

# Specialised intellectual disability health services

People with intellectual disability should be involved in all decisions about their health and wellbeing.

Some people can make decisions alone and some people will need support. It is critical that supporters know the person's will and preferences to make sure the right support is provided and the right decision is made.

When you have a health problem you usually go to a GP first. Sometimes, the GP refers you on to a specialist doctor or an allied health professional like a physiotherapist. Children with intellectual disability and complex health conditions will often have a paediatrician to help with their health care.

But sometimes, GPs and other mainstream health professionals struggle to diagnose and treat people with intellectual disability. A health service that specialises in working with people with intellectual disability may need to be approached as suggested in this health factsheet.

Following increased funding in the 2018 NSW budget, there will be more services in NSW that specialise in people with intellectual disability.

At the time of updating this fact sheet, contact details for the new services were not available and the impact of those services on some existing services was not clear. We will update this fact sheet with a full list of services and contact details as soon as possible.

## Services existing prior to 2019

These included:

- Disability Assessment and Rehabilitation Team for Young People (DARTYP) at Concord Hospital.
- Disability Health Team – Fairfield.
- Kogarah Developmental Assessment Services and Metro-Regional Intellectual Disability Network.
- NSW Developmental Disability Health Unit – Ryde.
- Northern Sydney Intellectual Disability Health Team.
- Westmead Hospital specialised services.
- 3DN Clinic, Prince of Wales Hospital (complex psychiatry second opinions).
- Psychiatric Clinic, Concord Hospital.
- A small number of private psychiatrists who specialise in working with people with intellectual disability.

These services usually require a referral from a GP or another specialist doctor.

## For children

Diagnosis and Assessment Services can help with complex health conditions of children with intellectual disability.

Diagnosis and Assessment Services often have a developmental paediatrician. This is a paediatrician who specialises in working with children with intellectual and other developmental disabilities. A general paediatrician can refer a patient to a developmental paediatrician.

See the **Diagnosis and assessment of a disability** fact sheet.

## New statewide network of intellectual disability health services

From mid 2019 there will be a specialised intellectual disability health team in six Local Health Districts (LHDs) and a specialist health worker in the other Districts.

The LHDs with teams will be:

- Sydney
- Northern Sydney
- South Eastern Sydney
- South Western Sydney
- Hunter New England
- Western NSW

Each of the teams will provide outreach services to one or two of the other LHDs.

The teams are focussed on people of all ages and will include a physician, a psychiatrist, a nurse, a social worker and other health professionals.

The new services' roles are to provide:

- Comprehensive health assessments and health care plans for people with complex health needs.
- Advice and skill development for GPs, hospitals and other health services.

The services will provide advice and support to a person's usual doctor rather than taking over from the usual doctor.

## **New mental health centres**

There are two new statewide tertiary mental health services being set up at:

- The Children's Hospital at Westmead for children and young people.
- Concord Hospital for adults.

These services will provide short term assessment and advice for people with intellectual disability and complex mental health needs including advice to the person's usual doctor.

## **For more information**

See **Going to the dentist** for information about specialised dental services.

See **More information** for specialised centres in Victoria, Queensland and South Australia.

Maps of the NSW Local Health Districts [www.health.nsw.gov.au/lhd](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/lhd)

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