

## Care of a Patient with a Learning Disability Emergency Department Care Pathway

A person with a learning disability presents at A&E.  
Reception staff to fast track or offer quieter place to wait if required – ask person or carers what additional help or support may be needed.

\*Reasonable adjustments need to be considered at every stage in the process.

### \*Examples of Reasonable Adjustments:

- Involve Carers
- Does patient need quiet area to wait?
- Ask what additional help is needed
- Ensure 'All about Me' booklet in place. If not, give one to carer to complete as soon as possible
- Offer quiet place to wait
- Offer side room if required
- Fast track patient if they cannot tolerate a noisy environment
- Use words people can understand
- Explain every procedure clearly and simply
- Find out how the patient communicates
- Safe and effective handover or transfer

### Triage the Patient

- The nurse will ensure patients safety and deal with immediate health care need.
- Check whether the patient is a **regular attendee** and whether an existing care plan in A&E folder.
- The triage process does not necessarily have to happen in A&E (e.g. it could be in EAU or a side room e.g.).
- Can the patient be **fast-tracked** to EAU or **preferably a base ward** to prevent anxiety & distress caused by multiple moves?
- Are family **carers** or paid carers with the patient? If not, do they need to be? Carers usually have essential information and need to be involved in assessment.
- Has the patient brought in a care plan / **All about Me** or other document to support caring? If not, print one off (intranet site: Departments>Learning Disabilities>Templates).

- Gather all relevant information. Complete CAS Card.
- Identify the main carer/guardian and contact them as soon as possible.
- Ensure all information about the patient's needs is **handed over to the doctor**.
- Refer to the Learning Disability Liaison Nurses (Ext 8271 or Bleep 377 – Mon-Fri 9-5).
- Is the patient a **vulnerable adult**? If so, has the Hospital SOVA lead been informed?

Explain treatment options/ procedures, attempt to seek **easy read information** to gain informed consent (some examples on intranet under Departments>Learning Disabilities>Easy Read Health Leaflets).

If patient is unable to give **informed consent** or you question their ability, refer to the **Trusts Mental Capacity Act Policy & Guidance** in order to complete a Mental Capacity Assessment and Best Interest decision.

Any treatment done in the patients 'Best Interest', as per Trust process, must be recorded clearly in the patient's notes.

Treat

Is the patient going to be admitted?

Commence 'Initial Assessment Proforma'

Yes

No

**Advise receiving ward** of any potential additional care needs or reasonable adjustments that the patient may require e.g. side room (**Ward 10 side room was identified for this purpose**) as a result of their learning disability, and any additional resources that may be required as identified in your assessment.

If carers are to be present – find out how often, and make provisions for them to stay with the patient.

Find out if there is an existing **Carers contract** between the hospital and the Care Provider – and ensure this is being followed.  
Give family & carers the 'Help for Adults with learning disabilities and their carers' leaflet, which can be found on intranet site: Departments>Learning Disabilities>Carers.

Alert ward of any Capacity Assessments & Best Interest decisions.

Is patient to be referred for an Out patient appointment?

Yes

No

Ensure all referrals **include information** about the patient's learning disability and **additional needs required** e.g. hoist.

Allow extra time to explain any aftercare and give easy read leaflets as needed (found on intranet as above). Ensure patient and carer have understood.

Discharge