

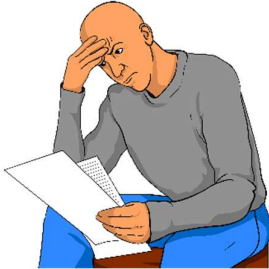


Summary of the health of people with learning disability in Aotearoa New Zealand



Published: June 2024

Before you start



This is a long document.

It can be hard for some people to read a document this long.



Some things you can do to make it easier are:

- read it a few pages at a time
- set aside some quiet time to look at it
- have someone read it with you to support you to understand it.





Some of the information in this document is about things that may make you:

- upset
- worried.



This document is about the health of people with learning disability.



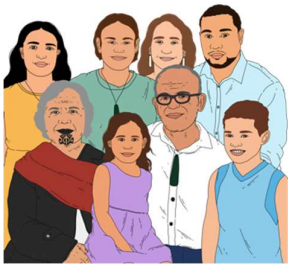
People with learning disability are all different.



Not everything we talk about in this document will happen to:

- you
- people you know.





If you are worried you can talk to your:

- whānau / family
- friends
- doctor.



What you will find in here



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What is in this document



This Easy Read document **Summary of the health of people with learning disability in Aotearoa New Zealand** is from:



- the **Donald Beasley Institute**
- **People First New Zealand Ngā Tāngata Tuatahi.**



The **Donald Beasley Institute** does research with people with learning disability.

The Donald Beasley Institute is sometimes called the **DBI**.



Research is when we:

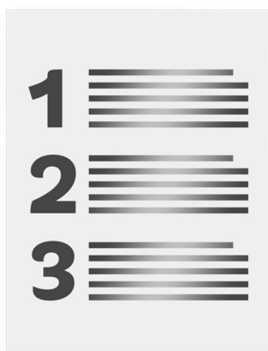
- find out about something
- learn from the things we find out.

People First NZ
Ngā Tāngata Tuatahi



People First New Zealand Ngā Tāngata Tuatahi is an organisation that supports people with learning disability to speak up about what matters in their lives.

The ideas in this document are a **summary** of lots of other research.



A summary:

- tells you the main ideas
- is shorter than the full documents.



If you want to find out more about the research you can read the plain language version of the report at this **website**:

<https://www.donaldbeasley.org.nz/publications/health/>



The research says that people with learning disability have more health problems than other people in Aotearoa New Zealand.



The Government has had this information for more than 10 years.



Not many things have changed in that time.



The Government does not have information about:

- how many people have learning disability
- what people with learning disability need.



This makes it hard for people with learning disability to get the healthcare they need.



In Aotearoa New Zealand people with learning disability have 5 main health problems:

1. dying at a younger age than people who do not have learning disability
2. having more **avoidable**:
 - health problems
 - deaths
3. having more **complex health conditions**.
4. getting worse healthcare than people who do not have learning disability.
5. being more likely to experience **discrimination** when they try to get healthcare.



Avoidable means something that did not need to happen.



Complex health conditions means having:

- more than 1 health problem
- health problems that last a long time.



Discrimination is when people are treated differently because of things like:

- disability
- gender.





Gender is if you are:

- a man
- a woman
- another gender like nonbinary.



The rest of this document has more information about the problems people with learning disability have with healthcare.

1. Dying younger



People with learning disability are living longer than they did in the past.



They still do not live as long as people who do not have learning disability.



Men with learning disability often die around age 65.

Men without learning disability often die around age 80



Women with learning disability often die around age 66.

Women without learning disability often die around age 84.



People with learning disability are all different.

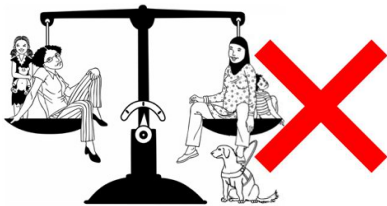


Not everything we talk about in this document will happen to you.

2. Avoidable health problems



Many disabled people in Aotearoa have differences in health that are:



- avoidable
- unfair.



Compared with other New Zealanders people with learning disability have more avoidable:



- health problems
- deaths.



Getting the right healthcare can stop you:

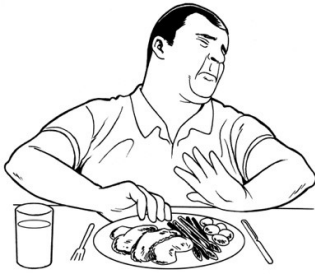
- getting very sick
- needing to go to hospital.



Avoidable hospital visits happen when someone did not get the healthcare they needed in time.



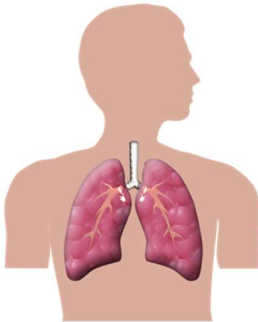
People with learning disability are 4 times more likely to have avoidable hospital visits than other people in Aotearoa New Zealand.



1 avoidable health problem is that people with learning disability often have trouble swallowing food.



Doctors do not always notice when people with learning disability have trouble swallowing.



People who have trouble swallowing can breathe food into their lungs.



