



**Herts Care Providers Association
Perimenopause and Menopause, Learning
Disability Support**

Welcome

Perimenopause and Menopause, LD Support

Date: 6th May 2026

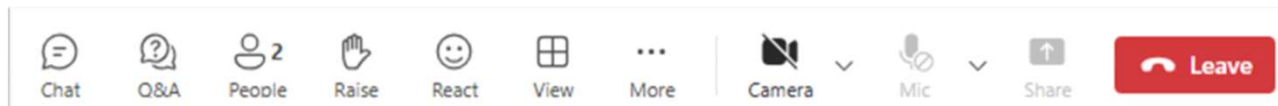
This Session will begin shortly





Webinar Housekeeping

- This webinar is being recorded and may be used to create a video resource for our website.
- We have switched off your microphones. Please use the Q&A box to ask a question and we will switch your microphones on at appropriate times if we need you to elaborate. You will also need to unmute yourself once enabled.
- We have enabled your cameras. If you do not wish to feature in the recording, please leave your camera off.
- If you are in the wrong breakout room, please click Leave and select Leave Breakout room and you will be taken back to the main event to be reassigned.
- You will be issued a CPD Certificate for attendance at this event. Certificates will be uploaded to your Care Professional Academy.





Perimenopause & Menopause

Support for people with a learning disability

The Community Learning Disability Nursing Service, ADS, HCC

Louise Jenkins

Karlene Green




Aims of the Session

To provide a brief overview of Menopause & Perimenopause

To support recognition of common signs and symptoms

To introduce the new tools developed to support structured symptom recognition

To enable confidence in supporting individuals through their menopause journey

- 
- When a person has not had a period for 12 consecutive months, and no other biological or physiological cause can be identified.
 - It typically occurs between ages 45 and 55 but can happen earlier due to medical conditions or treatments.
 - After this point, the person is considered postmenopausal.

(British Menopause Society, *What is the Menopause?*, August 2023)



What Is Menopause?



What Is Perimenopause?

- The transitional phase leading up to menopause, during which hormonal fluctuations begin and symptoms may appear.
- It can start several years before menopause, often in the mid-to-late 40s, but sometimes earlier.
- Symptoms may include:
 - Irregular periods
 - Hot flushes
 - Mood changes
 - Sleep disturbances
 - Vaginal dryness
 - Cognitive changes (e.g. brain fog)

(NHS, *Menopause – Symptoms*, August 2023)

Hormones and Their Role

Hormones influence:

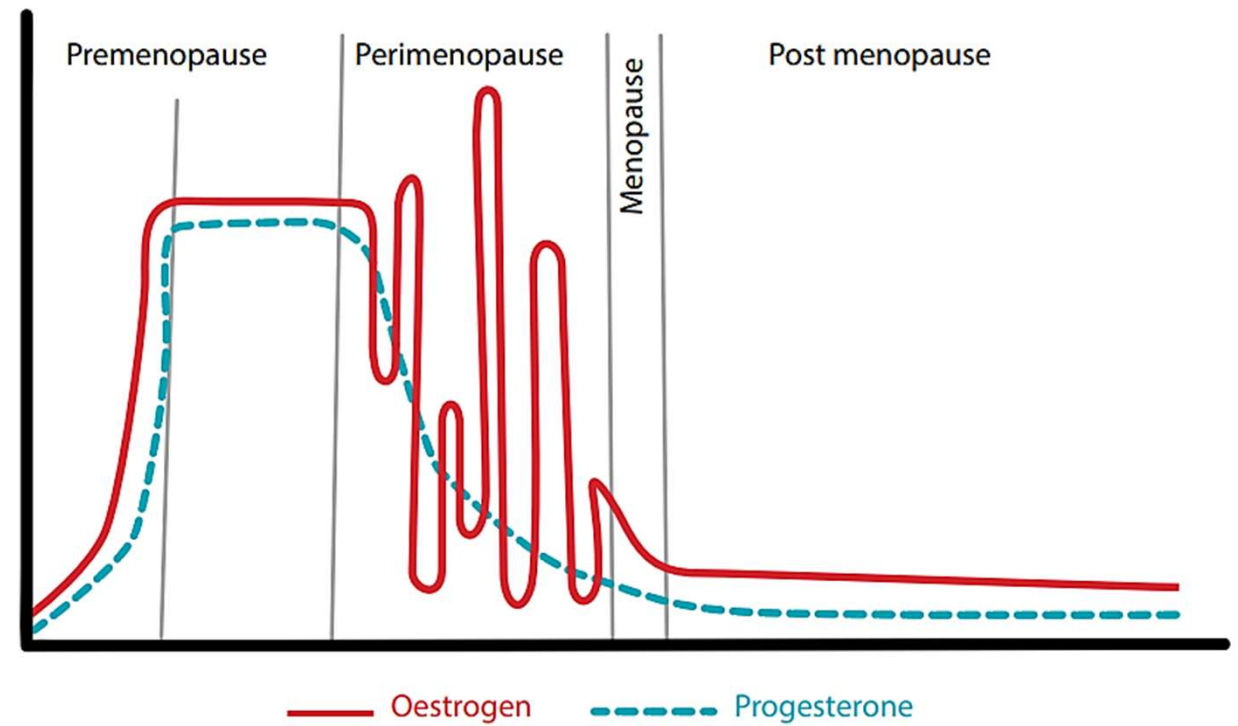
- Mood, sleep, cognition
- Bone and heart health

