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## Mental Health, Learning Disability and Autism bulletin

### Foreword

Dear colleagues,

We're focussing this week on how we're working to improve support for children and young people (CYP) – a good start in life sets them up for the longer term.

Yesterday, we released [our latest operational statistics](#) and it was great to see more progress in mental health expansion and transformation, particularly in access to CYP mental health services and perinatal mental health services.

We have been seeing a steady increase in the numbers accessing CYP mental health services in recent months, but from January to February 2024 we saw the largest month by month increase since we started collecting this data in 2021. The figures show that 780,963 CYP accessed NHS mental health services in February, which is around 22,000 more than in January 2024 and 266,999 above the Long Term Plan baseline target of 513,964. We also continue to see promising increases in the numbers accessing perinatal mental health services, with more than 1,200 more in February 2024 than January 2024. We are making excellent progress in these areas and it is a testament to those who so hard in services and systems to make it happen.

Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) also continue to support children and young people as they help schools and colleges implement a 'whole school approach' to mental health and wellbeing. We are on track to have coverage of MHSTs across 50% of England by Spring 2025, which would mean available support for over 5 million pupils and learners.

Progress has also been made for children and young people with neurodiverse conditions. All 42 Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) across England have now expressed an interest in participating in the Department for Education (DfE), Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and NHS England [Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools \(PINS\) programme](#). Many ICBs have already submitted their delivery plans for this important piece of work to provide earlier support for neurodiverse children and young people in schools. Thank you for your support so far and we look

forward to providing updates in this bulletin as the programme of work develops.

Best wishes

Claire Murdoch, National Director for Mental Health



Tom Cahill, National Director for Learning Disabilities and Autism



**Mental Health, Learning Disability and  
Autism Quality Transformation Programme  
update**

As a reminder, NHS England is welcoming expressions of interest to pilot mental health 24/7 community services closer to home for people who are experiencing significant mental health difficulties. We hope this will go some way to ensuring that people can maintain continuity of care and a sense of citizenship and belonging while receiving treatment, rather than the dislocation that is often a secondary feature of treatment for people who have to move out of their area to access inpatient care.

Central to the pilot programme are a set of principles, created in partnership with people with lived experience, and based on international comparators who operate similar systems of support. Projects receiving funding will be externally evaluated to create a body of evidence. Where circumstances mean that projects are not at the level of readiness required, we would be pleased to offer access to the community of practice and learning opportunities, even where financial support is not offered at this stage.

Expressions of Interest will be reviewed by a panel and in person meetings with potential sites may be required. The following criteria will be used to select sites in line with the funding allocation available:

- Evidence of commitment to the pilot process within the organisation through clinical, executive and lived experience leaders;
- Evidence of commitment to the principles included in the EOI with clear plans to address each principle;
- Evidence of whole system engagement and ability to co-produce change across the system;
- Balance of different localities, populations, circumstances to enable effective testing.

If you are interested in submitting an EOI, please complete the [Expression of Interest form](#) and submit to [england.mhldaqualitytransformation@nhs.net](mailto:england.mhldaqualitytransformation@nhs.net) by Friday 24 May.

## Campaign to raise awareness of Op COURAGE: The Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Service

NHS England is running a campaign to raise awareness of [Op COURAGE: The Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Service](#) and encourage those who've served in the UK Armed Forces and struggling with their mental health to seek help.

Regardless of how long someone served for or when they left, Op COURAGE helps individuals to recognise and treat early signs of mental ill health, along with providing support for more advanced mental health conditions and psychological trauma. Individuals can

self-refer or ask a healthcare professional, family member or friend to do this. Please support this campaign using the toolkit [here](#).

