporting people to attend appointments
- Promoting screening programmes
- Providing support to reduce anxieties and fears



Our Aims

- To encourage patients to attend annual health checks
- To encourage and support patients to access screening
- To identify patients who would benefit from health coaching
- To empower patients to look after their own health and wellbeing

The Team



Mandy Mileham Harding

Health Care Coordinator
(18 years+)



Michelle Taylor

Health & Wellbeing Coach
(18 years +)

Our Care Coordinator Mandy supports patients to attend annual health checks, health care appointments and ensure any reasonable adjustments are put in place, so all patients have a positive experience.

Our Health & Wellbeing Coach Michelle supports and motivates patients to make healthy lifestyle choices and changes, giving people the skills and building up people's confidence to look after their own health & wellbeing.

Data 2023- 2024

Care Coordinator 18 years +

2083

Contacts with patients



163

Annual health checks arranged

151

Health appointments arranged



97

Patients supported to appointments

93

Easy Read resources distributed

43

Screening appointments arranged

27

Patients supported to undertake screening



66

Home visits undertaken

406

Reasonable adjustments implemented



82

Referrals to additional health services such as OT, podiatry, dentistry, hospital support etc.

197

Covid vaccinations arranged



382

Tasks completed



Case Study

Sarah is a young lady, aged 28 years old who has a mild learning disability and lives with carers.

Sarah had been for her annual health check, and when discussing women's health with the doctor, she refused cervical screening.

A task was sent for us to contact Sarah to see if there was any support we could offer Sarah to enable her to undergo screening.

We contacted Sarah and whilst chatting with her, it was clear that she was extremely frightened, and this was the reason she was refusing. Sarah was not aware of what would happen during the procedure, and explained she thought it would 'hurt.'

We met with Sarah at the Hub. We talked through what would happen during a screening appointment and showed Sarah Easy read resources and a video. We then arranged an appointment to visit the nurse who would be conducting the procedure.

Sarah attended two appointments with the nurse, to get to know the environment to be able to put her at ease. These appointments not only helped to reduce her anxieties, but they also enabled Sarah to build up trust with the nurse giving her the confidence to undergo screening.

On the third visit to the nurse, Sarah successfully had her cervical screening procedure done. Sarah said it was 'the not knowing' that had stopped her from having the screening done. Without a doubt without this support and the implementation of reasonable adjustments, Sarah would have not undergone screening.

We are pleased to report that Sarah's results were normal, and she has informed us that when she is next invited to screening, she feels confident now to go on her own.



Health Coaching

Health coaching can support patients around the following topics or health issues:

- Health related anxieties
- Weight management
- Self advocacy
- Self managing health conditions
- Diabetes support
- Social or wellbeing support
- Lifestyle support
- Smoking cessation

Health Coaching Data 2023- 2024



42

Patients referred for health coaching

142

Consultations with patients

214

Contacts made with professionals

103

Referrals and support to access other health services

295

Telephone contacts with patients



131

Easy Read resources distributed



39

Referrals to social work & support with MDT's

36

Referrals to other organisations such as social prescribing and other voluntary organisations

9

Hospital passports completed for patients

Annual Health Check Data

Practice	April 2023	April 2024
Collingwood Surgery	76%	83%
Nelson Medical Group	73%	79%
Redburn Park Medical Group	92%	91%
Spring Terrace Health Centre	91%	90%
Priory Medical Group	84%	74%

Feedback from patients

"I appreciate your patience"

"I didn't understand what was going happen. Thank you for explaining and showing me it really helped"

"I wouldn't have gone if you hadn't come with me"

"Thank you for being there"

"Its lovely having someone my age to talk to"