



Learning Disability Professional Senate

What is the Learning Disability Professional Senate?

The aim of the Learning Disability Professional Senate is to provide a single voice through which we can lead and inform NHS England, Department of Health and other strategy leads about the needs of children and adults with learning disabilities. It brings together professional leaders from across the UK, to provide a collective voice of specialist health and social care practitioners. The Senate provides cross-professional collaboration, strategic advice and innovation to develop both mainstream and specialist services for children and adults with learning disabilities. The Senate recognises and works with the range of professionals working with children and adults with learning disabilities to champion inter-agency, multi-disciplinary, holistic approaches.

Who makes up the Senate?

The Senate is made up of members of the various Colleges and Societies that represent groups of clinical professionals who provide specialist health support to children and adults who have learning disabilities. It covers the jurisdictions of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Professional bodies / groups that are full members of the Senate representing both children and adults are:

- College of Occupational Therapists
- British Psychological Society
- Chartered Society of Physiotherapy
- Royal College of Nursing
- Royal College of Psychiatrists
- Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists
- Learning Disabilities Consultant Nurse Forum

Other Allied Health Professions groups, colleges and societies are Associate Members. We welcome other groups to become Associate Members. Current Associate Members include:

- British Association for Music Therapy
- British Association of Art Therapists
- British Association of Drama Therapy

Key stakeholders are also invited to provide support and advice to the Senate. These include:

- The views and experiences of children, young people and adults with LD and their families, and organisations who support them including the National Valuing Families Forum, Challenging Behaviour Foundation
- Health and Social Care commissioners
- NHS England
- Department of Health
- Learning Disabilities Public Health Observatory (IHaL)
- CQC
- Health Education England
- Public Health England

What are the aims of the Senate?

The overall aim of the Senate is to support the development of excellent health and social care services in the United Kingdom for adults and children who have learning disabilities. The Learning Disabilities Professional Senate will:

1. Provide advice and briefing papers to NHS England, Department of Health and the National Learning Disability Board on issues that are relevant to the strategic delivery of the government objectives.
2. Provide advice on the clinical aspects of proposals for large scale service change or reconfiguration where commissioners feel a broader strategic view would be useful.
3. Respond to national strategy consultations that have an impact on the needs of people with learning disabilities.
4. Provide information to NHS England, Department of Health and the National Learning Disability Board about policy that may improve the lives of people with a learning disability by better meeting their health needs.
5. Participate in national working groups to represent the professions of the Senate to improve the health care of people with learning disabilities
6. Provide a forum for the different professional bodies to develop consensus views about a range of policies and developments that can improve the lives of people with learning disabilities.
7. Provide leadership and an effective two way channel of communication between NHS England, Department of Health and the National Learning Disability Board and all the professional bodies and their members that make up the Senate.
8. Ensure that the members of the Senate promote the needs identified by the National Forum and the National Valuing Families Forum.
9. Support professions to develop collaborative working relationships to improve pathways and commissioning arrangements to ensure both children and adults with learning disabilities receive the services they need at the right time ensuring
10. Advise regarding the role and function of health professionals working with people with learning disabilities

The changing political and financial climate means that there are currently many policy issues that are of particular interest and relevance to the professional bodies within the Senate. For example:

- Advising regulatory bodies such as the Care Quality Commission about effective monitoring against agreed quality standards
- Advising the Transforming Care Programme
- Supporting the professions to develop a unified approach to outcome measures
- Supporting the professional groups to work together to develop effective processes to contribute to Clustering and Payment by Results
- Workforce development issues
- Developing a shared value-base across the professional bodies

For further information

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