

The Purple Folder

What is 'The Purple Folder'?



The purple folder is Hertfordshire's health passport that is available to adults with learning disabilities living in Hertfordshire or registered with a Herts GP surgery. Please click on the link below or visit our website for more detail. Good use of the Purple Folder can reduce the risk of delays in Diagnosis due to communication barriers or reluctance to accept investigations or treatment. It should be used by ALL health services in Herts when a patient attends an appointment. If someone with a learning disability says they do not have one, all health services should encourage them to get one.

How will it help?

The Purple Folder provides health professionals with a holistic overview of the

- Person's health and their baseline abilities
- Recent history of other Health professional's involvement to help build a diagnostic picture
- **The reasonable adjustments** that need to be made by the health service to ensure equitable health outcomes are achieved without delays in diagnosis and treatment
- **The Communication needs** of the person to both ensure they understand and can make informed choices as well as to ensure you, as health professionals, know whether they are communicating pain or ill health (e.g., one lady screams and bites her hand and this indicates she is excited and happy. Another lady screams and bites her hand and this indicates she is in excruciating pain)
- The level of support the person needs to enable them to successfully access healthcare services
- The support level they would need with personal care, eating and drinking should they be admitted to hospital



It is a tool that can support you, as a health professional, to confidently communicate and work with an individual in the most appropriate manner for them. It is a requirement under the **Equality Act** to make reasonable adjustments and a requirement under the **Accessible Information Standard** to use a person's preferred means of communication. The purple folder is deemed to be a health document and therefore, if the information is within the Purple Folder and a health service does not utilise it, they could be questioned over their compliance with these two legislations. The Purple Folder is there to help.

What should you do when someone brings their Purple Folder to your service?

1. If there are any barriers to you being able to give them the same healthcare you would anyone else, check the reasonable adjustments section and communication section to see if there are things you can try that their carer hasn't told you.
2. If you discover something that helps the person e.g., if I talk about dogs he calms and then he trusts me and engages with healthcare, then make sure this is added to the reasonable adjustment's sections so others in the future can use this top tip too.
3. If you are unsure whether they are in pain or of the severity of their illness, read the '**how I behave when I am well / unwell**' pages to see if they are likely to be non-verbally communicating more extreme symptoms than you can establish. Also, check the baseline measurements that are recorded in the folder to see how far off baseline they are
4. If the person has come without support, then complete one of the blank pages called '**The Health Plan after Today's appointment**' and write in clear and simple language.
5. After an Annual Health Check, make sure the Health Check action plan is stored in the annual health check section and you have record on the annual health check record page. If the baseline measurements page hasn't been updated, then add any that have been taken at the annual health check and remind the person the annual update of the purple folder is due at annual health check time
6. Always write a very brief summary in the health appointment record

The Health Appointment Record

This should be written on by **ALL** the health professionals who see the person. It only needs a brief outline of the appointment and actions. This will help gain an overview of all health interventions the person may be currently receiving to aid diagnostic decisions. The records should be kept in chronological order to make this easier for you.

An example of good use of this was a gentleman who started having falls, he became unsteady on his feet, disengaged, slept more, uninterested in the TV and his books. The GP did **NOT** look at the appointment record pages and went down the pathway of neurology and possible dementia. The neurologist **DID** look at the record and identified a sudden onset of these changes in February. It was identified he had seen an optician in February and been given a new prescription for glasses... this prescription was completely wrong. All the symptoms related to not being able to see. This would have been identified and resolved a lot earlier had the GP read records.



Getting a **NEW** 2023 Version of the purple folder

Whether someone has never had a Purple Folder or have an old version [Old versions will say MY purple Folder ... new ones say Purple Folder] They are all entitled to a new Version

All pages are available on the website for the person to complete electronically online and print and add to their folder.

To receive folder and inserts they can contact us on **01438 845372** or email purplefolder@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Here is a link to the information about the Purple Folder www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/purplefolder

If you think the person does not have a support network to help them complete the Purple Folder, then please let us know and we will support them. We will ask you the key Reasonable Adjustments and Communication approaches that you have established with the person to ensure these are in their folder.

Talk About

- What have you learnt about the purple folder?
- Why do you think it is important?
- What actions will you take to support good and wider use of the Purple Folder in your individual role or as a practice?

Our Pledge

record your services pledge for what you will change in your practice to ensure better use of the Purple Folder