

## Green Light for Norfolk and Suffolk

Service users with learning disabilities and autism are now receiving mental health services which better meet their needs thanks to a national initiative introduced at Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust (NSFT).

The Green Light Toolkit has been rolled out across the Trust over the last 5 years. Changes to trust policies and the production of trust guidance on how to support people with learning disabilities and autistic people were undertaken to ensure equality and inclusivity.

As part of the initiative, NSFT has recruited 300 of its staff to act as 'Green Light Champions', who work across the Trust to promote best practice to colleagues and make sure their services meet the needs of people with a learning disability or autism. Changes they have made so far include:

- Making sure all ward signage at Hellesdon Hospital is easy to understand and accessible to everyone.
- Sending easy read appointment letters which include a photograph of the staff member so that service users can recognize them when they arrive at their home.
- Using blue envelopes when posting appointment letters so that they are easy to identify and therefore more likely to get opened.
- Making reasonable adjustments to improve the care which people with learning disabilities and autism receive, such as providing easy read patient leaflets and care plans.
- Creation of waiting room standards to ensure the environments are conducive in reducing anxiety levels.
- Reviewing care pathways to make them more accessible.
- Co-developed and co-delivered learning disability and autism training are mandatory for all staff.

The Trust is also produced its first ever Learning Disabilities and Autism Strategy, which has been developed in partnership with service users, families, carers and staff. The strategy explains the changes which will be made over the next five years meet the 27 standards set out in the Green Light Toolkit and further improve care, this is currently under review:

<https://www.nsfh.nhs.uk/download.cfm?doc=docm93jijm4n567.pdf&ver=290>

Sue Bridges, Consultant Nurse for Learning Disabilities and Autism, said: "We are really proud of the positive changes our Green Light Champions have made in such a short period of time. They are helping to improve the services we provide not only by raising awareness, but also by ensuring their teams are making reasonable adjustments to meet service users' needs.

"The feedback we've received from service users and their families about this work so far has been overwhelmingly positive, and they really appreciate the extra focus we are placing on making sure our services meet their needs. We've also recruited five service user champions, who are sharing their experiences and ideas to help us improve still further.

"There is still work to be done, but we are delighted with the changes that have been made so far and look forward to continuing this important work over the coming months and years."