



National Patient Safety
Improvement Programmes



Lowering the harm from psychotropic medicines used for behaviour that challenges in people with learning disability



Easy
Read

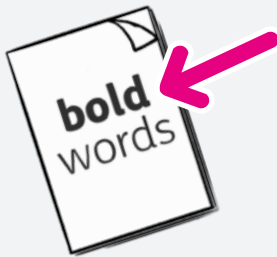
Easy Read



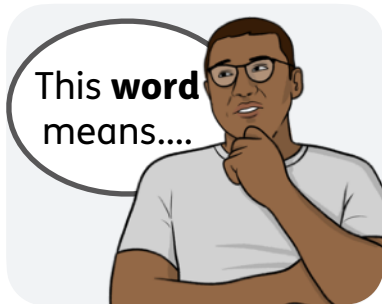
This is an Easy Read version of some information. It may not include all of the information but it will tell you about the important parts.



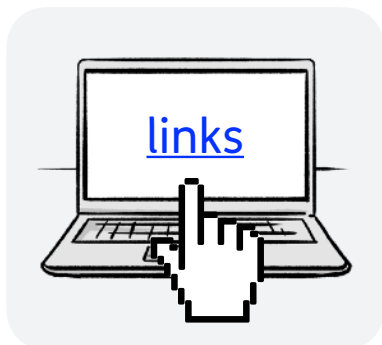
This Easy Read booklet uses easier words and pictures. Some people may still want help to read it.



Some words are in **bold** - this means the writing is thicker and darker. These are important words in the booklet.



Sometimes if a bold word is hard to understand, we will explain what it means.



Blue and underlined words show links to websites and email addresses. You can click on these links on a computer. If you are reading a paper copy of this booklet, you will not be able to click on the links.

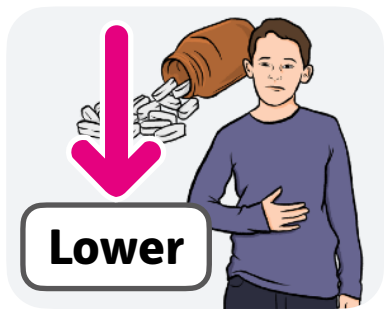
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About this booklet



This booklet is from the NHS.



It is about a **national project** to lower the harm caused by certain medicines to people with a learning disability.

A **national project** is a big task or plan that is done across the whole country.



The medicines are called **psychotropics** - they affect how your brain works.



In this booklet, we will tell you more about:

- The effects of psychotropic medicines.

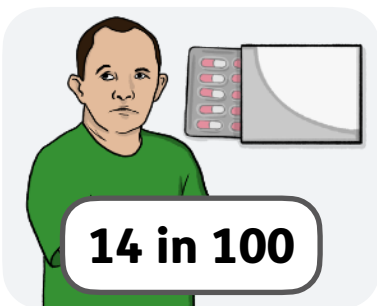


- Trying to lower the harm caused by psychotropic medicines to people with a learning disability.

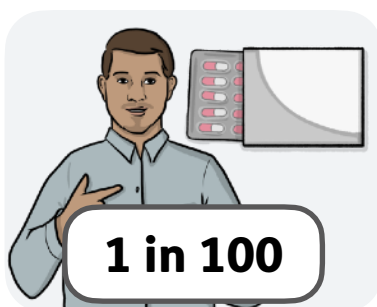
People with a learning disability and psychotropic medicines



There are about 1.3 million people with a learning disability in England.



About 14 in 100 people with a learning disability are given psychotropic medicines.



But only 1 in 100 people without a learning disability are given psychotropic medicines.

About psychotropic medicines

Psychotropic medicines can be helpful to treat things like:



- **Psychosis** - this is when someone can see or hear things that other people do not or they think strange things are happening.



- **Depression** - this can make you feel very sad and also worried about things.



- **Anxiety** - this means feeling worried or nervous about something.



- **Epilepsy** - this is when people have seizures (fits).



Psychotropic medicines may also be used for behaviour that challenges. We will tell you more about what this is on the next page.



All medicines can have **side-effects**.

Side-effects are unwanted things that can happen to your body after taking medicines, like feeling tired.



But not everyone will have side-effects from medicines.



So medicines should only be given when there are clear reasons that the person needs to take them.



Psychotropic medicines can affect how well someone can live their life. Sometimes they can be helpful, but sometimes they can have side-effects.

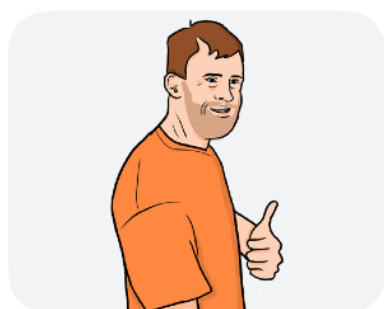
Using psychotropic medicine for behaviour that challenges



Behaviour that challenges is different behaviour that some people with learning disability may show if their needs are not being met.



