

Health checks and what happens after health checks

Dr Dawn Cavanagh
University of South Wales
dawn.cavanagh@southwales.ac.uk



Ysgoloriaethau Sgiliau Economi Gwybodaeth
Knowledge Economy Skills Scholarships



What was this study about?



I wanted to know what health checks are like for people with a learning disability.

I also wanted to know what happens to people's health after their health check.

Why did I want to know this?



Research shows that health checks are good at finding health problems.

Research shows that health checks are good at making sure that actions are taken to deal with health problems.



I could not find much research about what happens with people's health problems after a health check.

I could not find any research about how people look after their health between health checks. Or what support they may need to do this.



It is important to hear from people with a learning disability about what health checks are like for them.

I could not find much research about this either.



When health problems are not looked after or sorted out quickly it can lead to poor health and even early death (Heslop et al., 2013).



Research shows that people who are supported to look after their health live longer, healthier lives (London, National Voices, 2014).

Who took part in the study?



12 people with a learning disability agreed to take part in the study.

Some people needed help from a support worker or someone from their family to share their stories with me.

How did people take part in the study?



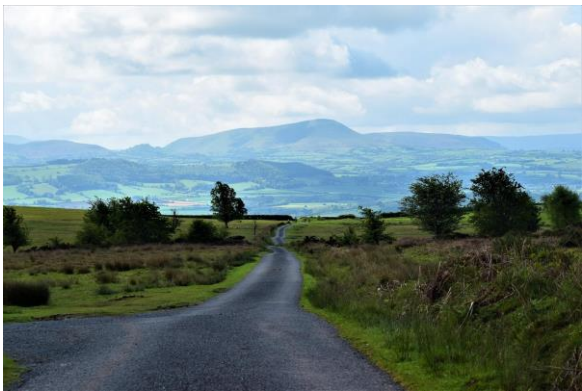
I interviewed the same people
**3 times at different times in the
year.**

What did I find?

What were health checks like for people?



- For some people this was their first annual health check. All these people lived with their families.



- People living in the countryside found it hard to get an annual health check.



- Some people were happy with their health checks.



- Some people were happy with **some** parts of the health check, but **not** with other parts.



- Some people were **not** happy with their health checks.



- Some people said that they had enough time for their health check.



- Some people said that their health check felt too rushed.



- Some people said that they had a good relationship with the doctor who did their health checks.



- Some people felt that the doctor did not treat them seriously or with respect.



- Some doctors did not check some things that are important for the health of people with a learning disability.

Reasonable adjustments



Reasonable adjustments are changes that places and services must make so that everyone is able to use them. For example, giving information in Easy Read.



- Some people said that **reasonable adjustments** had been made for their health check.



- Some people said that **reasonable adjustments** had **not** been made.



- Some people said that the equipment used to carry out some checks did not meet their needs.



- Some people had health problems that were found at the health check.
Some of these health problems can be serious if they are not found by a doctor.



- **Nobody** was given a **Health Action Plan** as part of their health check.

- A **Health Action Plan** says what needs to be done to make your health better.



It should give a date for checking when these things have been done.

Your doctor should work with you to write this plan.

What happened with people's health problems?



- Some health problems were sorted out quickly.



- Some health problems were **not** sorted quickly because reasonable adjustments were not made.
- Some health problems were **never** sorted out.

What happened with people's health problems?



- Many people said that they needed support to look after their health.



- Most support for looking after people's health was from someone in their family or from paid carers.



- Many people said that they wanted to exercise more and eat healthier food.



- People said that the doctor did not help them with this.



- Some people who took part in the study had long-term health conditions.
- A long-term health condition is an illness or health problem that lasts for a long time.

A long-term health condition can be managed with medication or other treatment.



- People with **long-term health conditions** said that doctors and nurses were good at checking their health.



- But some people said they found it hard to understand what the doctor or nurse told them about how to look after their health.



- Some people found it hard to read the information given to them.



- Many people had problems with their mental health. Some people said they wanted more support with their mental health.



- Everyone who was supported by a health worker was taking medicines for their health problem.



- Only 1 person was supported to do other things. Like mindfulness or gardening. This support came from paid carers.

What needs to happen now?



People living with families need to know about health checks.



We need to know why people living in the countryside find it hard to get a health check.



- Everyone with a learning disability should have a **Health Action Plan**.
- Everything in people's **Health Action Plans** need to be done as quickly as possible.



- People with a learning disability need to be sent to the right place or person to help with their health problems.



- People need to know how to get to their health appointments and what they need to do. They may need support with this.



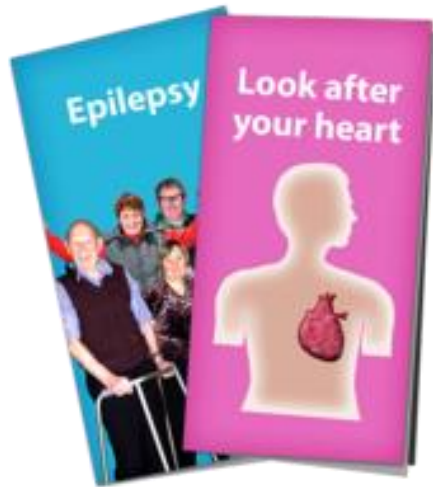
- People with a learning disability need to be given their test results. It is important that they get support to understand their results.



- Hospitals need to have computer systems that show that a person has a learning disability. This would help staff know how to care for a person. It would be linked to things like [Health Action Plans](#) and Health Profiles.



- Doctors need to be trained so that they support people with a learning disability better.



- Health information should be in Easy Read.



- People with a learning disability need support to look after their own health between health checks.



- This might mean lots of people in health working together to support people.



- There needs to be more ways for people with a learning disability to take care of their mental health.



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With special
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