

Social work: learning disability services

Quick summary sheet

NICE supports person-centred care and support through the development of evidence-based guidelines and quality standards.

Guidelines:

- Comprehensive set of recommendations for action
- Focused on a particular topic/setting
- Aimed at a range of audiences
- Show the underpinning evidence

Quality standards:

- Set of statements to help improve quality
- Focused on areas of poor quality or variation in practice
- Can be used to measure improvement or demonstrate good quality

Examples of guidance topics relevant to adults' & children's Social Workers:

LD and behaviour that challenges ([NG93](#), [NG11](#) & [QS101](#))

People growing older with LD ([NG96](#))

Transition from children's to adults' services ([NG43](#) & [QS140](#))

Decision making & mental capacity ([NG108](#))

Mental health & LD ([NG54](#) & [QS142](#))

Autism in under 19s ([CG170](#))

Autism in adults ([CG142](#))

Autism ([QS51](#))

The scenarios below show how NICE guidance could be used in social work practice. We recognise that NICE guidance would be used alongside other sources of information to support professional judgement.

Scenario 1—Support for parents

Situation:

Raphael is 10yrs old, with a severe learning disability and autism. He has no sense of danger, frequently hits his head on the wall and needs 1:1 support from his parents during waking hours.

His parents are exhausted and feel isolated. They don't know what they should do when he becomes distressed and hurts himself.

Examples of NICE guidance:

Learning disabilities and behaviour that challenges: service design & delivery (NG93—recommendations 1.3 & 1.7)

& Autism spectrum disorder in under 19s (CG170—recommendation 1.2)

Include advice on the provision of short breaks & access to advice and ongoing support for families and carers.

Action:

Raphael's social worker contacts colleagues in the local autism team to make a case for additional support for the family.

The social worker refers to NICE guidance in the email, highlighting the value that the additional support would offer the family.

Scenario 2—Future planning

Situation:

William is 53yrs and lives with his mother Elsie who is 82yrs. William has Down's syndrome and a mild learning disability.

Elsie is worried about how William will cope when she dies.

William wants to continue living in the family home. He would also like to learn how to fish and to visit Blackpool on holiday.

Examples of NICE guidance:

Care and support of people growing older with learning disabilities (NG96— recommendation 1.4)

NICE quick guide—advance planning

Include information about person-centred planning for the future, involving family and carers if appropriate. Also consider needs such as housing as well as future wishes and aspirations.

Action:

William's social worker refers to NICE guidance in a review meeting with William and Elsie.

They use the quick guide as a basis for starting to discuss and create a future plan with William.

Scenario 3—End of life care and support

Situation:

Rainey has a moderate learning disability and was recently diagnosed with terminal bowel cancer.

Rainey is frightened of dying and wants to leave hospital as soon as possible.

Rainey's consultant advises that she may only have up to 2 weeks to live.

Examples of NICE guidance:

Care and support of people growing older with learning disabilities (NG96— recommendation 1.6)

& Care of dying adults in the last days of life (NG31— recommendations 1.2 & 1.3)

Include guidance on person-centred end of life care planning. Also cover communication needs and the opportunity to discuss fears and anxieties

Action:

Rainey's social worker uses NICE guidance to help plan an agenda for an urgent multi-disciplinary care planning meeting.

They use the guidance to ensure that Rainey's wishes and concerns are given priority and to ensure that care and support provided is seamless.

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