



Hospital care for people with a learning disability

A Report about **GAIN guidelines** on caring for
people with a learning disability in hospital

December 2014





Who we are

We are called the **Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority**.

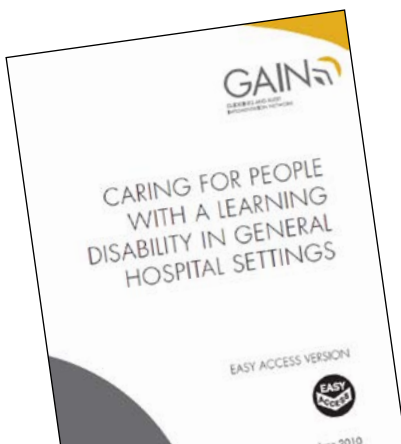
We make sure health and care services in Northern Ireland are good and safe.



What is this report about?

It is about hospital care for people with a learning disability.

People with a learning disability can find it very hard to get the right health care. In 2010 some guidelines were made to help with this.



They are called **GAIN guidelines**.

Guidelines are like rules.

The guidelines are for hospital staff and people in charge of hospitals in Northern Ireland

They tell staff how to give people with a learning disability good and safe care.



What is this report about?

- treating people with a learning disability in a good way
- giving people the right care
- giving people easy information
- good training for hospital staff



We checked what is happening with the guidelines. We checked if people with a learning disability are getting better hospital care.

This report tells you:

- what we found out
- what we think needs to happen next



How we did our work

We got information from the **Health and Social Care Trusts**. They give people health and care services.

We looked at information that hospitals keep about people's care.



How we did our work

We spoke to people with a learning disability and their families and carers.

We made a list of things we think need to happen next.



What we found out

This part also says what we think should happen next. We found some good things happening, like:

- information in easy words and pictures
- extra support for carers
- people with a learning disability having their own room in hospital



But a lot more needs to be done.

Most of these things are for the Health and Social Care Trusts to do.



Making the GAIN guidelines happen

We found that more needs to be done to make the guidelines happen.

The guidelines talk about good hospital care for people with a learning disability.



The words health staff use

Staff should always use the right words to talk about people with a learning disability.



The law and making choices

Sometimes there are very hard choices to make about a person's care. For example, if the person is near the end of their life.

It is important that people can make their own choices.



The law and making choices

There are laws about this:

Hospital staff should make sure people can

- make choices about their healthcare
- get good support if they find this hard



Information hospitals keep

We found that hospitals need to keep better information. For example:

- better information about people's care
- care plans that are right for each person
- notes to help staff remember to check if someone has a learning disability



Working with learning disability staff

Hospital staff should:

- find out if someone has a learning disability
- think about what care they need
- work with other learning disability staff to make sure people get the best care

We found this is not happening enough.



Working with learning disability staff

Hospitals should:

- try to get special learning disability nurses
- have nurses with learning disability training to support staff and carers
- make sure hospital staff know how to get in touch with learning disability staff



Hospital Passports

These are booklets that tell hospital staff about a person with a learning disability.

All hospitals should have a hospital passport to use with people.



Sharing good information

We found lots of good things happening to make hospital care better. But there needs to be better ways to share this information.

We want the government in Northern Ireland to look at this.



Working with families and carers

Families and carers know the person with a learning disability they care for best. But hospital staff do not always work with them in the best way.

Staff should find out how people want to work with them.

There should be rules for staff about this.



Speaking up

People may want to say they are unhappy with their care. This is called making a complaint. We found that hospitals need to:

- make it easier for people to say what they think of their care
- tell people where they can get extra support to speak up



Training for staff

There should be more learning disability training for hospital staff.

This should happen in all hospitals.



Giving people information

Hospital staff should:

- speak to the person with a learning disability, not the person they are with give people information in a way that is easy for them.

This could be words, pictures or other ways.



Hospital staff should also ask people before they share information about them.

We want hospital staff to know how to give people information in the right way for them.



Pain

People with a learning disability may show they are in pain in lots of ways.

There should be good checks to see if people are in pain.

Staff should have good information and skills to help them do this.



Care for people as they start to become an adult

Children with a learning disability should get right support as they become an adult.

There should be better plans about this.

People with a learning disability and their families should have a say in these plans.

Notes

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