

What is a learning disability?

A learning disability is characterised by a reduced intellectual ability and difficulty with everyday activities – for example household tasks, socialising or managing money – which affects someone 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.

The level of support someone needs depends on the individual. For example, someone with a mild learning disability may only need support with things like getting a job. However, someone with a severe or profound learning disability may need full-time care and support with every aspect of their life. They may also have physical disabilities.

People with certain specific conditions can have a learning disability too. For example, people with Down's syndrome and some people with autism have a learning disability.

It's important to remember that with the right support, most people with a learning disability in the UK can lead independent lives. Here are some things to remember;

- There are 1.4 million people with a learning disability living in the UK
- There are approximately 193,707 children of school age in the UK who have a learning disability.
- Friendships and socialising are important to people with a learning disability as they are to everyone. Harrow Mencap run a range of activities and club for both adults and children to give people an opportunity to socialise
- People with a learning disability are far less likely to have a job than the general population. 6% of adults with a learning disability known to their local authority in England are in paid work.

It is important to always keep in mind that people with Learning Disabilities are individuals with their own views and wishes and should have the opportunity to live a full life. At Harrow Mencap, all our activities are developed with this mind; we want to ensure that all we do brings about positive change and equality for people with learning disabilities.