Name/address of GP Practice  


**Date**

Dear [add name of main contact at GP surgery/CCG/Primary care network)

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter, we understand it must be an extremely busy time for you and your staff.

We represent [enter name Network Partner / TMW group] and we are writing to you regarding the recent announcement that people on the GP learning disability register will be invited to have the coronavirus vaccine.

The prioritisation of adults on the GP learning disability register in vaccination group 6 is very much welcomed and has been met with much relief for many. The news has also brought with it a wider awareness of being on the GP learning disability register and, as a result, people may contact you/your staff seeking information about whether or not they are on the register.

We know that during the pandemic, people with a learning disability aged 18-34 have been 30 times more likely to die from COVID 19 than those of the same age in the general population[[1]](#endnote-2): Priority access to the vaccine is essential for this group and we ask you to do everything you can to ensure that your patients with a learning disability are offered the vaccine as soon as possible.

Sadly, we know that many people with a learning disability are missing from the learning disability register, despite potentially having clinical codes which may indicate presence of learning disability. We ask you to please add any patients who you believe should be on the register, so they can access the vaccine, and any other support they may need.

Ensuring people with a learning disability are on the learning disability register is an essential step in tackling the health inequality experienced by people with a learning disability. Pre COVID, data suggested that women with a learning disability died on average 27 years younger than those without a learning disability, and men 22 years youngeri. People with a learning disability are also 4 times more likely to die of a cause that could have been treated with good quality healthcarei.

The learning disability register has many benefits beyond the vaccine, including eligibility for annual health checks which can play a vital role in identifying illness at an early stage and allow for early intervention; and eligibility for flu vaccination.

The register can also act as a useful way of identifying that a patient is likely to need reasonable adjustments such as easy read, a double appointment or a home visit. This can help you make sure that you are meeting your requirements under the Equality Act and the Accessible Information Standard.

To clarify, a learning disability is different from learning difficulties such as dyslexia, dyspraxia and ADHD. A learning disability means people may have difficulty with everyday activities – for example household tasks, socialising or managing money – which affects them for their whole life. People with a learning disability tend to take longer to learn and may need support to develop new skills, understand complicated information and interact with other people.

Please note that some people with a learning disability, will describe themselves as people with learning difficulties. Therefore, it is important that you and your team know how to identify people who should be on the learning disability register. This [guidance from NHS England](https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/improving-identification-of-people-with-a-learning-disability-guidance-for-general-practice.pdf) contains useful information and a helpful tool which can help you to do this.

Thank you very much for your time, and your commitment to help protect your patients with a learning disability from coronavirus.

Yours sincerely,

[Name of Network Partner/TMW group]

1. University of Bristol, *Learning Disability Mortality Review Annual Report 2019/2020*, (2020) <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/sps/leder/LeDeR_2019_annual_report_FINAL2.pdf> [↑](#endnote-ref-2)