

Studies

[‘I can’t say that anything has changed’: parents of autistic young people \(16–25 years\) discuss the impact of the Children and Families Act in England and Wales](#)

In 2014, changes to special educational needs and disability (SEND) legislation were introduced in England and Wales. These reforms aimed for young people and their families to receive the help and support they need, have a say regarding their support needs, and achieve better outcomes.

[Autism through midlife: trajectories of symptoms, behavioral functioning, and health](#)

This study describes change in autism symptoms, behavioral functioning, and health measured prospectively over 22 years. Most studies tracking developmental trajectories have focused on autism during childhood, although adulthood is the longest stage of the life course. A robust understanding of how autistic people change through midlife and into older age has yet to be obtained.

[Intellectual disabilities teaching for medical students: a scoping review](#)

People with intellectual disabilities are a marginalized group whose health experiences and outcomes are poor. Lack of skill and knowledge in the healthcare workforce is a contributing factor. In England, there is a new legislative requirement for mandatory intellectual disability training to be given to the existing healthcare workforce, including doctors. There is a lack of evidence about effective models of educational delivery of such training in medical schools. We undertook a scoping review to assess the range of intellectual disabilities educational interventions and their effectiveness.

[Adherence to treatment and parents’ perspective about effectiveness of melatonin in children with autism spectrum disorder and sleep disturbances](#)

Melatonin is considered an effective pharmacological treatment for the sleep disturbances that are reported in > 50% of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). However, real-life data about the long-term course and effectiveness of melatonin treatment in children with ASD is lacking.

[Disclosing an autism diagnosis improves ratings of candidate performance in employment interviews](#)

Employment interviews can be challenging for autistic people. In addition to standard interview procedures often being inaccessible, features associated with autism (including atypical emotional expression, eye-contact, and gestures) may lead to negative first impressions. Research using vignettes and ‘thin slices’ of communication indicate that perceptions of an autistic individual can be improved when their autism diagnosis is disclosed.

[‘I am Lil’: Enabling Autistic Voices in Transitions from School to Adult Life through the Co-Creation of a Digital Story](#)

Autistic children’s voices are frequently overlooked, underestimated, and undermined in research and practice such that children are denied agency and their rights as capable knowers. Our digital storytelling work aims to challenge this status quo by co-creating ‘I am’ Digital Stories with and for autistic children and their families. ‘I am’ Digital Stories are short videos (c.3–5 minutes) that provide a strengths-based representation of a child or young person, incorporating their strengths, capabilities, likes, communication and interaction preferences, and how support can be provided.



[Understanding covid-19 outcomes among people with intellectual disabilities in England](#)

Evidence from the UK from the early stages of the covid-19 pandemic showed that people with Intellectual Disabilities (ID) had higher rates of covid-19 mortality than people without ID. However, estimates of the magnitude of risk vary widely; different studies used different time periods; and only early stages of the pandemic have been analysed. Existing analyses of risk factors have also been limited. The objective of this study was to investigate covid-19 mortality rates, hospitalisation rates, and risk factors in people with ID in England up to the end of 2021.

[Gut microbiota and autism spectrum disorders: where do we stand?](#)

Children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) often have digestive problems and microbial imbalances in their guts, suggesting that these conditions may play a role in the development of the disorder. Scopus-based research on the gut microbiota and ASD was examined in this bibliometric analysis to shed light on the current state of research and identify potential hotspots for future work in this area.

[Hypovitaminosis D in persons with Down syndrome and autism spectrum disorder](#)

Plasma levels of vitamin D have been reported to be low in persons with Down syndrome (DS) and existing data is limited to small and homogenous cohorts. This is of particular importance in persons with DS given the high rates of autoimmune disease in this population and the known relationship between vitamin D and immune function. This study sought to investigate vitamin D status in a multi-center cohort of individuals with DS and compare them to individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and neurotypical (NT) controls.

Study Summaries

[What could reduce aggressive behaviour in adults with learning disabilities?](#)

People with learning disabilities are more likely than others to display challenging behaviour that is aggressive. It can be verbal (shouting or swearing), non-verbal (such as hand gestures) or physical (hitting or kicking). A review analysed 59 relevant studies to identify the effective elements of interventions to reduce aggressive challenging behaviour.

Clinical Standards

[Clinical standard – oral healthcare for autistic children and young people and/or those with a learning disability in special educational settings](#)

This clinical standard supports the vision of universal access whereby everyone receives quality health services that meet their specific needs. The clinical standard is designed to be used by all those involved in improving health outcomes and quality of life, including eating, speaking and socialising, for autistic children and young people, and those with a learning disability in England.

