Dear Parents / Carers

You may be aware that from the age of 14 all children and young people with a learning disability are eligible for an Annual Health Check at their GP surgery.

**What is a learning disability?**

Learning disability means a significantly reduced ability to understand new or complex information, to learn new skills (impaired intelligence) that starts in childhood.

People with learning disability have a reduced ability to cope independently (impaired social functioning); examples of this would be difficulty with everyday activities – for example household tasks, socialising or managing money.

People with a learning disability tend to take longer to learn and may need support to develop new skills, understand complicated information and

interact with other people.

This is not the same as learning difficulties like dyslexia, where a person has problems in specific area but a normal intellect.

**Why?**

People with a learning disability often have poorer physical and mental health than other people.  An annual health check can improve people’s health by spotting problems earlier.

People with a learning disability can sometimes find it hard to know when they are unwell, or to tell someone about it.  A health check once a year gives people time to talk about anything that is worrying them and means they can get used to going to visit the GP surgery.

**Where?**

Annual health checks are undertaken by the persons registered GP.

**Who?**

To be invited to the annual heath check a patient must be on the GPs learning disability register. GPs might not be aware that a person has learning disabilities and should be on the register. We encourage all children, young people, and adults with a learning disability to ask their GP to be included on the register. Every person with a learning disability from the age of 14y can have a health check every year. The GP surgery will invite all patients over 14 years every year for a health check.

Invitations to the health check can include easy read information. The surgery might send a check list you and your young person can fill in before the health check so everyone can focus on what matters the most to you.

You can learn more about Annual Health Checks here:

<https://www.mencap.org.uk/advice-and-support/health/dont-miss-out>

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

**Reasonable adjustments**

GP surgeries can make reasonable adjustments to make it easier for people with learning disability to attend the surgery. Reasonable adjustments are small changes like appointments at a quieter time or waiting in a quieter area of the surgery. Please tell us about any reasonable adjustments that your young person might benefit from and let us know how they would like to be invited for an annual health check.

**What happens at the health check?**

At the health check we will talkabout your young person’s health and wellbeing. The health check can be done by different health professionals like nurses, GPs, or practice pharmacists. They all had extra training to be able to do a health check.

During the health check the clinician will

* ask about physical health and do an examination like checking weight, blood pressure, heart rate
* talk about healthy lifestyle
* asks about dental health, eyesight and hearing
* ask about any medical problems like epilepsy, asthma, diabetes and sometimes they are invited for an extra check-up for those conditions
* ask about the mental health and wellbeing
* review the medication they take
* check all vaccinations are up to date
* talk about the transition from children to adult services when a young person turns 18
* talk about any support your young person or you might need

Every health check includes the creation of a health action plan. A health action plan is agreed with the young person and you, outlining the key action points such as tips on healthy lifestyle or having an eye test. It includes any action the clinician will take, for example a referral to another service.

We have created a “Note to my GP” for your child or young person to introduce themselves to their GP surgery. We really appreciate if you help them filling the form in and hand it in or email it to your GP surgery if you feel this would be helpful.

**My young person is under the care of a paediatrician or specialist!**

Whilst it is likely that you will still be in regular contact with your paediatrician and/or child services provider at this stage, we are working on the transition towards adult services and the Annual Health Check is an important part of this process.

Once a young person becomes and adult a lot will change and it it’s good to prepare. We hope that by involving young people early they can get to know their surgery and get help from their GP when they need it.

Many thanks,