



# Screening Tool

This is a checklist for GPs to assist them in identifying a learning disability. This is not intended as a diagnostic tool so always apply sound clinical judgement.

**Definition of a learning disability:** A significantly reduced ability to understand new or complex information, to learn new skills (Significantly impaired intelligence)  
**AND** A reduced ability to cope independently, (Impaired social / adaptive functioning)  
**AND** Which started before adulthood (onset before aged 18) with a lasting effect on development

| Questions to consider   | yes<br>✓ | no<br>✗ |
|---|----------|---------|
| Has anyone ever told the person that they have a learning disability?   |          |         |
| Is there a diagnosis of a learning disability/mental handicap in any notes? IQ under 70   |          |         |
| Did person attend any special schools (SILC) or were they statemented in mainstream school?   |          |         |
| Did the person achieve qualifications at school?(GCSE at low grades could indicate LD but high grade GCSE, A Levels or university education LD is not likely) |          |         |
| Is the person known to the Community Learning Disability Team?  |          |         |
| Does person have a consultant psychiatrist for learning disabilities?   |          |         |
| Does person need assistance with transport? (unable to get around independently?)   |          |         |
| Does person have problems with simple numerical calculations? (i.e. 'If I gave you £5 to buy milk. Milk costs £1.50 – how much is left?)                      |          |         |
| Does person have problems reading? (reading a novel or newspaper usually rules out a learning disability.)  |          |         |
| How does the person function in society? Does the person need support with activities of daily living?  |          |         |

### Does person have difficulty with:

|  |     |    |
|--|-----|----|
| Communicating needs                      | Yes | No |
| Writing                                  | Yes | No |
| Self-Care                                | Yes | No |
| Living independently                     | Yes | No |
| Interpreting social cues                 | Yes | No |
| Controlling behaviour                    | Yes | No |
| Co-ordinating movement                   | Yes | No |
| Learning new skills                      | Yes | No |
| Understanding new or complex information | Yes | No |

Several 'YES' answers will often indicate the presence of a Learning Disability

### Factors which MAY NOT indicate a learning disability

- Normal development until other factors impact (before 18).
- Diagnosis of ADHD, dyslexia, dyspraxia or Asperger's
- Successfully attend mainstream education without support.
- Gained qualifications (GCSE and/or A 'Levels)
- Able to function socially without support
- Able to complete complex purchases e. g. buying a house.
- Able to drive a car.
- Contact with mental health services
- Recorded IQ above 70.

### Factors which MAY indicate a learning disability

- Record of delayed development/ difficulties with social functioning & daily living before 18.
- Requires significant assistance to provide for own survival (eating & drinking, keeping self clean, warm and clothed) and/or with social/ community adaptation (e.g. Social problem solving/reasoning).

NB need for assistance may be subtle.

- Presence of all three criteria for LD i.e. Impairment of intellectual functioning/social adaptive functioning and age of onset.
- Range of information presenting a picture of difficulties in a number of areas of function, not explainable by another 'label'.
- Contact with specialist Learning Disability consultant.