Improving uptake of annual health checks for patients with a learning disability at Woodlands Family Practice

Emma Trickey e.trickey@nhs.net

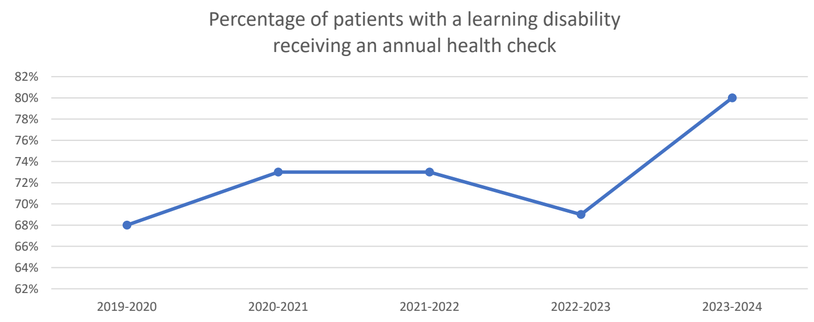
1. Background to the project

42%

of deaths of patients with a learning disability were avoidable compared with 22% from the general population according to the most recent LeDeR (Learning from Lives and Deaths: People with a Learning Disability and Autistic people) report from 2022 [1].

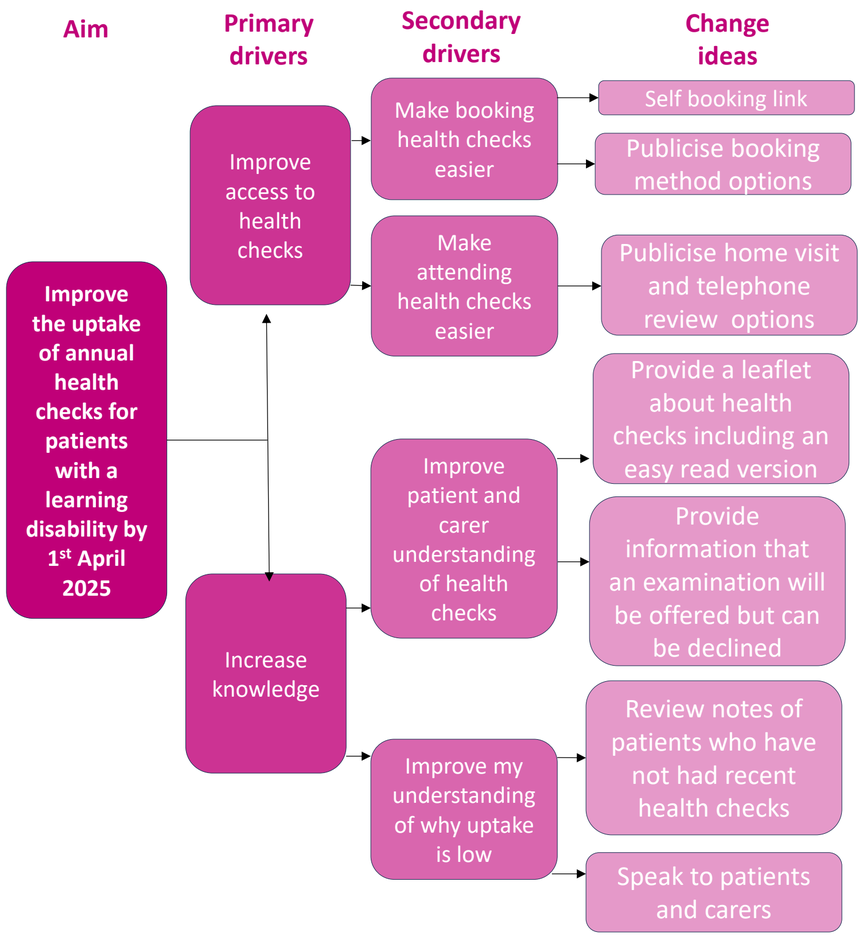
- All people with learning disabilities over the age of 14 should be offered an annual health check by their GP practice[2].
- Annual health checks are important to optimize health and to reduce avoidable deaths.