Hormonal decline affects:

- Emotional stability
- Memory and concentration
- Physical wellbeing

Hormones and Their Role

Hormonal Fluctuations Throughout Menopause



Why This Project Matters



Earlier Menopause in People with learning Disability

Symptom Awareness Tools Are Essential

Diagnostic Overshadowing

Unmet Needs in Menopause Care

Physiological, Chemical & Mental Health Impacts

Earlier Menopause Experience

People with learning disabilities often experience earlier menopause:

- Down's Syndrome, Williams Syndrome: ~44 years
- Turner & Fragile X: Primary Ovarian Insufficiency (~40 years)

(NICE, *Menopause: Identification and Management – Equity of Services*, November 2024)

Symptoms may be missed or misattributed due to:

- Diagnostic overshadowing
- Communication barriers
- Lack of tailored resources



A large green shape on the left side of the slide, consisting of a solid green rectangle on the left and a semi-circle on the right.

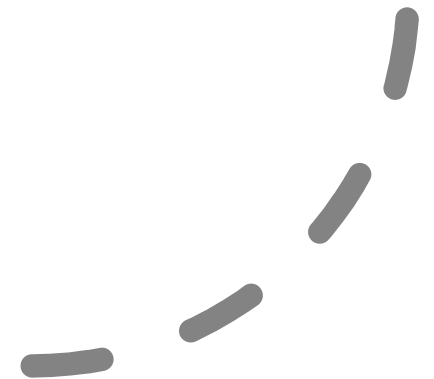
Symptom Awareness Tools Are Essential

Menopause = Significant Life Change

People with learning disabilities

- Health disparities
- Life expectancy gap (27 years shorter for women with LD)
(LeDeR 2024–2025)
- Higher rates of avoidable deaths

Tools help bridge these gaps



Diagnostic Overshadowing

Attributing symptoms to learning disability instead of menopause

(Royal College of Nursing, All You See Isn't All There Is, May 2018)

Examples:

- Mood swings → 'behavioural issues'
- Brain fog → 'early dementia'
- Sleep issues → 'routine distress'



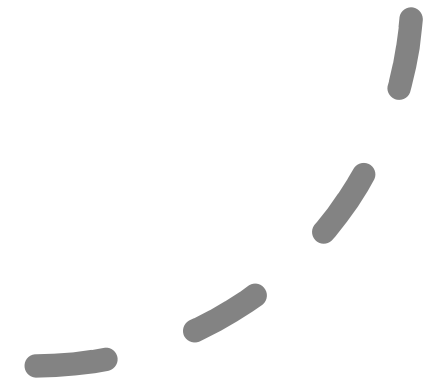
Unmet Needs in Menopause Care


(NICE, 2024)

- Less access to HRT and menopause support
- Communication barriers
- Lack of tailored healthcare services

Leads to:

- Delayed diagnosis
- Poor health outcomes





Physiological, Chemical & Mental Health Impacts

Physiological Impact (*McCarthy, M., & Millard, L., 2017*)

Bone Health

Cardiovascular Health (LeDeR, 2025)

Chemical Impact (*Smith, R., & Studd, J., 1993*)

Hormonal Changes

Medication Interactions

Mental Health Impact (*Hunter, M. S., & Rendall, M., 2007*)