Getting food in your lungs can make you:

- very sick
- die.

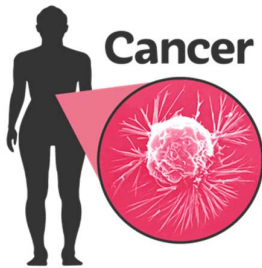


This is the biggest type of avoidable death for people with learning disability.

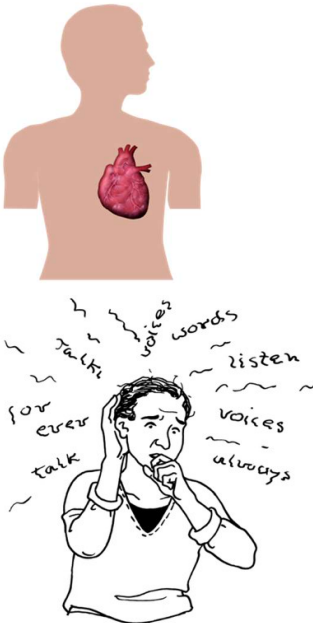
3. Complex health conditions



People with learning disability are more likely to have complex health conditions than people who do not have learning disability.



Some of the health conditions people with learning disability are more likely to have are:



- cancer
- heart problems
- diabetes
- mental health problems.



These things are true for people with learning disability of all:

- ages
- genders
- **cultures.**



Culture means the things a group shares like:

- language
- religion
- ways of doing things.

4. Healthcare



People with learning disability are often treated unfairly when they try to get healthcare.



Some healthcare workers treat people with learning disability like they are not very important.



This means people with learning disability might:

- have to wait longer for healthcare
- not get the healthcare they need
- not be treated very nicely.





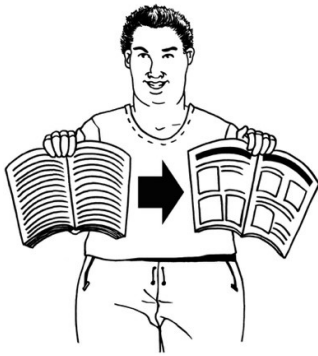
Healthcare workers do not get much training about what people with learning disability need.



This means that a lot of healthcare workers do not know much about learning disability.



Healthcare workers often do not understand what health needs people with learning disability have.

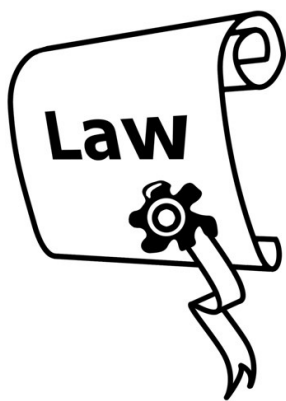


Healthcare workers also may not know how to give people with learning disability information they can understand.



This makes it hard for people with learning disability to:

- talk about their health
- take care of their health.



A lot of healthcare workers do not know what the law says about who can make their own health choices.



They might make health choices for a person with learning disability without asking them what they want.

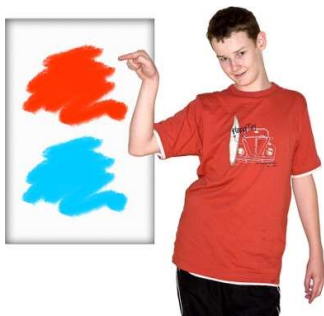
They might also let other people make choices for people with learning disability.



Sometimes people who work in healthcare think people with learning disability do not have good lives.



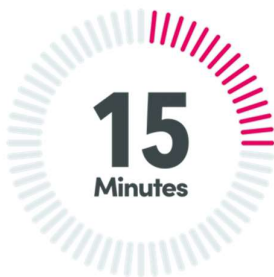
They might not think it is worthwhile giving medical care to people with learning disability.



Sometimes people with learning disability do not get the same choices as everyone else.



The way things happen in healthcare does not always work for people with learning disability.



For example appointments are often quite short.

There is not enough time to:

- listen
- explain things clearly.



It usually costs too much money to have an appointment that goes longer.

5. Health data



Data means information like:

- facts
- numbers.



Health data in Aotearoa New Zealand usually says if someone is disabled.



It does not usually say what sort of disability someone has.



This means it is hard to get information that is just about people with learning disability.



In 2023 the Government wrote a document called the **Provisional Health of Disabled People Strategy**.



The **Provisional Health of Disabled People Strategy** is a report about how Aotearoa New Zealand can make healthcare fair for:

- disabled people
- their whānau / families.



The document does not talk about:

- the health needs of people with learning disability
- how the health system makes it harder for people with learning disability to get good healthcare.





It is a big problem that there is not enough information about what people with learning disability need.

More information



You can find more information on the Donald Beasley Institute **website** at:

www.donaldbeasley.org.nz



You can send an **email** to the Donald Beasley Institute at:

admin@donaldbeasley.org.nz



You can **phone** on:

03 479 2162





This information has been written by the Donald Beasley Institute and People First New Zealand Ngā Tāngata Tuatahi.

It has been translated into Easy Read by the Make it Easy Kia Māmā Mai service of People First New Zealand Ngā Tāngata Tuatahi.

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