

LEARNING DISABILITY AND AUTISM STRATEGY 2026 - 2029



Our Vision

At the Royal Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (ROH) putting patients at the centre of their care is fundamental to our commitment to delivering safe, high quality, effective and compassionate care.

In line with the wider Trust Strategy and Trust Values, the Learning Disability and Autism Strategy embodies the ethos of compassionate, patient-centred care, empowering patients and people with a learning disability and/ or autism to access the healthcare they need in order to improve their quality of life.

We are committed to ensuring all patients with a learning disability and/ or autism have equal access to healthcare without facing barriers or exclusion. The ROH will work proactively to ensure patients and their families/ carers feel safe, listened to and respected. We are passionate that all staff have the awareness and understanding to identify and implement appropriate reasonable adjustments to achieve this.

Alignment with our Trust Vision

Our Learning Disability and Autism Strategy supports the Trust's vision to deliver excellent specialist orthopaedic care, underpinned by safety, dignity and respect.

We recognise the health inequalities that a patient may experience and are committed to mitigating these and providing inclusive, effective and timely care. Implementing reasonable adjustments through individually tailored care plans to support patients with a learning disability and/ or autism is an integral part of providing care in all areas across the Trust.



Our commitments

- **Person-Centred Care**

Providing person-centred care to all patients with learning disability and/ or autism diagnosis, ensuring the person is at the centre of all decisions and outstanding care is delivered.

- **Skills and Awareness**

Ensuring staff have the skills and awareness to implement reasonable adjustments and provide appropriate patient care.

- **Listening**

We will promote a culture of listening, ensuring that the people we care for and their parent/ carers are heard by everyone with feedback effectively addressed with meaningful change.

- **Co-production and collaborative working**

We will ensure that people with a learning disability and/ or autism are included in the development and evaluation of services. We will work collaboratively across the system to ensure partnership working and sharing of best practice.

Learning Disability and Autism Core Values

Person-Centred Care

The patient's voice is integral to all care and services provided by the ROH. We place the individual at the centre of all discussions and decisions made about them, and for them. It is imperative that we empower patients by listening to their views and wishes, and those of their parent/ carers where applicable and promoting informed choice. We advocate for people with a learning disability and/ or autism diagnosis to ensure their voice is heard throughout the Trust to enable an inclusive culture.

Compassion and Respect

We approach all patients with compassion and respect, ensuring communication is adapted sensitively and appropriately.

We reduce barriers and strive for equal access to all services and the reduction of health inequalities.

Excellence and Safety

We are committed to high standards of learning disability and autism practice whereby a culture of continuous learning is encouraged where incidents and near misses are learnt from and best practice is shared and celebrated. This is

supported by ongoing review, clear accountability and the use of annual audits, governance procedures, benchmarking projects and findings from national reports and LeDeR (learning from lives and deaths) reviews assist the evaluation and improvement of our services.

Learning and Improvement

The Trust fosters a culture of openness, learning and reflection supporting a continual cycle of improvement in response to feedback, concerns and incidents.

Training in Learning Disability and Autism Awareness is mandatory, so all staff have the right knowledge and the right skills to work with and support a patient with a learning disability and/ or autism diagnosis and respond to their needs effectively.

We acknowledge the importance of the patient voice within learning and improvement and is an area we identify requires an increased focus.

Strategic Framework and Assurance

The Trust's Learning Disability and Autism Strategy is aligned with national legislation, regulatory standards, professional guidance and system expectations, and provides assurance to the Board that the Trust can provide effective care to patients with learning disability and/ or autism diagnoses subject to ongoing oversight.

- Relevant legislation, including the Down Syndrome Act 2022, the Health and Social Care Act 2022, the LeDeR Policy 2021, the Care Act 2014, the Equality Act 2010, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2010, the Autism Act 2009, the Mental Capacity Act 2005, the Children's Act 2004, the Human Rights Act 1998.
- National strategy and standards such as the NHS Ten Year Health Plan for England 2025, NHS Long Term Workforce plan 2023, National strategy for autistic children, young people, and adults: 2021-2026, the Learning Disability Improvement Standards for NHS Trusts 2018, the Accessible Information Standards 2018.
- Care Quality Commission (CQC) Fundamental Standards and Right Support, Right Care, Right Culture (2026) guidelines ensuring reasonable adjustments and equitable care are embedded within Safe, Effective, Caring, Responsive and Well-Led services, with robust governance, clear lines of accountability and a culture that promotes openness, learning and improvement.
- Local arrangements, including effective partnership working with Integrated Care Boards, local authorities, community teams and cross-service working

to ensure timely information sharing, coordinated responses and shared learning.

- Strategic visions as set out by the Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care Board such as local LeDeR (learning from lives and deaths) arrangements, with attendance on oversight and governance panels.
- Feedback sought from patient experience team, local NHS Trusts, patients, families and experts by experiences ensuring patient voice is heard throughout.

Governance of the Learning Disability and Autism Strategy

The Learning Disability and Autism Strategy is included within the safeguarding and vulnerabilities workplan with actions and progress being reported annually to the Safeguarding and Vulnerabilities Committee. It will also go through Quality and Safety Committee before implementation and be overseen by this group and the executive board.

Specific actions will be set out for each year of delivery with oversight through the Safeguarding and Vulnerabilities workplan via the Head of Safeguarding and Vulnerabilities with assurance provided to the Chief Nurse.

Three-Year Delivery Framework (2026–2029)

This Delivery Framework translates the Trust's commitments, priorities, and core values into actionable annual plans with measurable outcomes over three years.

Year 1 – 2026/27: Foundations and Workforce Strengthening

- Strengthen and maintain resilience within the learning disability and autism service.
- Support the launch of the updated safeguarding and vulnerabilities workplan for Board assurance.
- Identify key areas of development in line with annual audit and NHS Benchmarking ensuring actions clearly reflected in an action plan.
- Continue to embed robust learning disability and autism pathways ensuring staff are aware of expectations and resources available.
- Strengthen reporting and escalation mechanisms.
- Increase visibility across all departments through regular presence, walkarounds, bespoke sessions, and liaison with clinical and corporate teams.

Year 2 – 2027/28: Bespoke Training and Implementation

- Implement bespoke learning disability and autism training programmes across the Trust using the Learning Management System, ensuring staff have awareness and understanding of Trust specific pathways.
- Continue to support the system wide roll out and implementation of the Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training (government preferred awareness package) encouraging compliance across the Trust.
- Evaluate staff confidence and competence via supervision, audits and feedback surveys.
- Strengthen cross-service working and external networking.

Year 3 – 2028/29: Evaluation and Governance

- Conduct in depth evaluation of the learning disability and autism strategy against commitments, priorities, values and outcomes.
- Review lessons learned from audits, complaints, incidents, learning from death reviews (including LeDeR), and serious case reviews.
- Update the strategy and contribute to the safeguarding and vulnerabilities workplan for the next three years.
- Support continuous learning and staff engagement to enable positive health outcomes and experiences for patients with learning disability and/ or autism.

Through alignment with this strategic framework, the Trust ensures that the learning disability and autism core values are embedded across governance, workforce development, clinical practice and partnership working, and that the Trust is providing care in line with expectations laid out in national policy and strategy.

