

# Health Action Plans and Health Facilitation

Good Practice Guidance  
for Learning Disability Partnership Boards

-Easier to read version



**Valuing People:**

A New Strategy for Learning  
Disability for the 21st Century



# What is this information for?

- **'Valuing People'** says that people with learning disabilities should get the chance to have a Health Action Plan. They should have help to get the services they need from the NHS. **Partnership Boards** have to work with **Primary Care Trusts** to make sure it happens. This information is to help them to do that work.

This information is for *everyone* on the Partnership Board.



Some harder words are explained in the dictionary at the end. Those words are in **darker writing.**

# Introduction

Good health is important to everyone. We all have the same rights to use NHS services. But many people with learning disabilities find it difficult to get the services they need.

This may not always be easy but the good practice guidance contained in this booklet will help this to happen. I know that many people working in primary care teams and other parts of the NHS are eager to take up this challenge.

It is essential that both children and adults with learning disabilities, are helped to be full citizens using NHS services like everyone else.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Colin-Thome', written in a cursive style.

David Colin-Thome  
National Director for Primary Care

# Contents

<b>What is this information for?</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Introduction by David Colin-Thome</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Contents</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>What are Health Action Plans?</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>What is Health Facilitation?</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Why do we need Health Action Plans?</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>How do you start a Health Action Plan?</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Who will have a Health Action Plan?</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Deciding if you want a Health Action Plan</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>What Partnership Boards need to do</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Here are some examples</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Dictionary</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>More Information</b>	<b>23</b>

# What are Health Action Plans?

**A Health Action Plan** is a personal plan about what a person with learning disabilities can do to be healthy. It lists any help people might need to do those things. It helps to make sure people get the services and support they need to be healthy.

- Ordinary services that everyone uses should get more involved in providing a service to people with learning disabilities.
- Valuing People says that everyone should have rights, independence, choice and inclusion. Health Action Plans and **Health Facilitation** must support this.
- If you have learning disabilities, you can have your own Health Action Plan. You will help to work out what should go in it and how to make it happen.
- You will get a copy of your Health Action Plan which you can understand. A copy will be kept at your doctor's surgery.

- Your job on the Partnership Board will be to help other people in your area to get a Health Action Plan. The Partnership Board will need to make sure that Health Action Plans can work well.



# What is Health Facilitation?

- This is making sure you get what you need from the NHS and other services that can help you be healthy.
- GPs and others who work in primary care and hospitals may need help to know their patients with learning disabilities and get things right for them.
- This is about supporting good emotional health as well as good physical health. So this is about your feelings as well as your body.
- Health Facilitators will be identified in each Primary Care Trust and there should be a named contact for Health Facilitation for each general practice.
- Local services will need to decide how to make Health Facilitation work well.



# Why do we need Health Action Plans?

It can be hard for people with learning disabilities to be healthy.

People do not always get the chance to lead a **healthy life**.

- This is not fair and we need to change it.
- You need good **health** to do what you want in life.



# How do you start a Health Action Plan?

You can start making a Health Action Plan in different ways.

- Someone at your Doctor's surgery can help you start one.
- You can include health when you are making other plans, like your **Person Centred Plan**, or your **Transition Plan**.
- Good health is an important part of your whole life. Planning for health should always fit in with any other planning that is going on.
- You can begin a plan yourself. Your family might help you.
- Staff might help you to start a Health Action Plan. This might be staff where you live, or in your day service.



# Who will have Health Action Plans?

- By Summer 2005, all people with learning disabilities should get the chance to have a Health Action Plan.
- **Valuing People** says there are some times when it is especially important to have a Health Action Plan:
  - When you are making plans for leaving school or college.
  - When you are moving home. Like if someone leaves their family home and moves into a group home. Or if you are thinking about doing this when your Mum and Dad are getting older. Or if you move to a home of your own.
  - If your health changes. Like if you have to go to hospital.
  - When you get older.

Partnership Boards might think of other times when it is especially important for local people to have a Health Action Plan. Partnership Boards might think of other groups who should be first in line to have a Health Action Plan.

# Deciding if you want a Health Action Plan

- Everyone can have a **Health Action Plan**.
- People need easy information to help them understand what having a Health Action Plan means.
- Some people might decide they do not need a Health Action Plan at the moment. They and their supporters need to think carefully about how to make sure they keep healthy.
- Some people will not be able to understand what a Health Action Plan is. They should be given support to understand as much as they can. People who know them well, and care about them, should be involved with their Health Action Plan.



