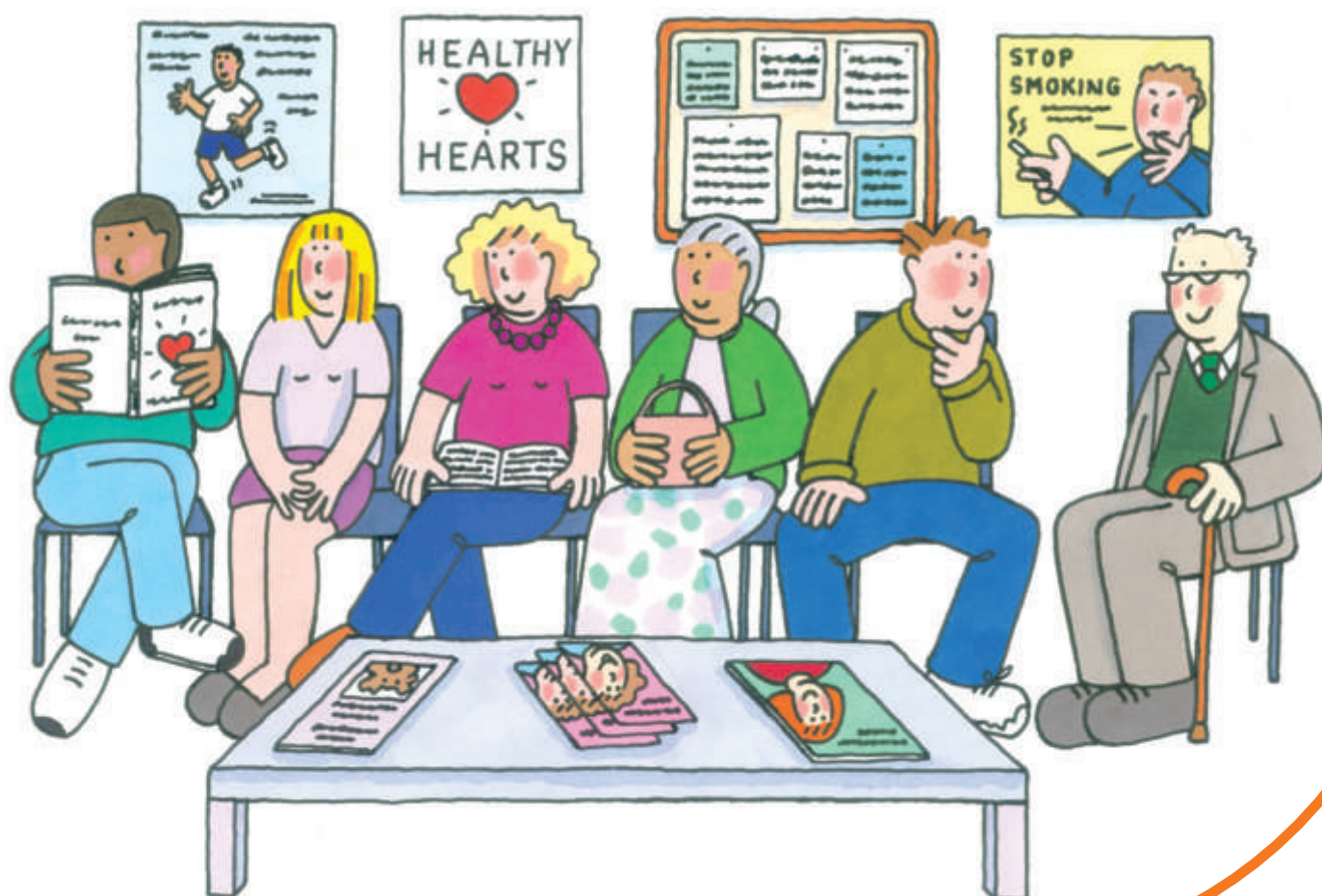


## Our health investigation: What we found out

## Easy Read Guide



Making things better by

- ✓ giving advice
- ✓ talking through problems
- ✓ making sure people follow the law

## What is the Disability Rights Commission?

The Disability Rights Commission wants to stop **discrimination** against disabled people.

