

Frequently Asked Questions

Thank you for your questions and comments. We have focussed on questions which summarise a key theme from stakeholders. If you do not think we have answered your question, or if we have missed anything, please do come back to us at: england.learning.disability@nhs.net

We will continue to update and re-issue FAQs however this will now be fortnightly, and we will upload a copy to the Future Collaboration platform.

We have set up a [Future NHS Collaboration workspace](#) to support the work of NHS England and NHS Improvement Mental Health, Learning Disability and Autism Covid-19 Response Cell. We use this platform to share guidance and information, and encourage mental health, learning disability and autism leads and providers to share advice and feedback on how best to look after patients and staff during these difficult times. The resources on this workspace are open to those working in mental health, learning disability and autism services and will include the voluntary and independent sector.

If you currently have a FutureNHS account, you can access the workspace directly through the homepage (<https://future.nhs.uk/MHLDAcovid19/grouphome>). Those without a FutureNHS account can either self-register to the platform if they have an nhs.net or nhs.uk email account, or directly request access by emailing our generic mailbox if they are from other organisations at: MHLDAcovid19-manager@future.nhs.uk

Key topics this week

- Supported living guidance
- Face coverings – transparent face masks
- Day services
- Guidance accessibility
- Support bubbles
- Research into the impact of covid-19 on learning disability and autism
- Data
- Special educational needs and disability (SEND)
- Reasonable adjustments digital flag
- Dynamic Support register / Dynamic Support system

Supported living guidance

Response from DHSC

We would like to thank the wide range of stakeholders who have helped in the development of the updated supported living guidance. This guidance will be published shortly.

Face coverings – transparent face masks

Response from DHSC

The UK Government's national personal protective equipment (PPE) procurement team has been working extremely hard in to source clear facemasks which comply with UK safety standards. While the product is not CE marked, UK government regulators have agreed that a particular mask can enter the NHS supply chain for use during Covid-19 and further details will be announced as soon as possible about availability to health and care settings.

Where regulators find that PPE (as regulated by HSE) or medical devices (as regulated by MHRA) can ensure an adequate level of health and safety in accordance with the essential requirements laid down in Regulation (EU) 2016/425 or the requirements of Directive 93/42/EEC, they may authorise the making available of these products for supply to frontline healthcare.

Day services

Response from DHSC

The Chief Social Worker's Office and PHE are working with SCIE to produce guidance on re-opening day services safely in line with local risk assessments and latest social distancing and infection control guidelines. We will keep you updated on an estimated publication date. This work has now commenced and is expected to be completed in the next few weeks-

We recognise the broad range of opportunities that are covered by day services, including providing respite services, and the different types of services that exist. We will be engaging with key stakeholders such as the LGA and providers, to consider how best to capture this in the guidance.

Guidance accessibility

Response from DHSC

All information is currently only published digitally, partly due to speed and accessibility and the changing nature of the guidance. Digital copies ensure information is always up to date.

The Cabinet Office are responsible for helping to ensure that information is accessible and our Comms team is working to ensure all published guidance from

DHSC is accessible. Cabinet Office, PHE, and DHSC are now holding regular meetings to improve accessibility of information.

Support bubbles

Response from DHSC

From 4 July, two households are able to meet inside. Where necessary, a carer from a third household can also be present to support.

From 4 July, up to six people from any number of households can meet outside. Carers would be included in the six people.

Research into the impact of covid-19 on learning disability and autism

Response from DHSC

We are in the process of commissioning pieces of research on the impact of covid-19 on people with learning disabilities and on autistic people and their families. We are working with research colleagues to determine the scope and will commit to providing further information as soon as we are able.

Data

Response from DHSC

We have commissioned PHE to undertake a thorough analysis of data on the deaths of people with learning disabilities. This will draw on data published by NHS England and CQC to understand the impact of Covid-19 on this group of people and the specific risks that they may face from the virus. An easy read of this report will be available when published.

SEND

Response from DfE

The Government is determined that all children and young people will be back in education settings in September. It is clear that the lost time this academic year has impacted all pupils, however it has affected disadvantaged groups most.

The Department for Education is working closely with Public Health England and the Department for Transport to produce detailed guidance for education settings to help them prepare to welcome back all pupils in September. Within this, we will take care to ensure that the particular needs and requirements of children and young people with special educational needs and disability are considered, both in mainstream and specialist settings. We will publish this guidance as soon as it is appropriate to do so.

Reasonable Adjustment Flag

There is a legal requirement to provide reasonable adjustments. Health and care systems may already contain flags and/ or recorded information in relation to this; however, the current mechanisms are not always consistent in the way they record and share this information.

The Reasonable Adjustment Flag provides a more consistent way of defining, recording and sharing information which will ensure that when one organisation knows about a patient's key needs, other organisations will also know.

This level of integration between all the many systems in health and care takes time and 2023/24 is the final date by which systems should be compliant. Some systems already have flags for indicating the need for reasonable adjustments and many will have them well in advance of this date.

NHS Digital's website lists what adjustments people may need that are typically recorded in current clinical systems; however, any other adjustment that can be specified can be recorded on the Reasonable Adjustment Flag using free text - it contains free text fields to allow the customisation of any coded adjustment from the picklist or to define a wholly new or specific adjustment for any individual that needs it.

There are many different types of software in use and most of them will connect to the Reasonable Adjustment Flag using a software interface.

If there were relevant specific Covid-related adjustments for an individual, these could be shared through the flag.

Dynamic Support Registers/ Dynamic Support Systems

The Transforming Care National Service Model (2017) makes it clear that each local area should have a dynamic system to identify those children, young people and adults with a learning disability, autism or both,, which includes a register of those who might be at risk of admission to hospital or of coming into contact with the criminal justice system. This is also clarified in the C(E)TR policy documents available on NHSE/I website.

The dynamic support system should work alongside the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) to identify the population of those with a learning disability, autism or both to support commissioning and planning; and the register (which some call an at risk of admission or admission avoidance register) should identify those individuals who have particular support needs or risks which may result in hospital admission. The purpose of this is to enable commissioners across health, social care and education collaboratively taking action to address and reduce risk of admission.

NHSE/I website provides information about where individuals may sit within a dynamic support process and when they may be included (with consent) on a

register. Transforming Care Partnerships (or STP / ICS) should have worked with local people with lived experience and their families to develop their system and register.

When it works, it works well (as an example, local health and care commissioners, with support from a regional team, worked quickly to source short term accommodation and care for a person who was at imminent risk of being admitted to hospital following the breakdown of a supported living care arrangement, sharing responsibility, agreeing funding, sourcing a care service).

As one of the key national learning disability and autism priorities we have set an expectation that dynamic support registers/ systems should continue during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Published Resources

[Reasonable adjustments information](#)

[NHSE/I website](#) dynamic systems pages

Future webinars

The next date will be **Wednesday 8th July**.

If there is a specific theme you would like to discuss or present please let us know.

Additional information

Public Health England weekly update [sign up here](#)