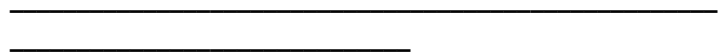
## Learning Disability and Autism Updates

### **Reasonable Adjustments Digital Flag: Health and social care staff training now available**

Staff training for the Reasonable Adjustment Digital Flag is now available on the [eLearning for healthcare website](#). This training is available to all health and social care staff and support organisations to meet their obligations under the [Reasonable Adjustment Digital Flag Information Standard](#). Under this Standard, organisations must provide training as mandated within the Health and Social Care Act (2012).

The training has been developed with subject matter expertise and has been thoroughly tested across a range of clinical and administrative professions. The training will support staff working across health and social care to be able to provide the right care and treatment by making sure that the reasonable adjustment needs for disabled people are supported.

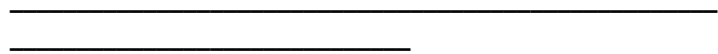
This is a single, short module covering the background, what reasonable adjustments are and the 6-step process to identify people with a disability or impairment (including autistic people and people with a learning disability) and their reasonable adjustment needs, to make access to care fair.



### **New Co-produced Dynamic Support Register & Care Education and Treatment Review leaflets for Autistic people aged 16 - 25 years**

NHS England's, Learning Disability and Autism programme have co-produced a set of [Dynamic Support Register & Care Education and Treatment Review leaflets for Autistic people aged 16 - 25 years](#). The leaflets aim to empower young people to better understand the process and benefits of deciding whether to be on a DSR, to have a C(E)TR and to be actively involved in this process. Visit the [DSR CETR webpages](#) for further information about the policy.

You can also [listen to Conor](#), a C(E)TR panel member and autistic person, talk about how the policy has been strengthened by being coproduced with people with lived experience.



## **Flourishing at work with reasonable adjustments: autistic co-trainer journey on The Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training**

The Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training helps those who work with people with a learning disability and autistic people ensure they experience excellent care and support.

In a recent interview with Lauren Saunders-Love, an autistic co-trainer for Oliver's Training, we understand her experience and the reasonable adjustments her employers made so she can contribute towards changing the culture in health and care for people with a learning disability and autistic people. Read [Lauren's full story](#).

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## **New video guides help autistic people understand health and social care appointments**

Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes Integrated Care Board have [funded a series of videos](#) to help autistic people get a better understanding of what to expect from screening appointments and other common NHS experiences.

The videos include topics such as type 2 diabetes, breast screening, weight management, and blood tests. They have been produced by Autism Bedfordshire to break down the barriers to good health for autistic people and people with a learning disability.

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## **New CQC's programme of Independent Care (Education) and Treatment Reviews (ICETRs)**

The CQC have [announced that they were restart ICETRs](#) and take the lead on them for the next two years. This followed one of the recommendations made in Baroness Hollins' report last Autumn.

Review panels will start in May and will focus on ensuring that people who are autistic or who have a learning disability have an independent care and treatment review to move out of long term segregation and our wider aim of this programme is to reduce the use of long-term segregation nationally.

CQC will follow the previous process for setting up reviews and will contact hospitals and families through NHS local support systems that are already in place.

## **Webinars and events**

**Bespoke, local and Small – Small Supports for people with complicated lives and support needs**

National Development team for Inclusion (NDTi) are pleased to launch a new monthly programme of online events for 2024; people involved in the programme and the day-to-day delivery of support to people will be sharing their thoughts, words and much learning over the coming months.

The sessions include:

- Why Small, Bespoke, Person Centred and Local? With Bill Love and Doreen Kelly
- Lessons Learnt and Outcomes shared. With Dave Barras, Steve Bardsley (Leeds) and Fiona Ritchie
- Launching our Living Library of Stories. With Sam Smith
- What Good Looks Like. With Helen Toker-Lester
- Our Journey – hearing from new small support organisations

These events will mostly be on the last Thursday of the month between 12 and 1pm, so please come along, bring your lunch and spend an hour learning more about the work of Small Supports Organisations and the NDTi programme. **The next meeting will take place on Thursday 25 April.**

The link to the page with more details and registration links is [here](#).