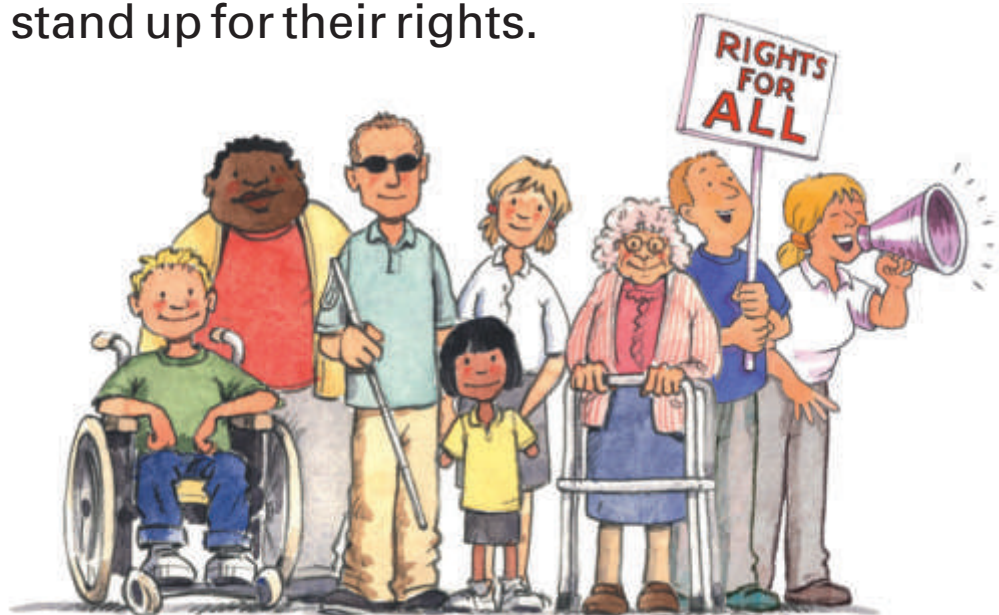


### **Discrimination**

This means treating someone worse than other people for some reason.

We tell people about the law. The Disability Discrimination Act is a law that says disabled people must be treated fairly.

We work with disabled people to help them stand up for their rights.



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## What this book is about

People with mental health problems or learning disabilities often have worse health than other people. The Disability Rights Commission thinks more should be done about this.

We held an **investigation**.

### **Investigation**

This means finding out everything we can about one problem. We talked to different people and groups to find out what they thought and then wrote a report.



## How we did our investigation

We spoke to lots of doctors, nurses and other people who work with them.



We spoke to people with mental health problems and people with learning disabilities. We also spoke to groups who work with them.

We looked at the notes that doctors write about their patients.

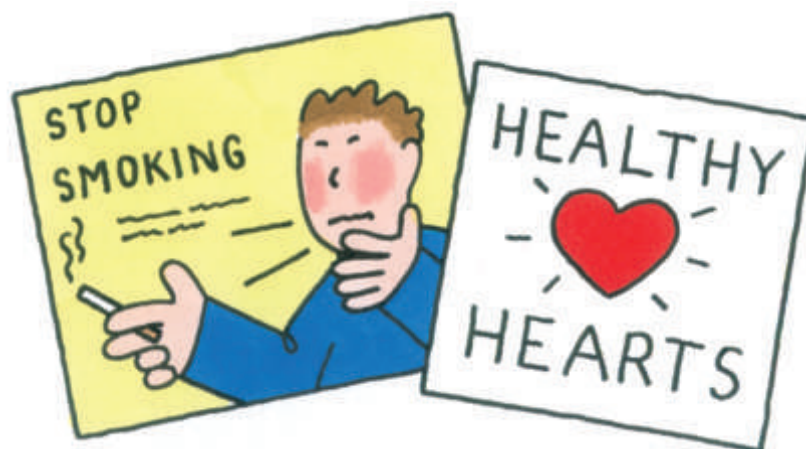
We looked at reports that people have written about this problem in other countries.

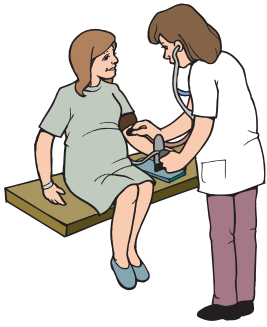
## What we found out

People with mental health problems or learning disabilities are ill more than other people.

### Examples

- More people with mental health problems have heart disease than other people.
- More people with learning disabilities are overweight than other people.
- People with mental health problems or learning disabilities do not live as long as other people.
- People with mental health problems or learning disabilities don't always get as good treatment as other people.





