



LEARNING DISABILITY, AUTISM & SAFER HEALTHCARE

Hospital / Health Passport

Preparing information that can support communication,
reasonable adjustments and safer healthcare.

The key idea

A Hospital or Health Passport can help explain how a person communicates, what support they need and what matters to them. It can support safer care, but it does not replace clinical assessment, consent, listening to the person or making reasonable adjustments.

Preparing information for your passport

The following pages are not intended to replace a hospital's own passport. They can help you gather information before completing one, updating an existing passport or preparing for an appointment or hospital visit.

How I communicate

Include speech, signing, gestures, pictures, AAC or other methods. How do you communicate yes, no, needing a break or not understanding?

How I show pain or that something is wrong

What changes might other people notice? Think about facial expression, movement, sounds, behaviour, sleep, appetite or becoming quieter or more active than usual.

How I prefer information to be explained

Think about simple language, written information, pictures, one question at a time, extra processing time, demonstrations or avoiding figurative language.

Sensory needs and my environment

Think about lighting, noise, touch, smells, crowded spaces, waiting rooms, clothing, medical equipment or anything else that can become difficult.

Things that can make healthcare difficult for me

What situations increase anxiety, distress or confusion? Are there particular procedures, approaches or environments that are especially difficult?

What helps when I am distressed or overwhelmed

What should staff do or avoid doing? Consider space, reduced talking, familiar objects, movement, sensory tools, a supporter or additional time.

Eating, drinking and swallowing

Include dietary needs, allergies or intolerances, swallowing difficulties, preferred textures, positioning, assistance, equipment or signs that eating or drinking is becoming unsafe.

Mobility, positioning and personal care

Include mobility aids, transfer support, positioning, toileting, personal-care needs and anything staff should know about touch, dignity or assistance.

Medication and important health information

Record key conditions, allergies, current medication and important information about taking medication. A current medication list from the appropriate healthcare source can be attached where available.

People I would like involved in my care

Who helps you communicate or understand healthcare? Include their role and how they can help. Their involvement should reflect your wishes and the relevant consent or capacity framework.

Reasonable adjustments that help me

Examples might include a quieter waiting area, longer appointment, first or last appointment, accessible information, communication support, sensory adjustments or allowing a supporter to attend.

Anything else healthcare professionals should know

Add anything important that has not fitted elsewhere: routines, fears, previous healthcare experiences, equipment, sleep, seizure information, safety needs or what helps you feel more comfortable.

Keep the information current

A passport is most useful when it reflects the person's current needs. Review it after significant health changes, medication changes, changes in communication or support, or when something important is learned from a healthcare experience. Add a date so staff can see when it was last reviewed.

What this might look like

After an admission, a family realises that the person's usual signs of pain were not obvious to unfamiliar staff. They update the passport with a short description of those signs and what usually helps staff assess whether something is wrong.

A passport does not remove healthcare responsibilities

People should not have to produce a perfect document before services respond to disability-related needs. Healthcare professionals and services still have responsibilities to communicate accessibly, assess the person properly and consider reasonable adjustments. In England, the Equality Act 2010 creates a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people, and the NHS Reasonable Adjustment Digital Flag is intended to help record and share adjustment needs across participating NHS services.

For healthcare professionals

Treat the passport as useful information from and about the person, not as a substitute for clinical judgement. Check what is still accurate, ask how the person wants to communicate today and avoid assuming that behaviour, pain expression or communication will look the same for everyone with the same diagnosis.

Before an appointment or admission

If possible, bring or share the passport early enough for staff to use it. Highlight the information that is most important for immediate safety and communication. If a particular adjustment is needed, ask the service about it in advance where practical.

Practical check

Does the passport explain communication, pain or distress, sensory needs and important health information? Are reasonable adjustments clear? Is the information current? Does it say who can help staff understand the person's communication? Are urgent safety needs easy to find?

References & Further Resources

Different NHS organisations may use different passport templates. These resources can help with creating or updating one and with understanding reasonable adjustments.

NHS England - Reasonable Adjustment Digital Flag

Information about the national flag used to record, share and view reasonable adjustment needs for disabled people across participating NHS services.

NHS England - Learning disability resources

NHS England provides information and resources aimed at improving healthcare for people with a learning disability, including accessible communication and reasonable adjustments.

NHS / local Hospital Passport templates

Many NHS trusts and learning-disability services provide their own Hospital or Health Passport. If a local service has a preferred version, its template can be used alongside the preparation notes in this guide.

Equality Act 2010 - reasonable adjustments

The legal framework in Great Britain includes a duty on service providers to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people. The adjustment required depends on the individual and the circumstances.

How to use this resource

These prompts can help a person, family member, carer or supporter prepare information, but they are not a clinical record and do not replace professional assessment. Where information is safety-critical, confirm it with the relevant healthcare team and keep it updated.