

Supporting Learning Disabled Clients at Sandyford

There are an estimated 14,000 people with learning disabilities living within Greater Glasgow and Clyde health board area. As part of Sandyford's commitment to provide inclusive services to people with learning disabilities we have developed a protocol to facilitate access to sexual health services, which take account of the specific needs of this client group.

Access to Sandyford services:

Clients with a learning disability can access **any** Sandyford Service via an appointment or by attending in person.

If this is the clients first presentation to Sandyford services please add a purple triangle alert to NaSH record stating "Priority- LD". Discuss with the Doc of the Day if there are any immediate concerns, and/or refer to the Sandyford Inclusion Team (SIT) if there are ongoing sexual health needs or support required.

Clients attending without an appointment who have an obvious learning or communication disability should be fast tracked, as well as those with a purple triangle (as above)

It is acceptable for a double Urgent Care appointment to be made if it is deemed appropriate by the clinician triaging.

Service Provision:

Often clients with learning difficulties can be easily accommodated and have their health needs met within generic Sandyford Services. Special consideration may be required for clients who need extra support such as:

- Longer appointment times
- Multiple appointments
- Continuity of practitioner
- Assessment of understanding and capacity to consent/liaising with Guardian
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Capacity and Consent:

The client's ability to provide informed consent to any medical intervention should be assessed by the clinician.

Carers and support staff cannot give consent on behalf of the client under any circumstances unless they have a current guardianship order for the client. If a guardianship order is held by a carer or social work service it must **specifically** include provision for medical treatment and the clinician seeing the client must be able to see this document. It should then be photocopied and scanned into the client's notes for future reference. Photocopies should be sent to the medical secretaries for scanning into NaSH.

If a guardianship order is not available for inspection during the consultation, the clinician must make a decision about the client's ability to consent. If the clinician feels that the client is unable to adequately consent to any treatment then an Adults with Incapacity Act form should be completed. This form can be found on the Sandyford Teamsite, in 'Sandyford Protocols' > 'Sandyford Inclusion and Outreach Team Protocols' > 'Resources' folder. Completed forms should be forwarded to medical secretaries in order for them to be scanned into the client's notes.

Where informed consent cannot be obtained at the initial consultation then consideration should be given to providing longer appointment times and additional visits in order to facilitate informed consent. In the event that the client's needs require to be met immediately, then the above guidance should be followed.

In cases where either the client's health needs require to be met immediately, or it is clear that a client will permanently be unable to provide informed consent, clinicians must make a decision based on the clients best medical interests.

Routine health screening services should be directed to the GP. People with Learning Disabilities will soon have annual health checks which should help prompt this.

Cervical Screening is currently available opportunistically to all women who fall within the remit of national screening program. If a client is attending Sandyford for other sexual health needs and are also due cervical screening- please consider whether additional support is required. If so, please refer to the Sandyford Inclusion Team.

Young people should all have completed HPV vaccines in school. It is particularly important to establish that eligible clients with a learning disability have had access to the vaccination program as they may have had disruption to or breaks in education.

Catch up vaccinations are available to those under 25 years old, otherwise please refer to the GP to arrange locally.

Clients who have never been known to be sexually active may not need cervical screening. Suspicion of historical sexual activity is not in itself a reason to perform cervical screening.

Clinicians need to make a judgment as to any potential health benefits and the client's ability to provide informed consent prior to carrying out cervical screening.

Referral Pathways:

There will be times when clients with learning disabilities will require access to specialist Sandyford services such as SCASS or SRP.

In these circumstances it would be beneficial to liaise with the service directly to make a referral to avoid vulnerable clients slipping through the net.

Connect and Local clinics will also have links with their local Adult Learning Disability Teams (ALDT) should referral to them be required.

Sandyford Internal Referrals to SIT:

Referrals to the SIT should be done via the internal referral form on NaSH.

If there are immediate concerns about a client's safety or wellbeing then please contact the Doctor of the Day for advice.

Further info can be found via links below:

Gender-based violence and learning disability Guidance for practitioners - <http://www.healthscotland.scot/publications/gender-based-violence-and-learning-disability-guidance-for-practitioners> [checked June 2023]

Scottish Commission for Learning Disabilities - <https://www.sclld.org.uk/> [checked June 2023]

British Institute for Learning Disabilities - <https://www.bild.org.uk/> [checked June 2023]

Royal College of Psychiatrists - <https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mental-health/problems-disorders/learning-disabilities> [checked June 2023]