For more information please email Nic Crosby – [nic.crosby@ndti.org.uk](mailto:nic.crosby@ndti.org.uk).

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### **PMH LTP Commitment Webinar – Expansion to 24 months – Friday 26 April**

To support implementation of the NHS Long Term Plan commitment to extend community services from preconception to 24 months after birth, the NHS England National Perinatal Mental Health team will be hosting a webinar on Friday 26 April, 11am-1pm. The focus of the webinar will be sharing case study examples, including good practice and overcoming implementation challenges.

To register for the webinar please follow the link below:

[Perinatal Mental Health LTP commitment webinar - Expansion to 24 months | NHS England Events](#)

You will need to register for the webinar in order to receive an invite. If you have any questions, please email [ENGLAND.PerinatalMH@nhs.net](mailto:ENGLAND.PerinatalMH@nhs.net).

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### **Improving the physical health of people living with Severe Mental Illness - Guidance for Integrated Care Systems – Tuesday 30 April**

In January, NHS England published new guidance: '[Improving the physical health of people living with Severe Mental Illness: Guidance for Integrated Care Systems](#)'.

We are hosting this webinar to outline best practice for improving the physical health of those living with severe mental illness, who experience a persistent health inequality of dying 15-20 years younger than the general population, drawing on the expertise of those with lived experience of mental illness, carers, primary care and secondary care:

- **Mark Farmer:** Co-Lead Adult Mental Health Advisory Network, NHS England
- **Dr David Shiers:** Retired GP and carer to his daughter with schizophrenia
- **Dr Emma Tiffin:** National GP Advisor, Community and Primary Care Adult Mental Health, NHS England
- **Dr Ed Beveridge:** Presidential Lead for Physical Health, Royal College of Psychiatrists

There will also be time for Q&A.

The webinar is scheduled for Tuesday 30 April 2024 from 12:30 – 14:00. The webinar is aimed at all colleagues working within physical health for SMI, including clinicians, ICBs, local authorities, VCSE and experts by experience.

[Please use this link to join the webinar.](#)

More information on improving the physical health of people living with severe mental illness, visit our [NHS Futures platform](#).

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### **National Learning Disability and Autism Conference – Wednesday 1 May**

Healthcare professionals from across the country are being invited to the first [national Learning Disability and Autism Conference](#) hosted by East London NHS Foundation Trust (ELFT).

The Trust, rated 'outstanding' by the CQC, is a leading voice in Learning Disability and Autism provider collaboratives.

ELFT is hosting the conference to examine the need for collaboration across health and social care and to explore the challenges faced by systems, health inequalities and cultural differences.

The in-person event will take place on Wednesday, May 1, 2024 and will be held at The Rufus Centre in Flitwick, Bedfordshire.

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## National Autism Webinar - Meeting the needs of autistic adults in mental health services – Wednesday 15 May

ICB Exec leads and mental health commissioners are invited to attend this webinar, which focuses on the recently published national guidance: [meeting the needs of autistic adults in mental health services](#).

This webinar will equip ICB leads with an understanding of 10 key principles to improve the quality, accessibility and acceptability of care and support for autistic adults to meet their mental health needs, both in the community and in inpatient settings. An overview of the complementary national guidance to support integrated care boards to commission acute mental health inpatient services for adults with a learning disability and autistic adults will also be provided.

In this webinar, we will cover:

- Introductions by Tom Cahill, National Director, Learning Disability and Autism Programme NHSE
- National Guidance, meeting the needs of autistic adults in mental health services.
- Data and Autism Dashboards
- Supporting integrated care boards to commission acute mental health inpatients services for adults with a learning disability and autistic adults.
- Workforce implementation
- Local implementation

To attend this webinar, please register on the [NHS England events webpage](#).

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 Forward



This is an external update from the Mental Health and Learning Disability and Autism Programmes at NHS England.

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