

North West North Tyneside Primary Care Network

Learning Disability Support Service

Progress Report

April 2023 - March 24



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



The Team

Our Care Coordinators Lesley and Steven support 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.



Michelle Taylor
Health & Wellbeing Coach
(18 years +)



Steven Ellis
Young Person Care Coordinator
(13 - 25 years)



Lesley Winter
Health Care Coordinator
(25 years+)

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

Data 2023- 2024

Young Persons Care Coordinator

1132

Contacts with patients



18

Annual health checks arranged

42

Health appointments arranged

35

Patients supported to attend health appointments



7

Patients supported to attend an annual health check



31

Patients received accessible information



9

Patients supported to access health coaching, health educational programmes and workshops



77

Home visits completed

46

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



25

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

152

Contacts with professionals



64

Tasks completed within the practices



Case Study

Liam is a 24-year-old young man who has learning difficulties, and lives by himself following the death of both his parents.

Liam struggled with everyday tasks such as bathing, cooking, and socialising. He only left the house when he had to, going to the local shops to pay his rent and buy ready meals.

At the onset of linking in with Liam, he declined support from any services. Initially we started to build up a relationship with Liam, so we could support him with his health issues. His health conditions included asthma, diabetes, bowel problems, and poorly managed personal hygiene.

Within the last 8 months we have managed to gain Liam's trust. Supporting him to get a diagnosis of a learning disability allowed us to refer him into the psychology team, so he could get the right support around his grief and mental health.

We also worked with Liam around dental hygiene. We made a referral and supported him to attend the community dentist. This was a huge accomplishment for Liam, as he had not been to the dentist since he was a young child. He has now started to undergo dental treatment and is attending regularly. Liam is now more aware of dental care, and he was immensely proud of the fact, "I'm now brave enough to go."

Throughout this period, we have given a lot of encouragement and support to Liam in order for him to attend health appointments. Because of this, Liam now has the confidence and is able to attend medical appointments independently. This includes reviews for his asthma and diabetes, which he is now managing more effectively.

We also made a referral into social work and supported him throughout this process, with the hope of getting him an allocated budget. The budget was authorised, and this enabled Liam to get an Outreach Support Worker. Liam now has support twice a week to enable him with cooking, cleaning and independent living skills.

With his Outreach Support Liam is now learning new life skills, going out in the community, and has begun to redecorate his home. Liam said, "I haven't felt this good in a long time."

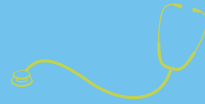


Data 2023- 2024

Care Coordinator

1910

Contacts with patients



107

Annual health checks arranged

52

Patients supported to attend Annual Health Checks



103

Health Appointments made
Support provided at 75 health appointments

51

Patients supported with pre-breast screening support



39

Patients supported to attend breast screening



17

Cervical screening appointments arranged



18

Patients supported to attend screening appointments



51

Patients supported with pre bowel screening

14

Patients supported with the bowel screening test



227

Referrals to other organisations such as social prescribing, health coaching, health educational programmes & other voluntary organisations



106

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

78

Accessible information & Easy Read resources distributed



141

Home visits completed



41

Reasonable adjustments made

Case Study

Mary is a 53-year-old lady who has learning disabilities who lives living independently without any form of support. It was identified that Mary would book an appointment at the practice and then cancel at the last minute.

We contacted Mary to see if we could find out why she was cancelling appointments. Mary was adamant she did not want to come into the surgery to meet with us, so we arranged to meet her at her home, at her request.

After chatting with Mary, it was clear that she was anxious about attending the surgery. Mary explained that she did want to attend and have an annual health check, as she did not know what to expect and was scared. She also mentioned that the appointments were always in a morning, which she found difficult.

We talked about what happens at an annual health check, looking through easy read resources and we offered to support her to attend the check. We also said we would make sure it was an afternoon appointment.

We attended the annual health check appointment with Mary and provided her with a lot of reassurances. During this review we found out was that Mary has not attended her breast screening appointment. Mary has agreed with our support, she will go for a breast screening appointment. We are using a soft approach, going through easy read literature, and pre-screening visits with the prospect of Mary undertaking breast screening very soon.

Our involvement shows the importance of making reasonable adjustments. Sometimes something as simple as avoiding booking appointments at a certain time of day or providing easy read literature can offer reassurances and help reduce anxieties.



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



86

Referrals for health coaching



392

Consultations with patients

654

Telephone contacts with patients

121

Referrals and support to access other health services

168



Patients received Easy Read resources

307

Contacts with other professionals



33

Referrals to social work & support with MDT's



14

Hospital passports completed for patients

Case study

Tanya is a 25-year-old autistic lady who has a mild learning disability. Tanya was referred to health coaching for support around self-confidence and body image issues.

When we met Tanya, she explained she wanted to lose weight and to feel better about herself. We explored activities she may like to do, and looked at what was preventing her from making these changes.

Tanya explained that she would like to go to a gym, but she was too nervous and scared that she would “have a meltdown.” Together we made a plan, looking at the barriers and how we could remove these to enable her to go to the gym.

Tanya felt she would need some initial support to go to the gym. Consequently we supported Tanya to go and look around two different gyms, where she met with the staff and asked lots of questions. She told the staff about her Autism and how it affects her, and they were incredibly supportive. They showed her an app where she could see when the gym was busy or quiet.

Tanya chose a gym and enrolled. We supported Tanya to attend her first session and induction, giving lots of reassurances. After 8 weeks, Tanya is now going to the gym 2 to 3 times a week. She uses her headphones to manage her sensory needs and checks the app prior to going, to see how busy the gym is.

Feedback from Tanya:

‘I feel great, I’m now going to the gym 2 - 3 times a week. I always do a warmup and cool down. I even went to a class and the staff were good with me. I feel stronger, my back and knees don’t hurt as much anymore and I’m going to keep this up.

I feel much more confident, and I think I can see my body changing. I walk quicker and I’m not as breathless as I used to be. I think health coaching was right for me, I even told my therapist about it. I would recommend it to other people.



Annual Health Check Data

Practice

April 2024

Lane End	85.3%
Mallard	51.2%
Northumberland Park	94.3%
Stephenson Park	94.3%
Swarland Avenue	86.9%
Wellspring	89.5%
West Farm	79.5%
Wideopen	78.8%
Woodlands	62.5%

PCN TOTAL 83.69%

Other:



- As of the 1st of April 2024 we say farewell to Steven Ellis and Michelle Taylor from the team. We thank them for all of the great work they have done and we wish them well.
- We have created Easy Read GP resource Packs for new patients. These packs provide patients with all there is to know about their chosen surgery, such as opening times, how to order a prescription and what help there is available when their surgery is closed. For more information you can speak to Lesley.
- We've been working closely with the Community Dental team. So far this year we have referred and supported 8 patients to attend dental appointments with the team. The patients have all struggled previously attending dental services due to anxieties. Due to the extra support they have received, they have had extremely positive experiences.