



BRIDGING THE RECOGNITION GAP:

*A discussion paper presenting a neurodisability framework
for health, education, and social care.*



THE NEURODISABILITY FRAMEWORK AT A GLANCE:

THREE MAIN STAGES. A GUIDE TO HOW SOMEONE CAN ACCESS SUPPORT.

Step 1:

What diagnoses does the person have?

Examples:

- Learning disability
- Autism
- Brain injury
- Epilepsy

Step 2:

How is everyday life affected?

- Learning
- Communication
- Health
- Independence

Step 3:

What support is needed?

Basic support:

Everyone gets basic support.

Extra support:

Extra support for some people.

Specialist support:

High level support for complex needs.

This document discusses an idea to organise support for people with learning disabilities, neurodevelopmental conditions and other neurological disabilities to improve access to support.



Who this is for:

This document is for:

- People with learning disabilities
- Families and carers
- People who plan or run services



Why this matters:

People with learning disabilities often have worse health.

People may die younger than other people.



Many problems could be prevented.

A big reason is misunderstanding.



What is a learning disability?

A learning disability is lifelong.



It starts in childhood.



It affects learning, understanding, and everyday life.



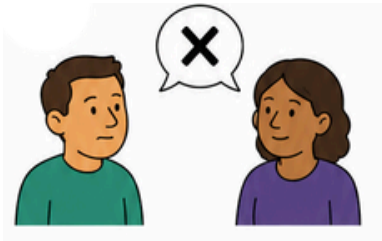
It is not a mental illness.



People can learn and live good lives with the right support.



Learning disability is often misunderstood.



Some people think a learning disability is the same as a learning difficulty.

This is not true.



Some people mix learning disability with autism or ADHD.

This causes confusion.



Because of this, people do not get the right help.

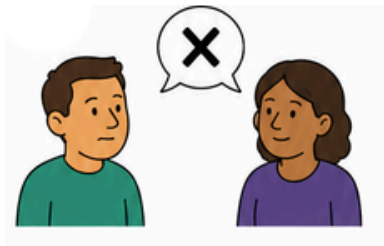


What happens when services misunderstand?

Needs are noticed too late.
People do not get help until there is a crisis.

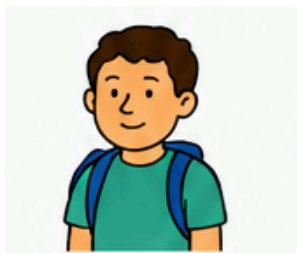


Families must explain things again and again. People and families are left without support.



Same diagnosis but different support:

Two people could have the same diagnosis, but need very different support. For example:



Person A:
Has Autism.



Lives independently and works.



Needs some support to do some things.

Step 3:

What support is needed?

Basic support:

Everyone gets basic support.

Person A therefore needs basic support and reasonable adjustments.



Person B:
Has Autism.



Needs help with communication.

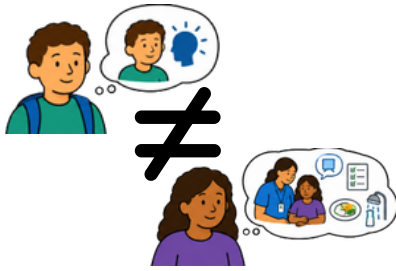


Needs help with daily living.

Specialist support:

High level support for complex needs.

Person B needs specialist support.
More support and coordination.



Same diagnosis does not mean a person needs the same support level as someone else.



**The Neurodisability Framework looks at:
Everyday life**



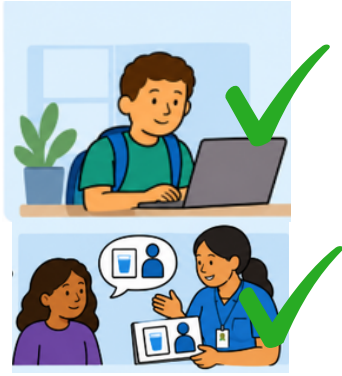
Independence and support needs



Risk



Coordination



This helps people get the right support.



What does neurodisability mean?

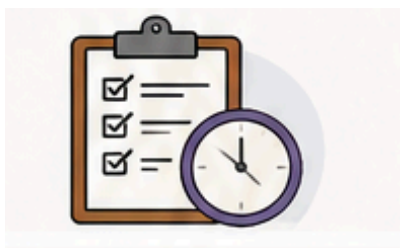
Neurodisability means lifelong conditions that affect the brain. People may need support with health, learning, or daily life.



Some people have more than one health need.



Support should be based on need, not just a label.



The problem today:

Services often wait for a diagnosis.
There are long waiting lists.



Support is not joined up.
People fall through gaps.



A Neurodisability Framework could help fix this.

It does this by focusing on what support a person needs throughout their life.



What is the neurodisability framework?

It is a different way of organising services. It is led by people's needs, not by diagnoses. It helps services understand lifelong needs earlier.

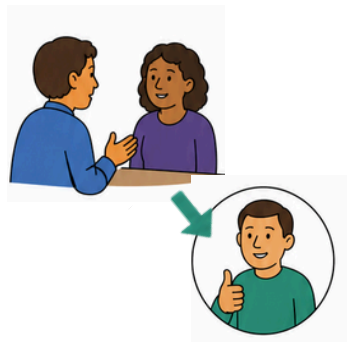


The framework is not a new identity. It keeps learning disability rights safe. People do not have to change how they describe themselves.



How this is different?

Help is based on what a person needs.
Not just on diagnoses or waiting for crisis. Services plan for the future.
Specialist staff are involved earlier.



Why understanding needs is key:

Everyone who has a learning disability is different. Focusing on needs rather than diagnoses means better access to the right support.



Risks are noticed earlier



Deaths may be prevented
Understanding saves lives.



How families benefit:

Families repeat their story less.
Families feel listened to.



There are fewer emergencies.
Life is more stable.



How services benefit:

Services work together better.



Money is spent better by being spent
earlier - not on crisis.



Staff understand their role.
Outcomes improve.



Services must understand learning disability.
Understanding leads to the right support.



Key message:

Misunderstanding learning disability is a major problem.



A neurodisability framework could help fix this by recognising someone's preferred identity, and focusing on independence and support.



Everyone deserves the right support, at the right time, throughout their life.



We want to hear from you:

We want to hear your thoughts on the neurodisability framework. You can say what you like or dislike about it.

Click the link below to tell us what you think.

<https://forms.cloud.microsoft/e/z6JkKJWsAQ>

Bridging the Recognition Gap: Discussion Piece Feedback Form

18 Sept 2026

This form is for the purpose of receiving feedback on the Enablement Hub's recent article proposing a new Neurodisability Framework.

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