

23 June 2010

## Health Matters:

### Resources to improve the health and health care of people with learning disabilities

In recent years, a number of high profile reports have shown that people with learning disabilities often experience worse health and worse health care than the rest of the population. The Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities has a long track record of work to promote better physical and mental health and access to health services for people with learning disabilities.

#### Are you supporting young people to plan for their future?

[‘What Kind of a Future’](#) explored new approaches to helping young people with learning disabilities plan for their future. An important part of planning is looking after your health so that you are well enough to take part in the things that are important and enjoyable to you. A workbook for young people, [My Kind of a Future](#), and another for families, [Prepared for the Future?](#), each includes sections on looking after your physical health and emotional well-being.

#### Are you involved in health action planning or person centred planning?

In a project called ‘Healthy Lives’ the Foundation collected materials and stories about good practice in linking health action plans and person centred planning. Issues such as communication, consent, sharing information and risk/duty of care were explored. Resources from this work can be found on the [Healthy Lives](#) section of the Valuing People website.

#### Are you trying to improve mental health support for people with learning disabilities?

[Green Light](#) is a toolkit, developed by the Foundation, to help local areas evaluate and plan action to improve their mental health services to support people with learning disabilities. Since its introduction, in 2004, some areas have made lots of improvements, but more work still needs to be done if people with learning disabilities are to have better access to, and treatment from, mental health services.

#### Do you need ideas about how the NHS can improve access for people with learning disabilities?

The Foundation used learning from the [‘Valuing Health For All’](#) and [‘Better Health, Better Metrics’](#) projects to produce guidance for commissioners and for Overview and Scrutiny Committees about access to health care. In 2009 the Foundation prepared a practical guide for the Department of Health called [Equal Access?](#) The aim of the guide is to support people working in hospital and community health services to improve access for people with learning disabilities. The Foundation is currently using the learning from this to produce resources for people with learning disabilities and family carers about what they can expect from the NHS.

## Do you want up-to-date and reliable information about health issues?

The UK Health and Learning Disability Network, hosted by the Foundation, is a valuable resource for finding information. You can post a query or use the website, archives, library of materials or contacts. Some of the network's 'hot' topics are: postural care, pain and distress recognition, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders and health in the criminal justice system. Over the coming year, fact sheets will be produced on these and other topics.

Membership is free and open to everyone. Anyone interested in joining the Network just needs to log on to [www.learningdisabilities.org.uk/dhn](http://www.learningdisabilities.org.uk/dhn) and complete the electronic joining form.

## How we can help you

We can provide support and consultancy to:

- Specialist health services to look at their roles and the ways they work: we do a lot of work with both Community Learning Disability Teams and commissioners on this issue
- Mainstream health services to become more inclusive.

## How can you help us?

The Foundation has been lobbying for improved policy and practice around NHS continuing care funding. We would love to hear about the experiences of people assessed as eligible for this funding. We would particularly like to hear more stories showing good practice!

For further information about the Health Network, contact Janet Cobb on [jcobb@fpld.org.uk](mailto:jcobb@fpld.org.uk)

For further information about our work on health, contact Alison Giraud-Saunders on [agiraud-saunders@fpld.org.uk](mailto:agiraud-saunders@fpld.org.uk)

If you would like to receive future information emails from the Foundation, please email [fpld@fpld.org.uk](mailto:fpld@fpld.org.uk)

### **This email is from the Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities**

We promote the rights, quality of life and opportunities of people with learning disabilities and their families.

We do this by working with people with learning disabilities, their families and the people who support them.

Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities is part of the Mental Health Foundation, registered at: Sea Containers House, 20 Upper Ground, London SE1 9QB. Telephone 020 7803 1100

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