




# Health Action Plans for people with Learning Disabilities

	<p><b>What is a Health Action Plan?</b></p> <p>A Health Action Plan is something the Government said that people with a learning disability should have.</p> <p>It is an accessible plan that belongs to the person that says:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What things they are doing to keep fit and well.</li><li>• What other things they want to do to be healthy.</li><li>• What help they may need to keep healthy.</li></ul> <p>It helps people to make sure that they have thought about their health and that their health needs are being met.</p>
	<p><b>Why have a Health Action Plan?</b></p> <p>Good health means being well in your body and in your mind.</p> <p>The Government said that people with learning disabilities sometimes have more health problems than people without a learning disability.</p> <p>The Government also said that some people with a learning disability find it hard to access mainstream health services and that sometimes their health needs are not met.</p> <p>If you are healthy you will be able to do more of the things that you enjoy doing.</p> <p>We all have the right to be as healthy as we can be. A Health Action Plan will help the person to be healthy.</p> <p>Doing a Health Action Plan gives the person the opportunity to take control over their own health and encourages people to make healthy choices.</p>
	<p><b>Who should have a Health Action Plan?</b></p> <p>The Government said everyone with a learning disability should be asked if they want a Health Action Plan.</p> <p>They do not have to have one if they do not want one.</p>

It is a good idea for someone with a learning disability to have a Health Action Plan:

- If they need a lot of help to be healthy,
- If they have a lot of health needs,
- If things are changing in their life,
- If they are getting older.

## Health Facilitators

The word 'Health Facilitator' simply means making it easy for someone to have good health.

The role of the health facilitator came from families and carers who wanted to improve the health of people with a learning disability.

Many people already act as health facilitators, a health facilitator should be someone the person knows and trusts, like a family member, friend or a support worker.

The Government said that the person with a learning disability should choose their facilitator who will then help them to:

- Think about their health (using the checklist)
- Make their own choices.
- Do a health action plan.

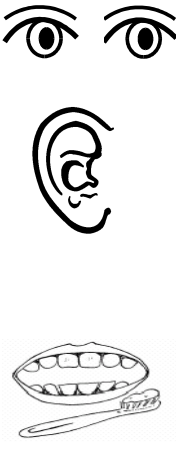



## Starting a Health Action Plan




A Health Action Plan can be started at any time.

There are some resources to help you to do a good health action plan.

The resources include a checklist of health needs for you to think about, this includes:

General Health	Pain	Special Health Needs	Medication
Mobility	Feet	Communication	Teeth
Eyes	Skin	Toileting	Feelings

	Exercise	Healthy eating	Women and men's health issues	Ears
	<p><b>Health Checks</b></p> <p>There are 5 key templates that should be filled out for everyone.</p> <p>There is a 1 page 'health action plan template' that should be filled out for each of the persons health needs. These can be done 1 at a time, starting with what is important for the individual.</p> <p>The Health Action Plan can be part someone's Person Centred Plan or any other plans they may have.</p> <p>It is a good idea to have the plan checked by the person's doctor or nurse as part of a 'learning disability health check'. This will make sure that the person doesn't have any unidentified health needs and will also give you as a health facilitator the opportunity to check that you are doing the right things.</p> <p>You can contact your doctor's surgery and ask them if they are offering the 'learning disability health checks' and ask if the person you support is entitled to one.</p> <p>There is an easy read leaflet which says what will happen when you go for your health check, this is available from</p> <p><a href="http://www.betterlives.org.uk/default.aspx?page=25270">http://www.betterlives.org.uk/default.aspx?page=25270</a></p>			
	<p><b>Health Action Plan Examples</b></p> <p>After visiting a practice nurse for a health check Simon was supported by the smoking cessation nurse to help him cut down. Simon was identified to have high cholesterol and was supported to improve his diet and do more exercise. Simon was referred to the Learning Disability Service who talked to him about testicular awareness and self-examination.</p>			
	<p>Julie talked through the checklist with her facilitator and was supported to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visit her doctor's surgery for a well women's check</li> <li>• Learn about cervical screening</li> <li>• Learn about healthy eating in order to loose weight</li> <li>• Get a toenail infection treated.</li> </ul>			

	<p>A health Facilitator supported a young women and her parents with arranging an optician’s appointment. On arriving at the optician’s the parents were told they would have to pay for the test. The Health Facilitator sought advice from the Primary Care Trust before directing the family to the Welfare Rights, who advised on the finances.</p>
	<p>A health facilitator supported a 56 year old man to have a think about his health. The man was very frightened of health workers and had neglected his health over the years. In completing the Health Action Plan together he agreed to be accompanied to a number of health appointments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●He was prescribed glasses</li> <li>●He saw a smoking cessation worker at the Primary Care Trust</li> <li>●He had a well man’s check and had an ear infection treated.</li> </ul>
	<p>Sarah had a Health Action Plan done in her best interests, as she was unable to be involved. The people who knew Sarah best wrote down the actions they take on a daily basis to look after her health. After visiting the Practice nurse for a health check the nurse informed Sarah’s health facilitator that the tablets that Sarah was prescribed should not be crushed as they could harm her. Sarah was prescribed liquid medication instead, which was easier for her to swallow.</p>