

Bigger Better Labels and Reasonable Adjustments

Hello – At Leeds and York Partnership Foundation Trust (LYPFT) we have been working with people with learning disabilities to explore their needs around use of medication. Medicines safety and the optimisation of medicines is of crucial importance for people with learning disabilities who as a group experience remarkably high rates of morbidity and mortality compared with the wider population

Our **Bigger, Better labels** project was inspired by a member of the Leeds Peoples Parliament for People with Learning Disabilities who said

"You go to the chemist, sometimes you don't know what tablets you're taking. Put the name of the tablets in big letters so I know what tablets I'm taking. "

Shaun Webster an involvement worker at LYPFT has championed this project and tells his experience as someone with a learning disability in this film. https://youtu.be/h5L_kiS7L50

The film was co-produced by our **Bigger Better Labels** steering group to highlight the issues about taking medication which were most important to people with learning disabilities. Over the past three years we have also run workshops and user-tested large print medication labels.

	What we found out from the workshops
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understanding medication really matters to people• Not being able to read the labels is frustrating and takes away people's independence.• Risk to patient safety
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Changing colour of packaging or the tablets is an issue.• Changes are not explained

The high rates of eye conditions give further reason for reasonable adjustments when this group of people receives their medicines. There are over 50% of people with learning disabilities who need glasses, approximately 6 in every 10 people (PHE 2020) and ten times the amount of serious sight problems in this group when compared to the adult population (PHE 2020).

For people with a learning disability



6 out of 10 people wear glasses.

Serious sight problems are 10 times more likely more than in the general population

Our project has documented how larger print medication labels and reasonable adjustments could make a big impact and help build positive relationships with this group of people and their carers. The Accessible Information Standard gives the legal expectations that health professionals are proactive and take steps to reduce barriers which limit access to health information for people with disabilities.

Could you help our project?

We would love to hear from pharmacies who would like to share their good practice and raise awareness about support available for people with learning disabilities. We have co-produced posters with people with learning disabilities to advertise support available. *Contact details can be found at the end of this document.*

Could you give your feedback on our posters?

All community pharmacies interested in receiving posters, can request an on-line meet-up or visit and hear more about reasonable adjustments can help maximise medicine optimisation for people with learning disabilities. *Contact details can be found at the end of this document.*

Project top tips

Making time Allocate more time to talk, so people with learning disabilities get the reasonable adjustment they need to access pharmacy services. A West Yorkshire Community Pharmacy project highlighted that building relationships, being approachable, flexible and asking questions as crucial to effectively providing the personalised service required (Urban 2016), (Hughes 2015).

Explain any changes

We have discovered that any changes in medication; the colour of package, the branding or the number of tablets often cause great concerns for people that they do not have their correctly prescribed medication.

These anxieties could easily lead to poor adherence levels and decrease medicine optimisation. But a change in medication also gives a good chance to answer patients questions and reassure them.

Offer the choice of a large print medicine label

Try to offer the choice of a larger label to someone with a learning disability when-ever possible. If the person is a reader, this may improve their understanding and adherence to the drug regime which in some instances improves patient safety too.

If you wish to share good practices, or request any resources, please contact Helen Thompson, LYPFT Patient and Carer Experience Team by email at: helen.thompson36@nhs.net.