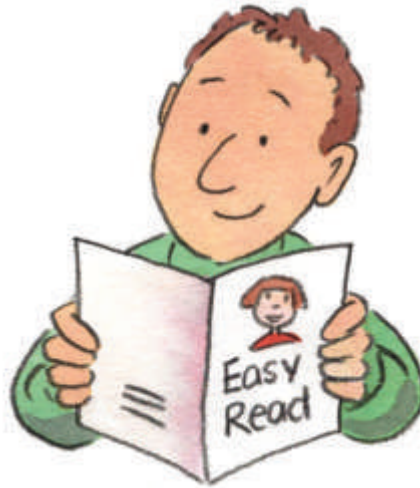
## Examples

- Women with learning disabilities don't get checked for breast cancer as much as other women.
- People with mental health problems do not get checked for heart disease as much as other people.

We found out that many people with learning disabilities have health problems that have not been treated. Sometimes they do not know that they have a health problem. This is why we think it is important to have a health check.

Sometimes people with mental health problems or learning disabilities with a physical health problem don't get proper treatment when they go to the doctors. The doctor or nurse thinks their health problem is part of their disability, even if it isn't.

Sometimes when people say they have a health problem the doctor doesn't understand or doesn't believe them.



People with mental health problems or learning disabilities don't always get help to see the doctor. The law says they should get help if they need it.

### **Examples**

- Often people with learning disabilities can't get appointment cards written in Easy Read.
- Often people with mental health problems can't make appointments by email.

Your doctors surgery need to make it easier for you to see the doctor. They need to make sure that they change their services to suit you.



## Some things we think should happen

Everyone should have the chance to have their own doctor, or **general practitioner**.

### **General practitioner**

A general practitioner is a local doctor who works at a surgery. They are sometimes called a GP.

At the moment, some people with mental health problems or learning disabilities don't have their own doctor (general practitioner).

### **Examples**

- Some people who are in residential care
- Some people who live in a hospital
- Some homeless people





Sometimes doctors say they won't see people with mental health problems or learning disabilities. They are not allowed to do this. They can't refuse to see someone just because they are disabled.

We think people with mental health problems or learning disabilities should be given a health check by the doctor every year. If they need help they should get it in the right way for them.

Doctors and nurses should get training to make sure they treat people with mental health problems or learning disabilities fairly.



## What you can do

Tell your doctor if you need any special help to come to an appointment.

### Examples

- You might need a longer appointment.
- You might want to wait in a room on your own.
- You might want information in Easy Read.





Ask for a health check every year. Ask for this even if you feel well. Ask the doctor to explain what they find. You might want information on tape or Easy Read to take home with you.



If you have problems with your tablets or medicine, talk to the doctor about it. Your doctor might be able to give you different tablets or medicine.



Ask your doctor if you need help to be more healthy.



### Examples

- Help to give up smoking
- Information on healthy food
- Groups to help you to exercise

Tell your doctor what you think about how you are treated. Doctors should listen to disabled people and make changes so they are treated fairly.

A doctor might not treat you fairly. Or they might refuse to see you. They might be breaking the law. You can call the Disability Rights Commission Helpline. We can tell you what to do next.



We can also give you more information on our investigation.

## How to contact us

If something has happened to you and you would like to tell us more about it you can:



### Telephone

08457 622 633

### Textphone

08457 622 644



### Post

Disability Rights Commission Helpline

FREEPOST MID 02164

Stratford upon Avon

CV37 9BR



### Web

[www.drc-gb.org/healthinvestigation](http://www.drc-gb.org/healthinvestigation)

# Words list

These are some of the words we use in this book.

## **Investigation**

This means finding out everything we can about one problem. We talked to different people and groups to find out what they thought and then wrote a report.

## **General practitioner**

A general practitioner is a local doctor who works at a surgery. They are sometimes called a GP.

## Talk to us

The Disability Rights Commission has written this and many other leaflets and books. You can tell us what you think about this book and the other things that we are doing by using the **Disability Rights Commission Helpline.**

**HEALTH2ER**

**Telephone** 08457 622 633

**Textphone** 08457 622 644

**Fax** 08457 778 878

**Website** [www.drc.org.uk](http://www.drc.org.uk)

**Post** **Disability Rights  
Commission Helpline**  
FREEPOST  
MID 02164  
Stratford upon Avon  
CV37 9BR



The Helpline is open Monday–Friday 8am–8pm



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