# What Partnership Boards need to do

By Summer 2003, the Partnership Board have to write a plan of how Health Action Plans will work in your area and say who health facilitators will be. To write that plan, there are a few things you can think about:

1. What is happening in your area about health?
  - Find out what work is going on to help everyone in your area to be healthy. Make sure people with learning disabilities are included in that work.



- Partnership Boards will have to make sure people with learning disabilities can use ordinary health services. Find out what is going on in your area to help ordinary health services give a better service to people with learning disabilities. Find out where work still needs to be done and plan how to do it.

- Being healthy is also about having a **healthy life**. Things like being poor, living in bad housing and not having a job can also result in being ill. This is also called **Health Inequalities**. Partnership Boards will have to make sure people with Learning Disabilities are included in local work to improve health inequalities. They must also make sure there is no **discrimination** against people with learning disabilities in health care.

## 2. Working on these New Ideas

- Think about how Health Action Plans can work best in your area. How can you make the best use of the skills people have and the money that is available?
- Try and get more people interested. Think about what everyone can do to help with Health Action Plans. See who can lead projects. See who can spend money to make services better.
- Think about what problems there might be with doing Health Action Plans in your area. Think about how you can get over these problems.
- Find out how people with learning disabilities and family members are involved in making decisions about services that help people to be healthy. See how they can be more involved. Find out what people with learning disabilities want from services.

- Find out who in your area is interested in how learning disability services and ordinary services can work together. What can they do to help people with learning disabilities improve their health? Think about people from a range of services and organisations.



## Working on these New Ideas

- Work out how the Partnership Board can help make sure that everyone gets an accessible copy of their Health Action Plan. This means one that the person can understand. See what help doctor's surgeries will need, to keep a copy. Make sure they follow the **Data Protection Act**, and that people agree who can have a copy of their plan.
- Make sure that everyone has the information they need to do Health Action Plans well. Work out what information will be needed for different groups (like support staff, families, and health staff). Let them know what they can do to help with Health Action Plans. Make sure people with learning disabilities have information about Health Action Plans that is easy for them to understand.
- Make sure that people with learning disabilities and self advocacy organisations are involved in all the work you do.
- Make sure they are involved in training people about Health Action Plans.

- Work out who needs training about:
  - Better health for people with learning disabilities
  - Health Action Plans.



### 3. Check Health Action Plans are Working

- Partnership Boards will need to find out whether Health Action Plans are making a difference to the health of people with learning disabilities in your area.
- Find out how many people with learning disabilities are getting Health Action Plans.

- Make sure that everyone with learning disabilities gets a fair chance to have a Health Action Plan. Be sure you include people who need a lot of help in their everyday lives, people from black and minority ethnic groups and people of different ages.



# Here are some examples to show you what Health Action Plans might look like and how they might work

Lucy Peyton

Lucy is a 49 year old woman, living in her own flat, with support from her care worker. She attends a work placement once a week and sees her mum and dad regularly. They are quite old.

Lucy's GP is inviting everyone with a learning disability for a health check if they have not had one for a few years. The picture shows what Lucy writes on her Health Action Plan. Lucy found out her blood pressure was a bit high and needs checking. Lucy wants to know more about her blood pressure, about getting older, the **menopause** and losing some weight.

Lucy has written her own Health Action Plan. It says she is going to visit the practice nurse every month to check her blood pressure. Lucy is exercising and learning more about the menopause at a woman's group. To lose weight Lucy is thinking about joining a slimming club.

