

Pathway: Learning Disability Service

Referral Criteria/Commissioning position:

Specialist health services for people with learning disability aim wherever possible to support people to access mainstream health services but where this is not possible an individual must meet the following criteria:

Have a recognised learning disability:

Learning disability as defined by the British Psychological Society and endorsed by the White Paper 'Valuing People', is in three parts:

- The individual will have significant impairment of mental functioning (i.e. full scale IQ is 69 or less).
- The individual will have significant impairment of adaptive/social functioning in at least two areas (e.g. needs help to survive – eating / drinking / washing / toileting / social problem solving / social reasoning etc).
- The individual will have onset of their learning disability before 18 (and usually at birth or in earlier childhood).

All three parts of the criteria should be met in order for a person to be said to have a learning disability.

Many people with learning disabilities also have physical and/or sensory impairments and other additional difficulties or diagnoses, in each case the individual must meet the 3 part criteria for a diagnosis of learning disability in addition to their other impairments, for example an individual with autism must also have a learning disability in order to access specialist health services for people with learning disability.

Learning disability is sometimes used interchangeably with learning difficulties, for the purposes of specialist health services for people with learning disabilities a learning difficulty has a separate meaning. Learning difficulty is an educational term and usually refers to a specific learning difficulty eg; dyslexia, dyspraxia etc. An individual with a specific learning difficulty may also have learning disabilities, as defined above, but their learning difficulty alone will not mean they meet the definition of learning disabilities accepted by our service.

Have a specific health need:

In order for a smooth referral process the referrer must identify a specific health need which requires intervention from the specialist learning disability health team.

For example:-

- Significant change in behaviours of concern (please note that a full physical health review is required from GP prior to referral)
- Deterioration in mental health
- Difficulties with communication or swallowing
- Issues affecting mobility
- Dementia assessment
- Concerns regarding understanding of sexual health needs and appropriate relationships
- Need for counselling and/or psychological therapies

Reasons why your referral may be rejected will include:

High functioning autism otherwise known as Asperger's syndrome

- Asperger's, Dyslexia, dyspraxia and conditions under the umbrella term of learning difficulties
- No identified health need

If you suspect that an individual may have a learning disability, it may help to find out the following information:

- Educational background – has the individual attended mainstream or specialist school? Did they receive 1:1 support when at school?
- Does the individual have any qualifications – GCSE, O-Levels, A-Levels, BTEC diplomas, NVQ
- Can the individual drive?
- Is support required for activities of daily living – does the person need support with personal hygiene, dressing and undressing or domestic activities?
- Any other known diagnosis – Downs syndrome, fragile X etc.

If the information gathered supports your suspicion that the individual may have a learning disability then a referral can be made to the specialist learning disability health team for assessment/diagnosis. Once the assessment has been completed, GP will be notified of the outcome.

The contact details for this service:

TEWV NHS Trust
Learning Disability Service
Eastfield Clinic
Westway
Eastfield
Scarborough
YO11 3EG
Tel: 01723 580940

References & Additional information:

Sign off:

Review Date: