

Amy, Susan and Lorraine  
Operational Commissioning Team for MH, LD & ASD  
Secure Email : [Susan.Edwards15@nhs.net](mailto:Susan.Edwards15@nhs.net)

**July 2020**

Dear Practice Manager & Practice Annual Health Checks Lead,

Our team, including our Experts by Experience, have continued to work through the current Covid 19 pandemic and wanted to be heard by you. So please take a few minutes to read through their letter, and send them a response in due course. Thank you ☺

**Part 1 – from Amy**

**Please Keep Us Safe!!!!!!**

My name is Amy, and I work for the NHS as an Expert by Experience, in the Operational Commissioning Team at NHS Lincolnshire CCG.

I am writing to you because I think it's important to keep GPs focused on the importance of **Annual Health Checks**, for people over 14, with a learning disability.

I am passionate about this because

- It will keep a yearly check on every individual's health;
- Patients receive a full and thorough Physical Health Check every year;

- Individuals can talk about their general health, and get help early if needed; Prevention is better than the cure.
- If patients have any concerns, it gives them an opportunity to discuss them;
- Healthy eating information can be shared, together with better ways for individuals to look after themselves; Smoking/Drinking advice and education;
- It ensures that individuals are kept up to date with any necessary vaccinations, and treatment;
- Attending an Annual Health Check offers an opportunity for patients to get to know their GP, surgery and all the staff, making each visit a positive experience instead of being anxious and scared;

## **Part 2 – from Lorraine**

### **Please Listen to Us !!!!**

Hello, my name is Lorraine Abbott and I also work for the NHS as an Expert by Experience, in the Operational Commissioning Team at NHS Lincolnshire CCG.

I feel it is important for GPs to listen to their patients with Learning Disabilities and ASD. I have had both good and bad experiences of Annual Health Checks. Up until 2018, I was not on my GP's LD Register and did not receive invites to my annual health checks. I took ill and was eventually diagnosed with cancer, and underwent treatment for the same. If I had been attending my annual health checks I believe this would have been diagnosed, and treated, much earlier. It was a long road to recovery and I am pleased to say I found out last year that I am cancer free.

When I sat and thought about it, it made me wonder how many other patients with LD are missing out because they are not registered as having a LD at GP surgeries. How many individuals could have been spared suffering, pain, treatment, and even death? This has to change and GPs have to listen to us. Please watch the video I created last year, *\*(by clicking on the link below)*, regarding Annual Health Checks for ideas on how you can be more proactive at your surgery.

*\* Link to Lorraine's Story  
(highlight the link press Ctrl + click together)*

<https://vimeo.com/387908356/9c92591849>

### Part 3 – Suse Edwards

Hello, I am an Assistant Practitioner within the Operational Commissioning Team at NHS Lincolnshire CCG, and part of my role is working alongside our Experts by Experience. Amy and Lorraine become the individual patient's voice at care and treatment reviews, and they both feel compassionate and driven to ensure that the numbers, receiving invites, and attending their Annual Health Checks currently, needs to improve massively.

If the Covid 19 pandemic has taught us all anything, it is to be more proactive against unnecessary health problems, conditions, and diseases. The way you can do this with all your patients who have a Learning Disability, is via Annual Health Checks. Not only will this help diagnose illnesses sooner, but will also prevent some altogether, saving £millions, whilst giving patients a much better, and longer, quality of life.

## Part 4 – from Amy, Lorraine and Suse

Every individual with a learning disability should be on his, or her, GP's Learning Disability Register. The Annual Health Check invites use this register as an indication of the patients at any one surgery, who should receive an invite each year. If they are missed off the register, they miss their Annual Health Check.

From previous data gathered, it appears that a lot of GP surgeries are not using the most up to date AHC template, which prints every individual patient a summary of their AHC appointment. Different templates being used, which makes AHC data much more difficult to analyze. **Please check that you are using the latest version of the AHC template at your practice.**

Thank you for your time in reading, and considering, our letter. We would be grateful to receive a response as to how proactive your surgery is in engaging every patient you have, with Learning Disabilities.

Kind Regards

*Amy Hodson Expert by Experience with  
Learning Disabilities*

*Lorraine Abbott Expert by experience with  
Learning Disabilities*

*Suse Edwards Assistant Practitioner*

*Operational Commissioning Team, NHS Lincolnshire CCG*