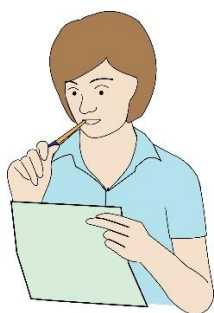


Easy read

Our response to the Healthwatch report October 2024

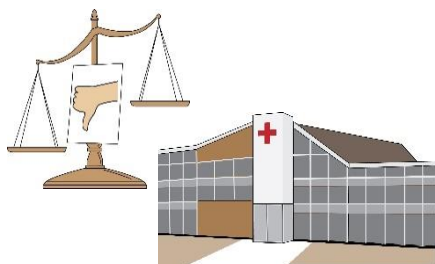
Introduction



healthwatch

We welcome this important report.

We have carefully thought about each of the recommendations.



In healthcare, we know that there are differences in services, which are unfair, but we can do something about this.



We want to make sure that everyone has equal access to high quality healthcare.



We know we need to do more to improve the quality of our support for people with learning disabilities.



This report is important for us. It teaches us more about the barriers that stop people with learning difficulties from accessing healthcare.

Our response on recommendation 1: Training



Now, we train our staff using the [Oliver McGowan national mandatory training](#).

This is so they have better skills and understanding of the needs of autistic people and people with a learning disability.



We also do staff training on how best to apply **reasonable adjustments**.

Reasonable adjustments: By law, these are changes that organisations must make to their services or the way they work so that people with a disability are not at a disadvantage. For example, providing information in Easy Read format, or providing a quiet place to wait.



We regularly run and support events to make the public more aware about learning disability.



Our Learning Disabilities Committee brings together **champions** from across the Trust.

Champions: people who advocate for a cause



We are co-developing our new autism strategy for people of all ages.

We are co-developing it with:

- people with lived experience
- staff
- partners
- local community organisations

Our response to recommendation 2: Sharing information



We share what we've learnt and what we do well with our partners to improve our services.



One of our key actions is to make our complaints process easier for people with learning disabilities and autism.



As part of our new autism strategy, we are focussing on improving access to good quality and inclusive services.

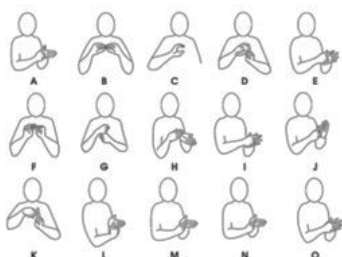
Our response to recommendation 3: Communications



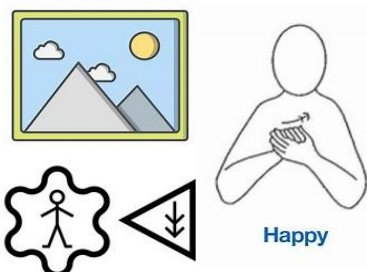
We are working with adults with learning disabilities to develop ways for them to tell us how we're doing.



For example, we have created easy read questionnaires that use picture symbols chosen by patients.



We want more staff to receive [Makaton](#) training.

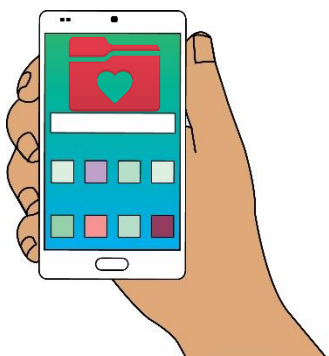


To meet the individual needs of patients, we use different types of visual support tools such as:

- objects
- photos
- symbols
- key word signing



We are working on improving patients' experience of contacting the Trust by telephone.



[MyChart](#) is a secure online app where patients can access their health records with us.

It gives patients another way of communicating with our services.



We have worked with people with disabilities to design and test our new website. This is to make the website as accessible as possible to anyone of any background, ability or need.



We provide a full language and accessible support service. This is so that we can communicate well with our diverse community of patients.



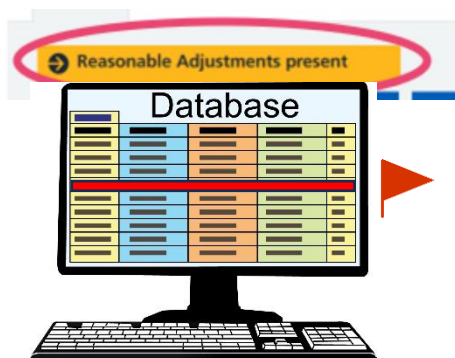
We want to make sure that people who cannot use our digital services are not disadvantaged.



We are working on digital inclusion across the Trust to:

1. see how we can deal with digital exclusion for patients
2. make sure that all our staff have the essential digital skills

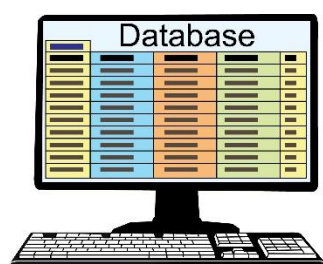
Our response to recommendation 4: Operational issues



The NHS 'Reasonable Adjustment Digital Flag' will record on our systems which patients need reasonable adjustments and why.



Since September 2022, the Trust has been part of the 'NHS England Reasonable Adjustment Fast Followers Pilot'.



This means we are working hard to put this important information onto EPIC (our new electronic patients health records system).



We know our hospital settings and physical environment can cause **sensory** distress.

Sensory: to do with the senses, for example, sight, hearing or smell. For example, a very noisy room can be distressing to some people.



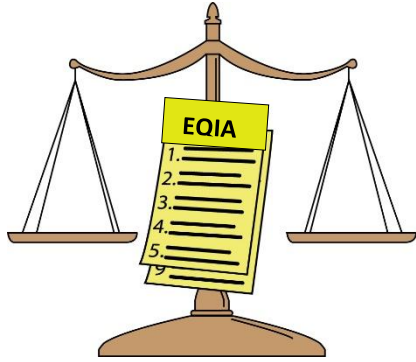
We will greatly improve our physical environments, making sure we get the basics right for patients, visitors and staff.



We want to reduce health inequalities and improve results for patients' and their experiences of our services.



We perform equality impact assessments (EQIA). This process aims to prevent a policy or project having any disadvantage on individuals with protected characteristics.



We are making changes to our EQIA process and form to make sure that we think about equalities early in a project, policy or service change.



To help local people from all backgrounds into work, we are working with:

- local schools and colleges
- community groups
- other partners



We want every autistic person to have access to the support they need when they use our services.



Working on our autism strategy now is a huge step forward in making that happen.

The full version of this document is called:

**Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust (GSTT)
response to Healthwatch Southwark report:
Empowering voices: Examining healthcare access for
adults with learning disabilities and autistic adults in
Southwark**

It can be found online here:

<https://www.healthwatchsouthwark.org/sites/healthwatchsouthwark.org/files/GSTT%20Response%20HWS%20LD%26A%20Report%202024.pdf>

This document was put into Easy Read by the Empower Team at People First (Self Advocacy).

Information is Power!

www.peoplefirstltd.com