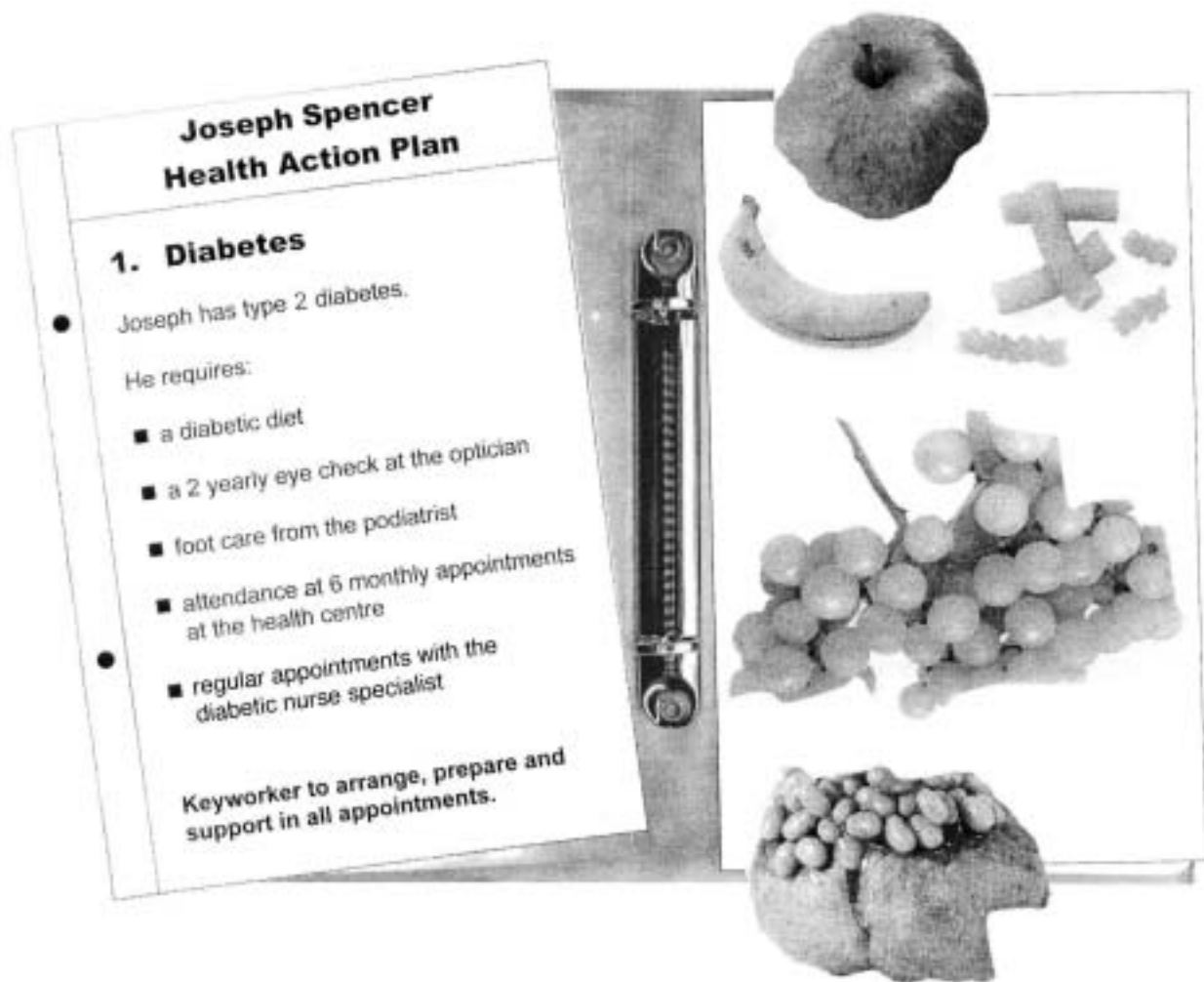
Health Action Plan			
Date	Health Issue	Health Action	Review Date
1st Feb 2002	high blood pressure  swelling a lot probably due to menopause  I weigh 12st 4lb I want to lose weight	Visit practice nurse Sue every month to have my blood pressure checked. Sam the health promotion nurse will visit me at home to help me learn more about high blood pressure start doing exercises on the flat from Sue Learn about the menopause at the women's group on Wednesday If I am worried I can talk to Sue or Dr Fred Sam or Sue will help me in losing weight I might go to slimming club eat more fruit and veg eat smaller meals not so many take aways walk in head of getting on	every month with Sue  every month or any time if worried  In 6 months I want to lose 1 stone

Joseph Spencer

Joseph has Down's syndrome and seems to be healthy, he has not been to his Doctor for ages.

He lives in a large residential home. Joseph has been in a bad mood a lot, and has started wetting the bed. The staff take Joseph to see his Doctor. It turns out Joseph has **diabetes** and together with his support worker they make a Health Action Plan about diabetes and what this means. This is a part of it.

The writing in the Health Action Plan is to help the staff so they know what has been decided. The pictures are so that Joseph can remember the healthy food that he should eat to help his diabetes.



Lucy and Joseph are not real people. They are made up to give you an idea about how Health Action Plans might work and what they could look like.



