

Inclusive Communication for people with learning disabilities

Inclusive communication is a two-way process which allows people who use services to receive information and communicate in the way that they are most comfortable. Inclusive communication covers all forms of communication and will be able to help you to support people when they communicate in the following ways:

- Face to Face
- Written
- Online
- Telephone

The majority of people with a learning disability will have some level of difficulty in communicating. These difficulties can impact the use of speech, facial and body movements, vision, hearing and literacy. Inclusive communication aims to ensure people are supported in a way that best suits their individual needs or preferences. It is always preferable, where possible, to communicate face to face.

It is always good practice to ask each individual (or family member/care provider) how they would like to communicate. Some people may have a communication profile which will help with this.

This guide will help you by giving an awareness of the different ways that you can communicate and deliver services that are accessible for people with a learning disability.

Ask how best to communicate	<p>People with learning disabilities communicate in a range of different ways. If the person has a support worker, a carer or family member you can ask them ahead of your conversation how best to communicate.</p> <p>People who access Renfrewshire Learning Disability Services have a personal communication profile which sets out how each individual likes to communicate and what support they may need.</p> <p>Some people may have another person (support staff, family member or friend) who helps them to communicate.</p>
Allow time	<p>It is important to allow time for communication. People with learning disabilities take longer to process information. They may also have other health factors which impact how they communicate such as: visual, hearing or speech impairment.</p>
Communicate in a person- centred way	<p>Each person will have their preferred way to communicate. People with learning disabilities may use one or more of the following ways to communicate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Speech or sounds ▪ Written ▪ Some people may use verbal communication and some people may communicate using sounds ▪ Images or symbols ▪ Non-verbal communication such as facial or body movement

<p>Verbal communication face to face</p>	<p>Speak slowly and directly to the person you are communicating with and not to others who may be with them. Use short words and short sentences. Avoid using jargon.</p>
<p>Communication on telephone</p>	<p>If you are making a telephone call take time to introduce who you are, where you are calling from and importantly why you calling. As with face to face, speak slowly and clearly, using easy to understand words. Phone conversations may be difficult for a person with a learning disability as they have no visual prompts as to who you are and why you are calling. It might be helpful to ask if the person wishes to speak directly to you or to ask someone to help them with the conversation.</p>
<p>Communicate information in sections</p>	<p>To allow people time to understand what you are communicating it is a good idea to break the information in to smaller sections. You can check for understanding before moving on to the next section.</p>
<p>Provide accessible information</p>	<p>You can provide information in different formats such as easy read or using pictures or images.</p>
<p>Easy read</p>	<p>Easy read makes information easier to understand and uses short words and sentences along with images. Images aligned on the left and text aligned on the right. Use a font like Arial as its easier to read. Font size should be a minimum of 16 and may need to be bigger depending on the individual. Use images which have meaning for the person you are communicating with. There are websites which you can pay a licence for to access images such as Boardmaker or PhotoSymbols.</p>
<p>Check the person understands</p>	<p>As you communicate it is useful to check the person's understanding. Avoid asking long or open questions (questions that do not have a yes or no answer) Recap what information has been shared and anything you have agreed during the conversation. Consider giving the person the information to take away to allowing them to discuss it with other people that support them.</p>
<p>If you need further help to communicate</p>	<p>Having followed the advice above, you find that additional help is needed with communication you can ask for guidance from Renfrewshire Learning Disabilities Service. These websites may also be helpful resources: www.easyhealth.org.uk www.sclid.org.uk/easy-read-documents/ www.plainenglish.co.uk</p>