

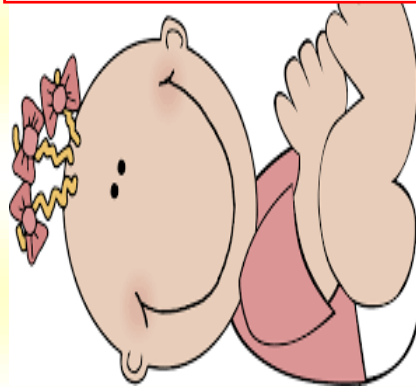
## 1. What does having a Learning disability mean?

Diagnosis must be under the age of 18 years old. A learning disability is a reduced intellectual ability and difficulty with everyday activities. 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. For example, someone with a mild learning disability may only need support with things like getting a job. However, someone with a severe or profound learning disability may need full-time care and support.

[Further information from Mencap](#)

## Safeguarding: 7 Minute Briefing

**The impact an identified learning disability may have on parenting capacity and how reasonable adjustments from multiagency partnership working can be supported to reduce identified risk**



## 2. Impact on parenting capacity

Estimated 1.3 million adults in the UK with a learning disability. 7% of parents will have a mild learning disability or no formal diagnosis making it difficult to identify them for support. Parents with a learning disability can often be affected by poverty, social isolation, stress, mental health problems, low literacy and communication difficulties.

Around 40% of parents with a learning disability do not live with their children, as their children are more likely than any other group of children to be removed from their parents' care.

## 7. Further helpful information:

[Kirklees Safeguarding Children's Partnership - Parenting & Learning Disability](#)

[Kirklees Adult Learning Disability Health Service](#)

[Calderdale Adult Learning Disability Health Service](#)

[Learning Disability England](#)

[Reasonable adjustments for people with a learning disability - GOV.UK](#)



## 3. What challenges do parents face?

University of Bristol research indicates there are perceptions that:

A person's learning disability may automatically equate with an inability to parent. There may not be enough professional curiosity given to other environmental or social factors which could impact on the parenting difficulties. Assumptions from professionals that parenting capacity won't improve. Professionals setting unrealistic goals/expectations without the required support.

## 6. Learning Points

Professionals must establish and share a parent's full history including the father.

Parents must be given every opportunity to show that they can parent safely and be good enough parents, with appropriate support.

Have a system in place to identify an individual with a learning disability on their health records and to invite those individuals to annual health review to support reasonable adjustments.

[Remember the principles of the Mental Capacity Act](#)

Signpost to local services as per the presenting need:

[Kirklees Services](#) [Calderdale Services](#)

## 5. Case Study

Two babies born prematurely suffered physical injuries six weeks after their birth.

The mother had a learning disability, which was recorded on several agency records, although any formal diagnosis of this disability and the specific impact it had on her ability to process and understand information was not understood and documented. There was absence of a full assessment regarding her disability how this contributed to the overall concerns.

There were a number of other complex factors that also impacted on her parenting capacity. Little information was known about the children's father and his parenting capacity.

## 4. Reasonable adjustment for the parents

[Information for parents with learning disabilities](#)

Parents presenting with a learning disability may require a more individualised approach to health reviews and support.

Utilise local learning disability services if they are involved or consider their involvement

[Supporting parents with learning disabilities - good practice guidance](#)

However if concerns emerge that parents are not meeting their child's needs, the child must always be at the centre of decision making.