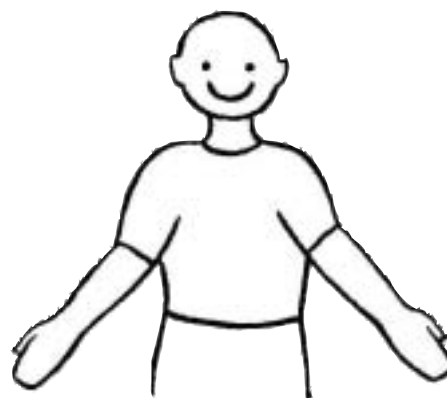
## **A Health Action Plan**

This is a personal plan about what a person with learning disabilities can do to be healthy.

## **A healthy life**

To be healthy you need:

- The chance to find out about being healthy
- To take care of yourself, like eating healthy food, regular exercise, no smoking and not too much alcohol
- Good health care
- Friends and connections in your community
- Enough money to buy the things you need
- Good housing
- Interesting things to do (like a job)



## **Data Protection Act**

This is a law that makes sure information and records about people are kept safe and private.

## **Diabetes**

This is an illness, which means you need to see doctors and nurses regularly and think about what you eat. Some people need to have injections to keep them well. You can find out more about diabetes from Diabetes UK, phone them on 0207 424 1030.



## Dictionary

### **Discrimination**

This is when you do not get equal rights to services and when you are not treated with respect.

### **Health**

Good health means you are not ill. It also means you feel well and can lead a full and active life.

### **Health facilitation**

This is about helping people get full access to all the services they need from the NHS.

### **Health Inequalities**

This is when you do not get the same chance to have a healthy life as everyone else.

### **Menopause**

This is sometimes called the change and is the time when women stop having their periods usually when they are 40 or 50. You can find out more about the menopause from Tizard Centre – Michelle McCarthy 01227 827997

### **Partnership Board**

These are the people who have the job of putting Valuing People into practice. They come from different organisations and include:

- people with learning disabilities
- family carers
- social services



## Dictionary



- health services
- housing services
- employment services

### Person Centred Planning

This means putting the person at the centre of planning for their lives. Person centred planning is about:

- listening to and learning about what people want from their lives
- helping people to think about what they want now and in the future
- family, friends, professionals and services working together with the person to make this happen.

### Primary Care Trust

This is the organisation that is responsible for the health of all the people in their local area.

### Primary Health Care Team

These are the people who you see first when you need healthcare. They include the doctors and nurses at the health centre as well as people like dentists and chiropodists.





## Dictionary

### Transition plan

This is the plan you make for when someone leaves school or college.



### Valuing People

This is the Government plan to make life better for people with learning disabilities.



Thanks to Michelle Chinery, Tracey Fry, Julian Goodwin, Wendy Perez and Beth Tarleton for helping to make this information easier to understand. Thanks to Karen Gyde for doing the design and Vali Herzer for doing the pictures.

## More Information

There is a tape of this book.

There is more information for people with learning disabilities in a booklet called

Health Action Plans

**What are they?**

**How do you get one?**

There is also a tape of this booklet.

There is a longer book for people who are going to work out the details of Health Action Planning and Health Facilitation called Action for Health

The back page tells you how to get the books and tapes.







*Other books in the Health Action Plans series are*

Action for Health, Health Action Plans and Health Facilitation. Good Practice Guidance on Implementation for Learning Disability Partnership Boards (detailed version - reference no 28600)

Health Action Plans, What are they? How do you get one (booklet for People with Learning Disabilities – reference no 28599)

*You can get tapes of the following versions from end August 2002*

Health Action Plans and Health Facilitation, Good Practice Guidance for Learning Disability Partnership Boards (Easier to read version – reference no 28611)

Health Action Plans, What are they? How do you get one (booklet for People with Learning Disabilities – reference no 28612)

Copies of the book are on our website  
[www.doh.gov.uk/learningdisabilities](http://www.doh.gov.uk/learningdisabilities)

Free copies of this book are available from:

Department of Health Publications  
PO Box 777  
London SE1 6XH  
Fax: 01623 724524  
E-mail [doh@prolog.uk.com](mailto:doh@prolog.uk.com)

Please ask for the books by title and reference number when you order them

You can copy anything in this book if you want to

© Crown Copyright  
Produced by Department of Health  
00000 1p 0.75k July 02 (XXX)  
CHLORINE FREE PAPER.