

INFORMATION SHEET



CBF Summary: Supporting patients of all ages who are unwell with coronavirus (COVID-19) in mental health, learning disability, autism, dementia and specialist inpatient facilities -

published by NHS on 30th April 2020

This guidance is for all professionals supporting individuals with a learning disability, autism, dementia or a mental health issue who are also unwell with coronavirus in inpatient facilities. This summary is useful for families whose relative is currently in an inpatient unit.

Key Points:

- Families should be involved in decisions about their loved one's health and care as much as possible
- Reasonable adjustments for each individual do still need to be made
- Clinicians such as doctors and psychologists should be mindful of assuming signs of illness are linked to the individual's learning disability. Families should be consulted to help identify early signs of illness
- Everyone being admitted to inpatient settings should get a test when testing capacity expands

Contact and Involvement of Family

- Though this is not in this guidance, other guidance states that blanket bans such as advance care plans and DNAR plans being applied to a whole group are not possible. The [NHS Hospital Visitor Guidance](#) also states that you are allowed to visit if you are supporting someone with a learning disability or autism where you not being present would cause them to become distressed.
- Individuals and their families and carers, as appropriate, should be involved in any key decisions about the individual's care and should be provided with all relevant information in an accessible format. For more information please see our [Restrictions on Contact with Family](#) information sheet.
- Providers must notify patients and their relatives if another patient on their ward has tested positive for COVID-19 (while maintaining patient confidentiality)
- Family members or next of kin should be informed if adjustments and/or restrictions are being made in line with national guidance about self-isolation for their loved one and those who have been in contact with them

Reasonable Adjustments and Equal Treatment

- Inpatient settings should consider the vulnerabilities of all patients they are caring for, making any reasonable adjustments to care where required.
- Individuals must, wherever possible, continue to be guarded against overly restrictive practices.
- Providers should adopt a trauma-informed approach, with particular consideration of the effects of staff in personal protective equipment (PPE) providing care and support to individuals, recognising the overall aim of reducing trauma.
- Additional consideration should be given to the known specific negative effects of medications and their side effects in individuals with COVID-19 and other infections.
- Any impact on leave or CETRs should be appropriately communicated to the individual and their family. If any of these procedures are not happening as the guidance stipulates, please contact the CBF family support line on **0300 666 0126 between 9am – 4pm** or email support@thecbf.org.uk .

Learning Disability

- Clinicians such as doctors and psychologists should be mindful of assuming that an individual's symptoms are due to their mental health/behavioural problem or learning disability.
- Family carers should be consulted to help identify softer signs or early indicators of illness such as increases in self injurious and/or challenging behaviour, or more general changes in behaviour and mood
- Specialist advice and support from clinical and liaison staff in learning disability and autism teams should be sought if they are not already involved. You may find our [Covid19 Letter to Paramedics, Healthcare Staff and First Responders](#) and [Routine Health Care During Covid19](#) information sheets helpful.

Testing

- When testing capacity increases, it has been agreed that everyone being admitted to an inpatient setting should get tested. For more information on testing, see the government [guidance](#).

You can read the full guidance [here](#).

If you have any concerns about your loved one's care and support during this time you can contact the CBF Family support line on 300 666 0126 between 9am – 4pm or email support@thecbf.org.uk . Alternatively, if you have a question you would like to submit to our legal panel to be addressed in an FAQ please email info@thecbf.org.uk with LEGAL QUESTION as the subject.

We aim to update summaries in line with guidance which is changing regularly, this summary was last updated on 21st May 2020.