If possible, doctors should try and use a different therapy than medicine to support people with a learning disability with their behaviour that challenges.



But sometimes psychotropic medicines are needed and are helpful.

If someone is given psychotropic medicine for behaviour that challenges, it should be:

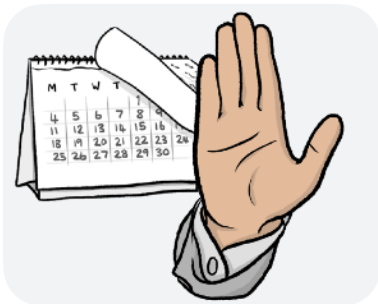


- The smallest **dose** that will help them.

A dose is the amount of medicine a doctor says you should take.



- Checked regularly, like at a review of all the medicine someone is taking.



- Stopped as soon as possible.

About this project



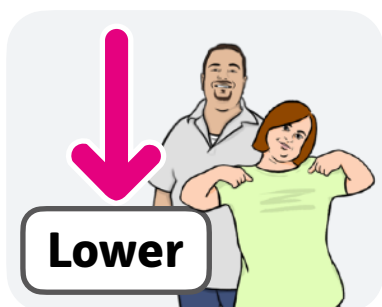
This national project is called the National Medicines Safety Improvement Programme.



The project aims to improve the care given to people with a learning disability and behaviour that challenges.

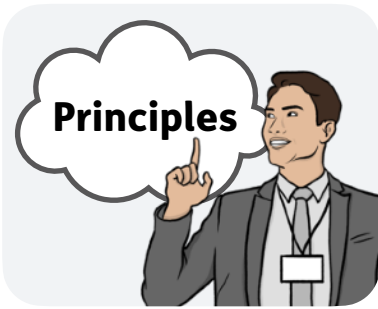


This is so that psychotropic medicine is only given to people who really need it, when they need it.



Lowering the number of people taking psychotropic medicines when they do not need them will lower the amount of harm.

Key principles

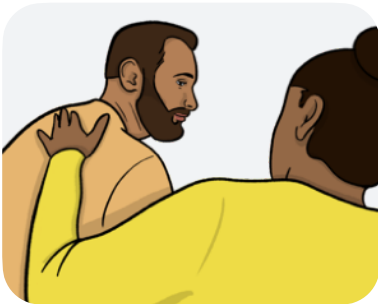


Principles are the ideas we think about when we do our work.

The key principles for this project are:



- Improving the management of behaviour that challenges by carefully planning care with the person with a learning disability and their carers.



- Supporting people to manage their behaviour that challenges without medicines, where possible.



- Making sure different health and care services are working together to provide the best care.



- Thinking about the person's needs now and in the future.

The key principles for this project are also:



- Thinking about the benefits and risks that using medicines might have.



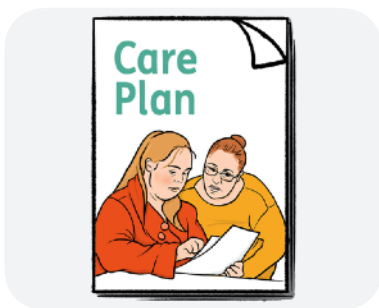
- Thinking about the benefits and risks of using other treatment that is not medicine.



This will stop people taking medicine they do not need, which might harm them.

How this project might help people with a learning disability

The ways this project might help people with a learning disability are:



- People should have their own personal care plan based on their needs, which includes therapies that are not medicine.

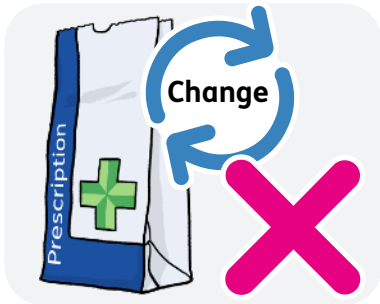


- Psychotropic medicines will only be given if someone really needs them.



- There will be less harm from psychotropic medicines.

What to do if you are taking psychotropic medicines and you are worried

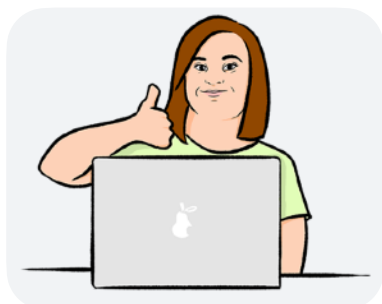


Do not change the dose of your medicines or stop taking them without talking to your doctor.



If you are worried, your doctor and the people who support you will help you.

Find out more

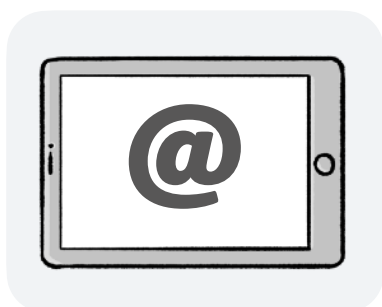


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