

Finding out about other services that may help

This fact sheet has been written to support frontline staff working in the criminal justice system who come into contact with people with learning disabilities. You may find it useful to read our other guide called 'How to spot signs that a person has learning disability' before reading this one.

Who can help

Community Learning Disability Teams

Your area is likely to have a local community learning disability team (CLDT) that supports people with learning disabilities and their families. Teams vary widely; often they have eligibility criteria that restrict them to working with:

- adults (sometimes with young people in transition)
- people with an IQ of 70 and below, or 50 and below
- and sometimes only people who meet the criteria for support from social services.

Some are more flexible about including people with milder learning disabilities. Some include people on the autistic spectrum even if they do not have a learning disability. Some teams are joint health and social care teams and some are separate. Most teams have at least community learning disability nurses and social workers/care managers; many have a wider membership (for example, including therapists, psychologists and psychiatrists). They should know about all the local services that can support people with learning disabilities, including housing, employment and voluntary organisations. You can usually contact your local CLDT through your local council.

Put in here where to contact your local CLDT:

In a few places there are forensic learning disability teams. Some of these have access to forensic in-patient services. Some offer offending behaviour programmes that have been adapted or designed specifically for people with learning disabilities (e.g. thinking skills or programmes for sex offenders). Many learning disability teams operate a model of supporting other services and co-working to ensure that people with learning disabilities gain access to the right mix of skills.

Mental health services for people with learning disabilities

People with learning disabilities should have equal access to mental health services and in some areas there are strong working relationships between mental health and learning disability services that make this work well. There is evidence that people with learning disabilities can benefit equally from psychological therapies such as cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT), provided that some reasonable adjustments are made. Referrals for CBT are usually made to Increasing Access to Psychological Therapy services (IAPT), which are available in all local areas in England and should be able to support people with mild to moderate learning disabilities. Some mental health services are, however, still reluctant to accept people who have a learning disability in addition to a mental health problem.

You may come into contact with young people who have had support from CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services). This is less common for young people with learning disabilities, who often miss out on identification of mental health problems and good mental health care.

Autism services

Some areas also have specialist autism services that provide mental health and general support to people with autistic spectrum disorders.

Advocacy

Advocacy ensures that minority and disadvantaged groups in society have a means to know about, and gain, the same life opportunities as others. Independent or citizen advocacy is about speaking up for someone who has difficulty in getting their voice heard. It is about spending time with them and getting to know their wishes and then supporting them to bring about the changes they desire in their lives. It is about putting the person in control of their lives. Self-advocacy is about speaking up for yourself. The Care Act 2014 places new duties on local authorities to provide information, advice and guidance to adults who may be in need of care and support. This can include advocacy if the person is likely to have 'substantial difficulty' in understanding processes and options. It is well worth finding out what local organisations exist and whether they can work with offenders with learning disabilities. (Some may be confident about working with offenders, but not about learning disability, and vice versa).

People with learning disabilities may also require professional advocacy (such as an Independent Mental Capacity Advocate or an Independent Mental Health Advocate).

Put here where to contact your local advocacy groups and professional advocacy services:

Further information

To find out about self-advocacy groups see:

<http://www.selfadvocacy.net/united-kingdom/>

To find out about Independent Mental Capacity Advocates see:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/365629/making-decisions-opg606-1207.pdf

This is part of a series of fact sheets for people working in the criminal justice system. They are how to spot signs that a person has a learning disability; finding out about other services that may help; communication; making information easier to read; making appointments; making decisions; useful information and resources. To download these or for more information see:

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/learning-disabilities/our-work/rights-equality/criminal-justice-system/>



**foundation for
people with
learning disabilities**

www.learningdisabilities.org.uk