

## **Assessing and treating patients with a learning disability during the COVID19 pandemic**

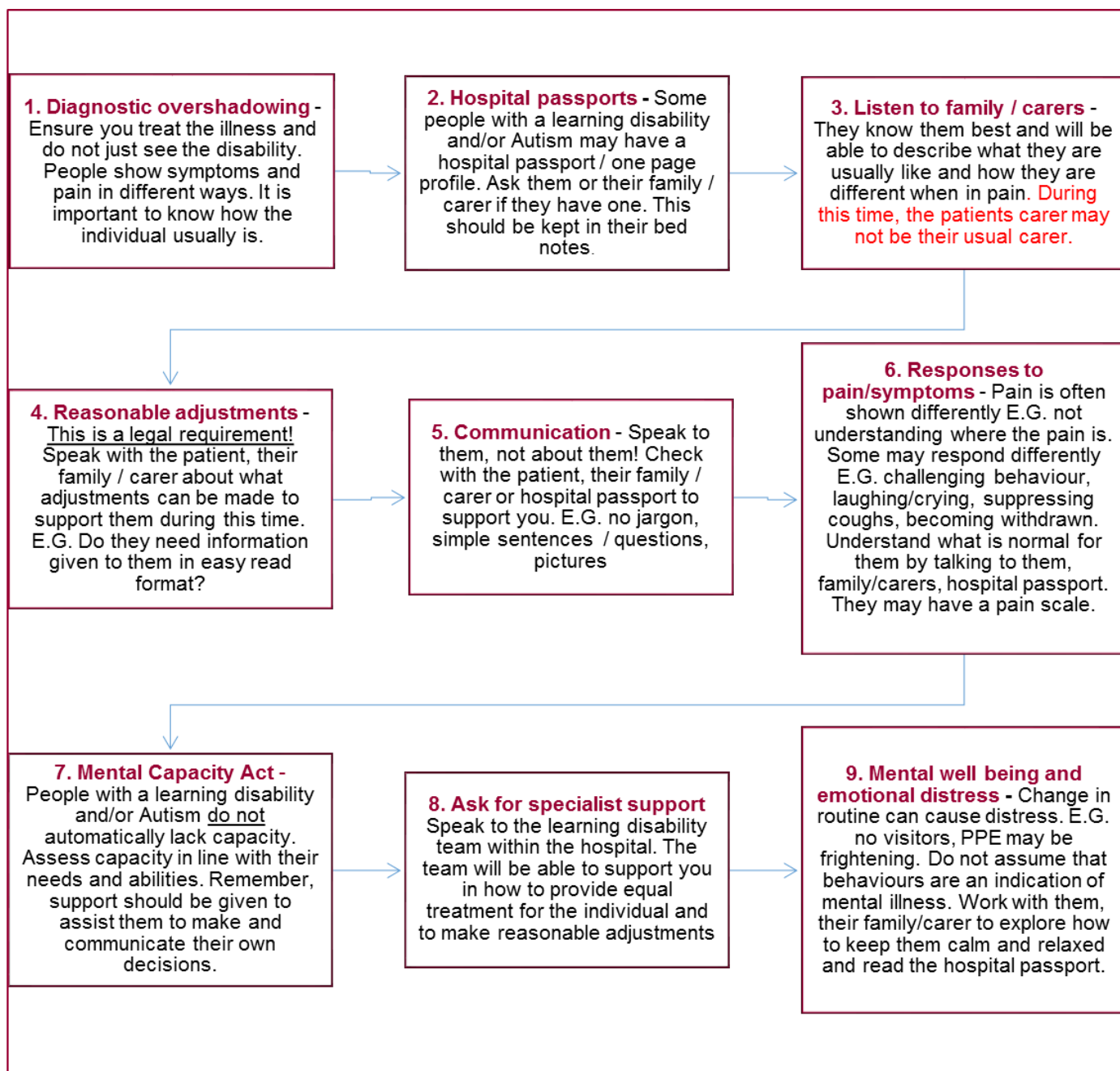
**People with a learning disability are at higher risk of conditions such as dysphagia, as well as a higher propensity to be either overweight or underweight, which mean an increased chance of choking and pneumonia. The most recent LeDeR review estimated that 41% of deaths of people with a learning disability in hospital were due to respiratory conditions.**

**However, this doesn't mean that people with a learning disability will inevitably die of covid-19 if they get the right support and treatment, both in the community and in hospital.**

**Diagnostic overshadowing, where symptoms are attributed to someone's learning disability rather than their illness, can result in respiratory conditions going untreated.**

**It doesn't have to be this way. Simple reasonable adjustments, such as communicating effectively and understanding how people express pain, will ensure people with a learning disability get the right treatment and could save their lives. The reasonable adjustments are a legal requirement under the equality act.**

Please consider the following when assessing and treating a patient with a learning disability and/or with autism who is COVID19 positive or suspected.



This document was amended from an original document created by Hampshire Hospitals NHS foundation trust learning disability team