

St Helen's & Knowsley Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Learning Disability

Co-ordinated decision making

*Enhancing access to healthcare for
those with additional/complex needs*

BACKGROUND

Failure to access healthcare is a key reason why groups such as those with a learning disability are consistently reported as achieving poor health outcomes throughout their lives. The Mental Capacity Act requires professionals to act in the best interests of those patients who lack capacity to make decisions about their care and treatment.

In order to achieve compliance with the framework of the Act, all health and social care professionals involved in care provision must come together to agree best interests, process and pathways.

PROCESS

This project established a broad spectrum stakeholder group to provide challenge to and oversight of its output. It set out to provide simple tools to assist the workforce in standardising a variant, complex process which required a highly personalised approach. Key professionals were identified who are involved in the patient journey from referral to discharge in the acute setting and the guidance developed was aimed at supporting these key roles in their interaction with patients with a learning disability. A support pathway was devised which gave each professional recommendations relevant to their role of reasonable adjustments to consider, other professionals who could assist them and advice on best interests process and decision making.

OUTCOME

An audit process was carried out to establish baseline knowledge of the workforce in key areas of care delivery to patients with a learning disability.

Awareness training and introduction to the support pathway was then rolled out to all relevant areas. The initial baseline audit pinpointed areas that the support tool and associated awareness training will enhance moving forward. This package can be replicated and delivered to all acute staff across the North West region ensuring standardised best practice and improved access to acute healthcare services for our patients with a learning disability or additional, complex need.