

# Coping with Appointments

This guide gives some tips and advice to help you cope taking your young person to appointments and ideas around building their skills.

## Why are appointments tricky?



Appointments can be tricky for lots of reasons;

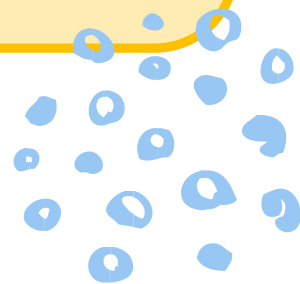
- They are a shift from a young person's routine.
- They often involve unfamiliar requests like having a blood pressure reading or opening your mouth.
- The environments can often be busy, and they may be expected to wait.



Reasonable adjustments are a legal requirement, some common ones include:

- providing easy read appointment letters.
- giving someone a priority appointment if they find it difficult waiting in their GP surgery or hospital.
- longer appointments if someone needs more time with a doctor or nurse to make sure they understand the information they are given.

Every hospital has a Learning Disability Liaison Nurse who you can contact to request support to make sure reasonable adjustment are in place. They will help others to understand your young person's needs.



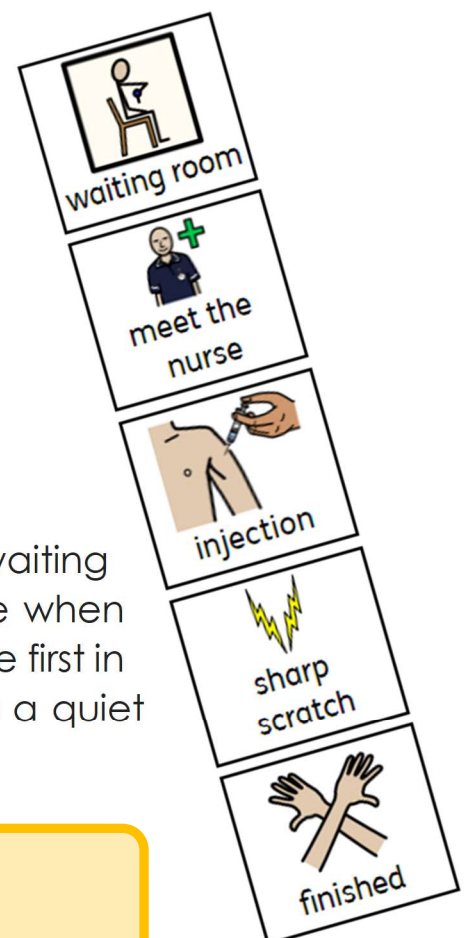
# What can you do to help?

## Plan ahead

Know where you're going and what will happen, this will help you to feel more relaxed which will support your young person also.

Have a few practice visits, even if it is just to the waiting room or to say hello to the reception team. This will reduce anxiety on the day and help them to understand your young persons needs.

Use visuals to prepare them these could be some simple photos of where you are going, or what to expect when they get there.



Speak to the receptionist and find out when the waiting room is busy before you go. Arrange your visit to be when the room will be quieter. For example, could you arrive first in the morning or last thing. Find out if you can access a quiet area if needed or wait in the car to be called in.

Plan something nice afterwards!!

## On the day

Bring anything that helps them feel more comfortable, for example noise-cancelling headphones, favourite sensory objects, or a special toy. Could they have some music they like to listen to? Would an iPad help them to cope?

If you have support from family, friends or paid carers, speak to them about supporting you and your young person. This can help one person to have their focus on what the professionals are saying whilst the other can support your child. Be clear about how you would like them to support you.



Be clear about their needs. Neurodiversity can affect everyone differently. Make sure staff have information about your child's needs and the reasonable adjustments needed to support them. It can be helpful to have a hospital passport that shares this information. There are lots of options out there...

The NHS offers a template that gives space to share information about your child:

- Ways they communicate.
- How to communicate with them
- How independent they are
- Things that are important to them, for example not liking loud noises
- What their like and dislike



You can download a copy and amend it online or print it out and fill it in. You know your young person best; this will help others get to know them.

<https://www.royalfree.nhs.uk/patients-visitors/disabled-facilities/patients-with-a-learning-disability/hospital-passport/>