2. Understanding the current situation



- The aim of the project is to improve uptake of annual health checks for patients with a learning disability from 80% to 90% by 1st April 2025
- For 2023/2024 out of the 98 patients on the learning disability register, 79 patients (80%) attended, 15 did not attend a health check and 4 declined.
- Historically, uptake of annual health checks for patients with learning disabilities within our practice has been lower (68-73% between 2019 and 2023)
- In the months preceding the project in 2023/2024 we began to offer more home visit reviews and appointments on an additional day which may have increased uptake in 2023/2024
- Increase in 2020-2022 during the pandemic is likely to be as a result of performing more health checks by telephone
- Standard health check appointments are 30 minutes face to face in a dedicated clinic with a GP but telephone appointments are also available.
- Initial invites are by letter with follow up telephone calls to patients who have not responded to the letter invite

3. What are we trying to accomplish?



4. How will we know that a change results in an improvement?

Outcome measure

- An increase in the number of patients with learning disabilities attending their annual health checks from 80% to 90%

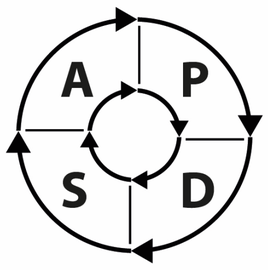
Process measures

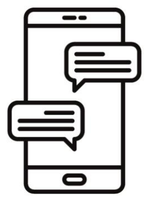
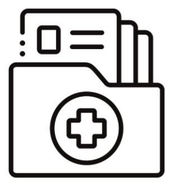
- Number of self booking links being used
- Feedback from patients and carers on use of the self booking link

Balancing measures

- Patients being inappropriately sent the self booking link
- Reduction in the number of annual health checks taking place

5. What changes can we make that will result in improvement?



	Plan	Do	Study	Act
	• Make it easier for patients and carers to book review appointments	• Self booking links introduced 19th April 2024	• 31% of learning disability reviews booked using self booking link since introduction in April 2024 • Verbal feedback suggests booking link helpful but a letter is often preferred	• Continue to offer self booking links • Continue to follow up with letters and telephone call invites to maximise booking ease and accessibility
	• Identify why some patients are not taking up the annual health check	• Reviewed patient notes to identify any obvious reasons for not attending	• One non responder lost to follow up with no contact details – now rectified • Other patients contacted several times by letter, text and phone call to offer annual health check	• Review notes of patients who do not attend again this year • Aim to contact patients who have not attended or have declined to see if there are any barriers to attendance the practice can help with
	• Identify the reasons for the increase in annual health checks 2024/2025	• Considered factors that have changed in the interim • Discussed with key stakeholders	• The number of home visit reviews have increased since I started to do the reviews in July 2023. • Appointments on an additional day since July 2023 • Telephone call reviews likely increased uptake during the pandemic • Accommodation of non-standard times where practicable	• Continue to offer home visits and telephone reviews where needed • Raise awareness of these as an option • Aim to continue flexibility and creative thinking where possible when patients have asked for accommodations or non-standard times

6. Key reflections, learning and next steps

Key reflections and learning

- Improvement can happen to solve an immediate problem – e.g. introduction of home visits and some flexibility in appointment times. The PDSA (plan, do study, act) cycle and other QI methodology help to identify further areas for improvement and evaluate changes made.
- Relationships with key stakeholders have been strengthened as a result of the project
- Self booking link is useful and improves access and ease of booking for some patients but still need traditional methods of booking to maximise access according to feedback from patients and carers

Next steps

- More work still to be done - year end for practice data collection is 1st April 2025
- Need to obtain more feedback from patients and carers about the booking and health check process
- Next steps could be to improve the register and quality of checks
- Consider improving the provision and quality of action plans provided as part of the annual health check

References: 1. White, A; Sheehan, R; Ding, *et al. LeDeR Annual Report Learning from Lives and Deaths: People with a Learning Disability and Autistic People 2022*. Available online at: https://www.kcl.ac.uk/research/leder. Accessed 9/10/24
2.NHS Digital. *Learning disabilities health check scheme, England June 2024.* Available at: https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/learning-disabilities-health-check-scheme/england-june-2024 Accessed 9/10/24