

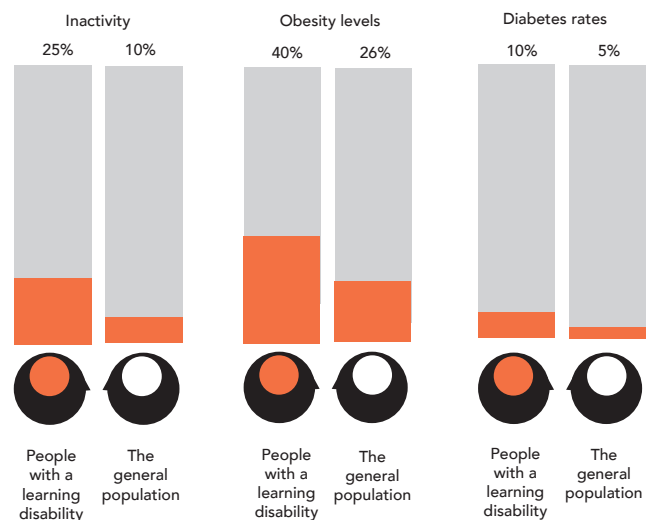
1 Why is improving diabetes care for people with a learning disability important?

There are clear health inequalities between people with a learning disability and the general population.

Men with a learning disability die, on average, **14 years** before those without a learning disability.

Women with a learning disability die, on average, **18 years** before those without

The Confidential Inquiry into premature deaths of people with a learning disability found that deaths from causes that may be avoided by good health care were nearly three times more common in people with a learning disability than in the general population. (1)



People with a learning disability are more likely to have diabetes than the general population.

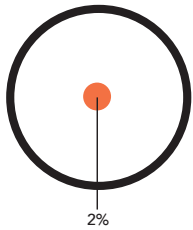
The factors associated with higher levels of obesity and low levels of activity are mostly social rather than medical.

People with a learning disability often:

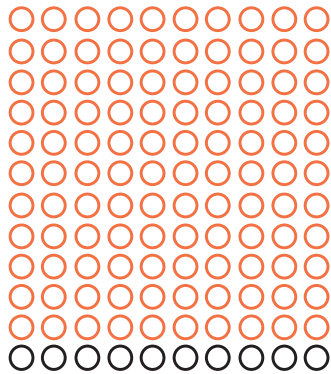
- have limited financial resources
- lack support to maintain a healthy diet
- experience social isolation
- lack opportunities to engage in physical activity outside the home.

- Adults with a learning disability have much higher levels of multi-morbidity than the general population, with health problems starting at an earlier age; this includes diabetes. (2)
- Prevalence of diabetes in people with a learning disability is unknown, but recent data indicate it is around 10% - nearly double the rate of the general population. In most cases this is Type 2 diabetes.
- Obesity and a sedentary lifestyle are known risk factors for Type 2 diabetes. In the UK around 40% of adults with a learning disability are obese. (3)
- Around 25% of adults with a learning disability report walking for no more than 10 minutes at a time in the past month compared with 10% of the general population. (3)
- Over-prescribing of psychotropic medication to people with a learning disability adds to the obesity problem.

How many people in your service will have a learning disability and diabetes?



In a typical General Practice



120 adults will have a learning disability

At least 10 will have diabetes

- Around 2% of the adult population have a learning disability, in most cases this will be a mild to moderate level of disability.
- Not everyone with a learning disability has a diagnosis.
- In a CCG covering a population of 250,000 there will be approximately 5000 adults with a learning disability.
- With a prevalence of diabetes around 10% in this group (as health surveillance figures suggest) around 500 people with a learning disability in this CCG area will have diabetes, mostly Type 2 diabetes. (4)
- In a general practice with a list size of 7500 there will be about 120 adults with a learning disability; at least 10 will have diabetes.

How might having a learning disability influence someone's response to diabetes?

People with a learning disability have a significantly reduced ability to understand new or complex information and to learn new skills. This is combined with a reduced ability to cope independently. (5) Even so, most people with a learning disability can be involved in the management of their diabetes and research shows they want more help to do so. (6)



Diabetes UK
'How to Guide'

Do you know what your legal responsibilities are to people with a learning disability?

- Learning disability is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. The law requires that people with a learning disability are not discriminated against.
- It is the legal responsibility of NHS CCGs and GPs to provide diabetes care that meets the extra needs of people with a learning disability. Changes in care made to meet these needs are called reasonable adjustments.
- The Diabetes UK 'How to guide' on making reasonable adjustments sets out five steps to enable services to meet their legal responsibilities and support people with a learning disability and diabetes. The 'How to guide' is in this pack and available to download on line.

Things you can do now

- 1) Read the short Diabetes UK 'How to guide' on making reasonable adjustments.
- 2) Access the online resources in the Professionals area of the Diabetes UK website...<http://www.diabetes.org.uk/learning-disability> ...to find more practical information, links to additional materials and films with health professionals and people with a learning disability to help with training.
- 3) Share these resources with your colleagues.

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2. Cooper S-A, McLean G, Guthrie B, McConnachie A, Mercer S, Sullivan F, et al. Multiple physical and mental health comorbidity in adults with intellectual disabilities: population-based cross-sectional analysis. *BMC family practice*. 2015;16(1):110.
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5. Department of Health. Valuing People: a new strategy for learning disability for the 21st Century. Dept of Health, London. 2001.
6. House A, Bryant L, Russell AM, Wright-Hughes AM, Graham EH, Walwyn R, et al. Managing with Learning Disability and Diabetes - OK-DIABETES: a case finding study and feasibility Randomised Controlled Trial. London; 2018 (In Press).