News

[Bild responds to HSSIB report 'Caring for adults with learning disabilities in acute hospitals'](#)

The Health Services Safety Investigations Body (HSSIB) latest report, Caring for adults with learning disabilities in acute hospitals, released this week (02.11.23), highlights clear violations of human rights and an urgent requirement to meet the needs of people with learning disabilities and autistic people in hospitals.



[Thousands sign our open letter to the Prime Minister](#)

Representatives and campaigners from the National Autistic Society and learning disability charity Mencap delivered an open letter signed by 18,234 people to 10 Downing Street today, calling on Rishi Sunak to urgently reform outdated mental health law.

[Our response to the Mental Health Bill being excluded from The King's Speech](#)

Tim Nicholls, Head of Influencing and Research at the National Autistic Society, said: "The Government has ignored the thousands of us calling for reform, so our mental health laws are fit for the 21st century. We do not understand why it is not worth parliamentary time to change the law so that autism can no longer be a reason to section someone."

['Impact of Advocacy' Video Launch with Speakup Self Advocacy](#)

Learning Disability England and Speakup Self Advocacy have produced a video together. The video is about being a self-advocate. Self-advocacy can make a big difference to people's lives, and help more people to understand what it is like to live with a learning disability or autism.

[Adult ADHD and autism assessment requests blocked by NHS screening system](#)

A new screening system for adults wanting an autism or ADHD diagnosis has rejected up to 85% of requests for a referral since it was launched, adding to concerns from campaigners who warn it could become a blueprint across the NHS.

[Teasing apart insistence on sameness with Mirko Uljarević](#)

Restricted and repetitive behaviors are one of autism's hallmarks, as noted in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM). These behaviors may manifest as repetitive movements, restricted interests, insistence on sameness, and atypical responses to sensory stimuli, according to the DSM.

[Telling the Government how work reforms need to work for autistic people](#)

Recently the Government announced it was going to make changes to the way people were assessed for benefits when they cannot work because of a disability or a long-term health condition.

[Apology and compensation for breaches of human rights – family secures admission of failure and harm caused](#)

1st November, London: In a landmark settlement for families of relatives with learning disabilities, the Royal Court of Justice has today approved a settlement acknowledging the human rights violations of a mother and her son, Ben.

[Continuing professional development opportunities for learning disability nurses](#)

This year, Learning Disability Nurses Day is a double celebration for us as it also marks six months since the launch of a bespoke training package for learning disability nurses called the Learning Disability Nursing CPD Award. The response to the training so far has been brilliant as almost 2,000 people have already registered to use it. If you haven't already tried it, you can [access the training for free on the NHS Learning Hub](#) and we hope that it will support you in your career. We want the training to be as meaningful and valuable as possible for you, so please do complete the evaluation survey at the end of the training as well, to let us know what you think of it.



[Sexual Abuse in Care Homes](#)

Recent disturbing headlines only reinforce the worries many of us have about entering a care home, but sadly such abuse can happen anywhere, including in a person's own home. Many people do live safe and happy lives in care homes but when abuse does occasionally happen, it's important that care providers learn from these tragedies to protect their residents.

[Dimensions launches #NoTimeForHateCrime campaign](#)

A fifth of the public have laughed at someone, called someone names or avoided talking to someone because of their learning disability or autism, according to new research from Dimensions.

[Hospitals can be unsafe for people with a learning disability](#)

People with a learning disability are facing 'persistent and widespread' safety risks when in hospital, according to a damning new report. The comprehensive national investigation from the Health Services Safety Investigations Body (HSSIB) shows that the needs of learning disability patients are 'not consistently met' when they are cared for in hospital. It also highlights how poorer outcomes and avoidable illness are leading to premature death for those with a learning disability.

[New report shows needs of learning disability patients 'not consistently met' when they are in hospital](#)

Despite national efforts to address inequity, the health and care system is not always meeting the needs of people with a learning disability when they are cared for in hospital, says our latest report.

[Carers Rights Day](#)

Your rights: today, tomorrow and in the future - Carers Rights Day is Thursday 23 November 2023. Each year Carers UK promotes Carers Rights Day where we're joined by hundreds of organisations and thousands of individuals raising awareness of caring, helping to identify carers and signposting them to information, advice and support.

