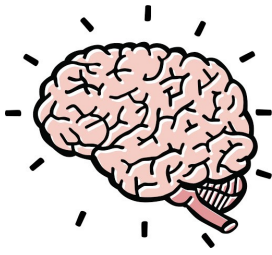


CHANGING YOUR THINKING

EASY READ DOCUMENT

WHAT IS A LEARNING DISABILITY?



Someone with a learning disability has a condition that affects their brain. A learning disability is not an illness.

2%

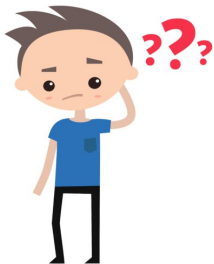
About 2 in 100 people have a learning disability.



Everybody with a learning disability is different. But people with a learning disability have some things in common:



- ◆ They find it hard to learn new skills.



- ◆ And they find it hard to understand information and to understand the world around them.

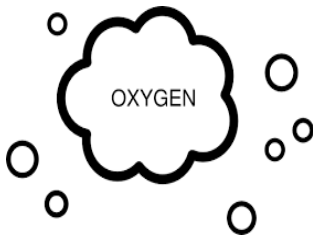


A learning disability usually happens to someone when they are a baby growing in their mother's womb. Or soon after they are born or in early childhood.

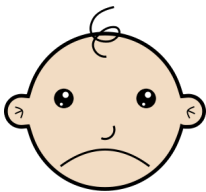
Some reasons why a child has a learning disability are:



- ♦ Their mother had an illness or accident in pregnancy



- ♦ They didn't have enough oxygen at birth



- ♦ They had an illness or accident as a baby or child



- ♦ They inherited genes from their parents



Getting a diagnosis is important as it is the first step in getting the right support for the person with a learning disability.

As well as their GP there will be other professionals that will help the person with a learning disability throughout their life.

These might include:



- ◆ Speech and language therapists



- ◆ Physiotherapists



- ◆ Psychologists



- ◆ Social Care Workers

MILD
MODERATE
SEVERE

A learning disability can be mild or moderate or severe.



Someone with a mild learning disability might be able to live on their own and have a job. But they might take a bit longer to learn new skills and they might need some support to do things. For example filling in forms.



Someone with a moderate learning disability might live with family or in supported living. They might need help with most activities of daily life including shopping, going out, cooking and attending appointments.



Someone with a PMLD (Profound and Multiple Learning Disability) has a severe learning disability as well as physical problems. These physical problems might be to do with hearing, sight, speaking or mobility.



In school, children with learning disabilities might have problems with reading and writing, concentrating, understanding and behaviour.



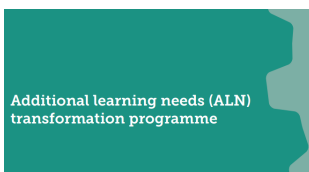
In England, children with learning disabilities are said to have special educational needs (SEN).



In England the SEND system supports children and young people with learning disabilities throughout their education. SEND stands for Special Educational Needs and Disability



In Wales, children with learning disabilities are said to have additional learning needs (ALN).



In Wales the system supporting children and young people with learning disabilities is called the ALN Transformation Programme. ALN stands for Additional Learning Needs.



There are many different ways in which SEND and the ALN transformation programme can help.



It depends on the needs of the student. Some students might only need accessible information. For example braille or large printed information.



Some students need 1 to 1 support.



Children and adults with a learning disability often have more physical and mental health problems than other people.



To help change this, all people with a learning disability over 14 years old are invited to have an annual health check at their GP's surgery. This health check is given by your GP or a nurse and doesn't take long. You don't have to go. But it is a good chance to talk about any health or medication worries that you might have.

These health checks are important to make sure things go well when a child with a learning disability moves to adult services at the age of 18.



Adults with a learning disability want to be valued and respected members of their community.



Most would like a paid job provided they had the right support.

6%

But only 6 in 100 adults with a learning disability have a paid job.



Getting the right support is important in giving the person with a learning disability a full and happy life.



But not everyone gets the right support. This need to change. A lot of adults with a learning disability do not feel that they get their voice heard. This is why self advocacy organisations like People's First Groups are so important.



There are organisations with help and advice.

These include the **NHS**

www.nhs.uk

Also **Mencap** for people with learning disabilities

www.mencap.org.uk

Helpline 0808 808 111

Also throughout Wales, there are self advocacy groups for people with learning disabilities. These groups are called people first groups.

www.allwalespeople1st.co.uk

Also there are people first groups throughout England.



[Ben is from Barry in the Vale of Glamorgan. Ben has a learning disability. To see a short film about Ben and his life click on the link below.](#)

[About my learning disability - Ben - YouTube](#)