

Supporting a person with a Learning Disability in the Hospital Setting

Always look for a Hospital Passport

Where can you find the hospital passport?

- **Patients** can access a copy [here](#)
It can be filled in electronically, saved and printed off
- **Hospital staff** can access the passport [here](#)

10 top tips for communicating with people who have a Learning Disability



1. **Listen carefully** – just because the person may not communicate in the same way as you and I doesn't mean that they haven't got something valuable to say.
2. **Try and keep your words simple** – try not to use medical terminology or complicated words. Try not to use too many words at once.
3. **Check that you have understood each other** – sometimes people may appear to have understood you when they haven't. If you can always check by asking them to repeat what you have said. It is also good practise to check that you have understood them correctly by repeating what they have said to you.
4. **Be patient** – always use the 10 second rule by pausing after you have spoken to give the person time to understand what you have said and time to respond.
5. **Remember to use facial expression and gestures** – these are so important as they help people understand more about what you are saying
6. **Use visual supports where you can – help the person to understand by** showing them what you are doing, using objects, pointing, gesturing or using pictures if you have them (use [The Hospital Communication Book](#))
7. **Reduce distractions**- hospitals can be noisy and very distracting. Close doors, curtains and reduce noise to help the person focus on what you are saying.
8. **Think carefully about the questions that you ask** – some people will be able to respond to open questions e.g. what did you eat for lunch? Others will require closed yes/no type questions e.g. did you have some soup?
9. **Don't pretend to understand if you haven't** – this can be disheartening and lead to further communication breakdown.
10. **Learn from experience** – talk to your colleagues about what worked well or what didn't. Don't be afraid to ask carers/families or key people about their experiences.

Contact your local Learning Disability Teams for support

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- N/M – 02830256780
- C/B - 02837564250