

## LEARNING DISABILITY PASSPORT TO BETTER HEALTH SERVICES



*Roving Reporters Catherine, Jonathan, and Kevin from Downpatrick TILII joined with Philip Foster from Muckamore Abbey Hospital TILII Patients Council to cover the launch of the Learning Disability Passport at Stormont*

TILII members were delighted to go to the Learning Disability Hospital Passport Launch at Stormont to report on the new passport that has been designed to help people with a learning disability communicate with health care staff.

The Public Health Agency worked together with the Regional General Hospital Forum for Learning Disabilities, the Health and Social Care Trusts, and most importantly, people with a learning disability and their carers, to design the Hospital Passport folder. The purpose of the passport is to help people with a learning disability get better care when they go to the hospital. It has details about the patient's likes, dislikes and how best to communicate with them. This will help all staff in a general hospital setting to provide individual support meeting the needs of each person with a learning disability visiting or staying in hospital.

The first person we interviewed was Mary Hinds, Director of Nursing and Allied Health Professionals at the Public Health Agency.

Mary said, "It's a tremendous piece of work. The passport is very clear, straight-forward and I think it could apply to more than just people with a learning disability. It provides crucial information for the hospital staff and offers them the chance to get to know the individual needs of each person very well. I hope it will help staff in hospital to understand what's important to a person with a learning disability and assist them in being more person-centred, providing an even better service."

She continued, "I think it's really important that having created such a good passport in partnership with people with a learning disability, that it is widely used. I am the Director of Nursing and there are thousands of nurses in hospitals. You have my commitment that I will work with my team to make sure every nurse knows and understands what an important communication tool the passport is. I hope others learn from it."

Cliona McElhoney, an Acting Team Leader in the Western Trust's children's disabilities team told us, "As a team leader for children with learning disabilities I will promote the passport and talk to members of the public to inform them that there are links on the Public Health Agency's website where they can download the passport."

We spoke to the Senior Education Manager in the Clinical Education Centre in Northern Ireland, and she said, "I think the passport is great, bright and user friendly. My background is as a Sister in the Emergency Care Department and quite often we see people with a learning disability but we do not have a lot of information about them. This will enhance the care that nurses and medical professionals provide to people with a learning disability."

After doing some interviewing, the Roving Reporters got the chance to take part in the launch. We listened to everyone talk about how proud they were to be involved in the making of the passport, and how everyone was hoping that it would make a big difference to patient care for people with a learning disability.

It was also great to see members of Lilliput Theatre, who did some sketches about visiting the hospital and listen to Christian, a Lilliput member, talk about the work that Lilliput do.

Then it was back to the Roving Report, as TILII interviewed Alison McCafferty, Policy Lead for Learning Disability in the Department of Health. She said, "I think it looks great and I particularly like the focus on peoples' abilities with a lot of emphasis on support. They are two really important things."

Margaret Cameron, Director of Disability Service in Inspire Wellbeing said, "The language in the passport is clear and I shared it with the people we support who have a learning disability and they really liked the format of it."

Jenny MCMahom from the South-Eastern Trust said, "I have been involved in the project from the very beginning. As a Clinical Coordinator for a surgical ward at the Ulster Hospital this is fabulous and just what we need. My hope is that it helps us support more the dignity of people coming in."

Briege Quinn, Nurse Consultant for Mental Health and Learning Disabilities in the Public Health Agency said, "I think it's amazing, colourful, easy to read, and very informative. It is helpful without being patronising, and I think it's just how people should do things round here - just ask simple questions like, 'When is your birthday?'. That can make all the difference to people with a learning disability. Sometimes time pressures mean we revert to a parent or carer for information. The passport will help us stop and think and see there is a different way of communicating to get the information we need, by involving the patients themselves. As part of my job I will promote people using the passport and evaluate it to make sure it is being used and most importantly that we don't forget it in a couple of months."

Yvonne Diamond, Service Manager at Priory Group, said, "I think it is very good, it is concise but covers everything it needs to. It gives people the opportunity to have a person-centred approach, it allows the person to be involved, and it allows the staff to get to know the person with a learning disability a lot better."

Own Barr, Professor of Nursing at Ulster University, said, "I think it is easy to read, easy to fill in, the pictures are very useful on it, and it looks good. I think it will help the staff because they will be able to see how to best communicate with the patient. It is critical we understand that if someone is worried, in pain, or feeling ill, it will give staff more confidence and help them to work better with people with learning disabilities, and make the hospital journey better for everyone involved. I think the launch of passport was very important for everyone to know it is out there. I will be giving the passport to all student nurses."

To finish, we would like to quote Mary Hinds who said it beautifully when she said "The passport is about good communication. That is what is so important - that staff quickly understand the patient to ensure their stay in hospital goes smoothly and communication is key."

## TILII Tips

- Even if you are good at talking, have the passport there in case you are nervous in the hospital, you can use it to support your speech
- It is important to get the right treatment: make sure you use the passport so the nurses and doctors understand how you feel so they can help you to get better
- Keep your passport in a safe place and don't lose it. If you are unsure where to keep it, you can ask your carer to keep it safe and secure, as it has confidential information on it



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MUCKAMORE PC IN ACTION



**WE HOPE YOU HAVE ENJOYED OUR ROVING REPORT, AND THAT YOU WILL MAKE SURE  
YOU GET YOUR OWN HOSPITAL PASSPORT**