



# Getting the healthcare you need

**An easy read guide**



# Looking after your heart



There are lots of things you can do to look after your heart and stay healthy.



These are some of the things you can do in your everyday life:



- **eat a healthy diet**



- **do some exercise**



- **stop smoking**

## Using health services



Sometimes we need to get help from health services. This might be to:

- have an appointment with a doctor or nurse to talk about our health



- get information, advice or medication to stay healthy



- have blood pressure checks, blood tests or an annual health check

## Making health services easier to use



Some people with learning disabilities find it hard to use health services.

?



Sometimes information is difficult to understand. It can be hard to make a health appointment.

NHS



Sometimes people with learning disabilities don't get the same treatment and care as other people.



This means they can be more at risk of getting illnesses like heart disease than other people.



People with learning disabilities can ask for **reasonable adjustments**.



These are changes that make it easier to get the health care you need.

# What are reasonable adjustments?



Reasonable adjustments help people with learning disabilities get the care that is best for them.



Reasonable adjustments are things like:



- doctors and other health professionals speaking clearly and using simple words



- **longer appointments** at your GP surgery so you have more time to talk about how you are feeling



- health appointments at a **time that suits you**



- a **quiet place** or private room while you are waiting



- having **support** workers or family members with you at appointments



- information about your health that is easier for you to understand – this could be **easy read**, audio or a film



- better **physical access** to a hospital or GP practice



- having a **hospital passport** – this helps people know about you and the support you need if you go to hospital

## What does the law say?



The **Equalities Act** is a law that says health services have to make reasonable adjustments.

This is to make sure people get the health care and treatment they need.



Rights

What reasonable adjustments help you?  
It is **your right** to ask for these changes.

## The GP learning disability register



The **learning disability register** is a list your GP surgery has of people they look after with a learning disability.



If you have a learning disability you can ask your GP surgery to add you to the register.



If you are on the learning disability register your GP surgery will keep a record of the reasonable adjustments that you need.

This means they will know how to support you.



They will also invite you for an **annual health check**.

## Getting a learning disability annual health check



An annual health check is a free health check at your GP surgery for people 14+ years old.



Annual health checks happen every year. They can help you stay healthy.



**You don't need to be ill** to get a health check.





If you don't have a learning disability there are other health checks available. You can speak to your GP about this.



Everyone over 40 years old can get a health check. People with a long-term health condition, like diabetes or asthma can get an annual health check.

## What happens at an annual health check?



Your doctor will ask questions about your health. They will check things like blood pressure and do blood tests.

A screenshot of a booklet titled 'Getting ready for your Annual Health Check' from NHS Sussex. The booklet includes a header with the NHS logo and the text 'Annual Health Checks are To help you stay well and healthy'. Below the header, there are several fields for personal information: Name, Address, Date of birth, Phone, and Email. Each field has a small icon representing the information type.

It is good to get prepared for your annual health check. Your doctor should send you a '**Getting ready for your annual health check**' booklet to complete.



After your check you should receive a health action plan. This will record any health issues you have and the things you need to do to keep healthy.



Your health action plan will have information about how you can keep healthy. This might be information like:



- things you need to do to look after your heart
- taking your blood pressure more often
- taking medication
- getting support to have a healthy lifestyle

## Ask for the reasonable adjustments you need



When you use health services like your GP, make sure you ask for support and reasonable adjustments if you need them.



This will help you get the right care so that you can stay as well and healthy as possible.

## Local services:



To get help with healthy living and healthy blood pressure, you can contact your local health and wellbeing service:

**Brighton and Hove** - 01273 296 580  
[brighton-hove.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing](http://brighton-hove.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing)

**East Sussex** - 01323 404 600  
[oneyoueastsussex.org.uk](http://oneyoueastsussex.org.uk)

**West Sussex**  
[westsussexwellbeing.org.uk](http://westsussexwellbeing.org.uk)

- **Adur and Worthing** - 01903 221 450
- **Arun** - 01903 737 862
- **Chichester** - 01243 521 041
- **Crawley** - 01293 585 317
- **Horsham** - 01403 215 111
- **Mid-Sussex** - 01444 477 191

# For more information:

**Sussex Health and Care website has more information and short films for people with learning disabilities about looking after your heart:**

<http://www.sussex.ics.nhs.uk/support-for-people-with-a-learning-disability>

**For more information about blood pressure checks:**

<https://www.bloodpressureuk.org/media/bpuk/docs/Keep-your-blood-pressure-healthy---Easy-Read.pdf>

**Annual health checks:**

Watch these films to find out how to get an annual health check:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/learning-disabilities/improving-health/annual-health-checks/>

This is a film about how health actions plans are helping people to keep healthy and stay well:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ocU8XhD1kh8>

**Asking for reasonable adjustments:**

'Treat me well' is a Mencap film about asking for reasonable adjustments in hospital:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DMV06K1oanA>

This easy read guide was made in partnership with

**Brighton and Hove Speakout**, who offer independent advocacy for adults with learning disabilities in Brighton and Hove:

<http://www.bhspeakout.org.uk>



**Sussex  
Health&Care**