Mood Changes

Behavioural Changes



Menopause Research for Women with Learning Disabilities

McCarthy, M., & Millard, L. (2003). *The Menopause and Women with Learning Disabilities*. Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities, GOLD Programme

- Limited Understanding of Menopause
- Strong Preference for Female Support
- Need for Education and Resources

Menopause Survey Insights for Women with Learning Disabilities (Nov-Dec 2024)

Methodology Summary

Purpose: Explore menopause awareness, symptoms, and support needs

Participants: 13 women with learning disabilities

Recruitment: Through Camphill Village Trust & Mencap, Borehamwood

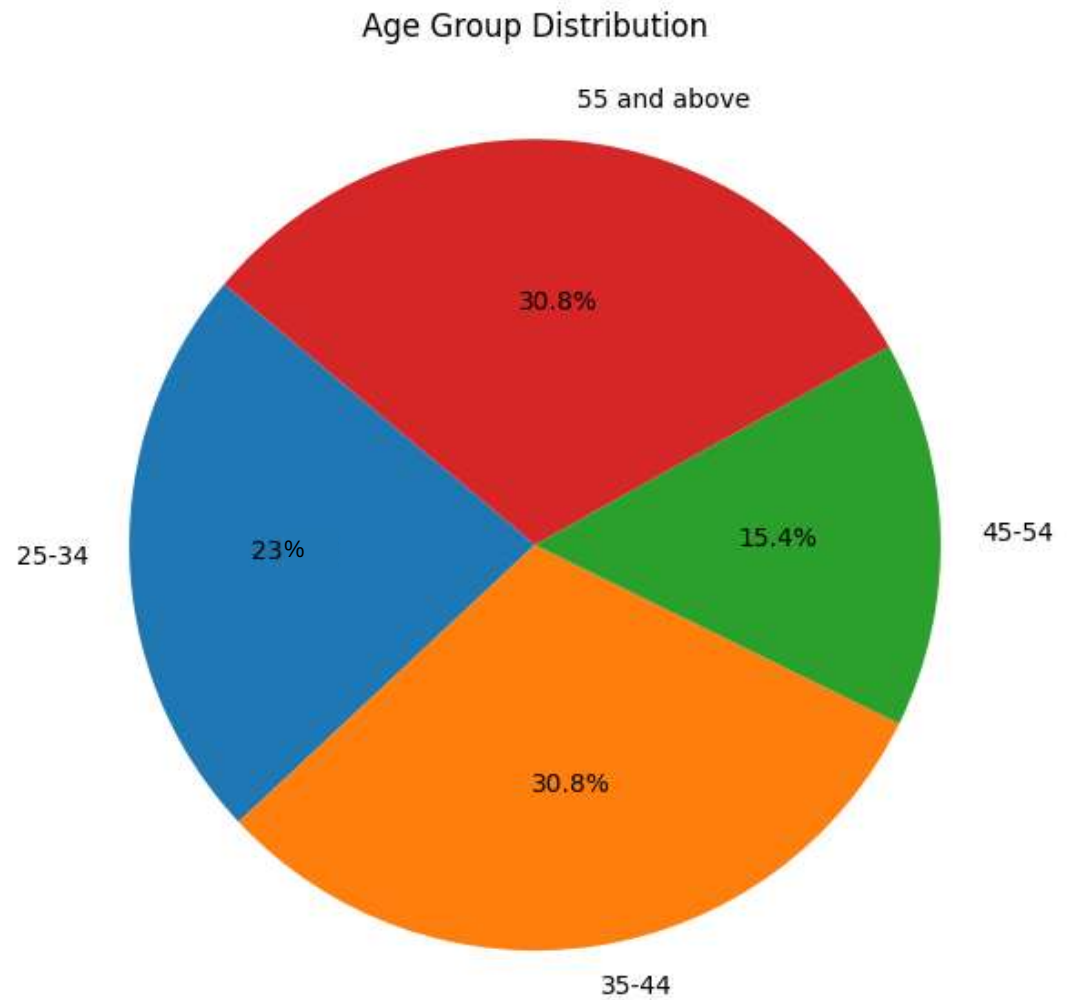
Sampling: Purposive sampling based on relevance to menopause experience

Camphill Approach: In person menopause survey

Mencap Approach: Printed surveys sent online, completed with carer support

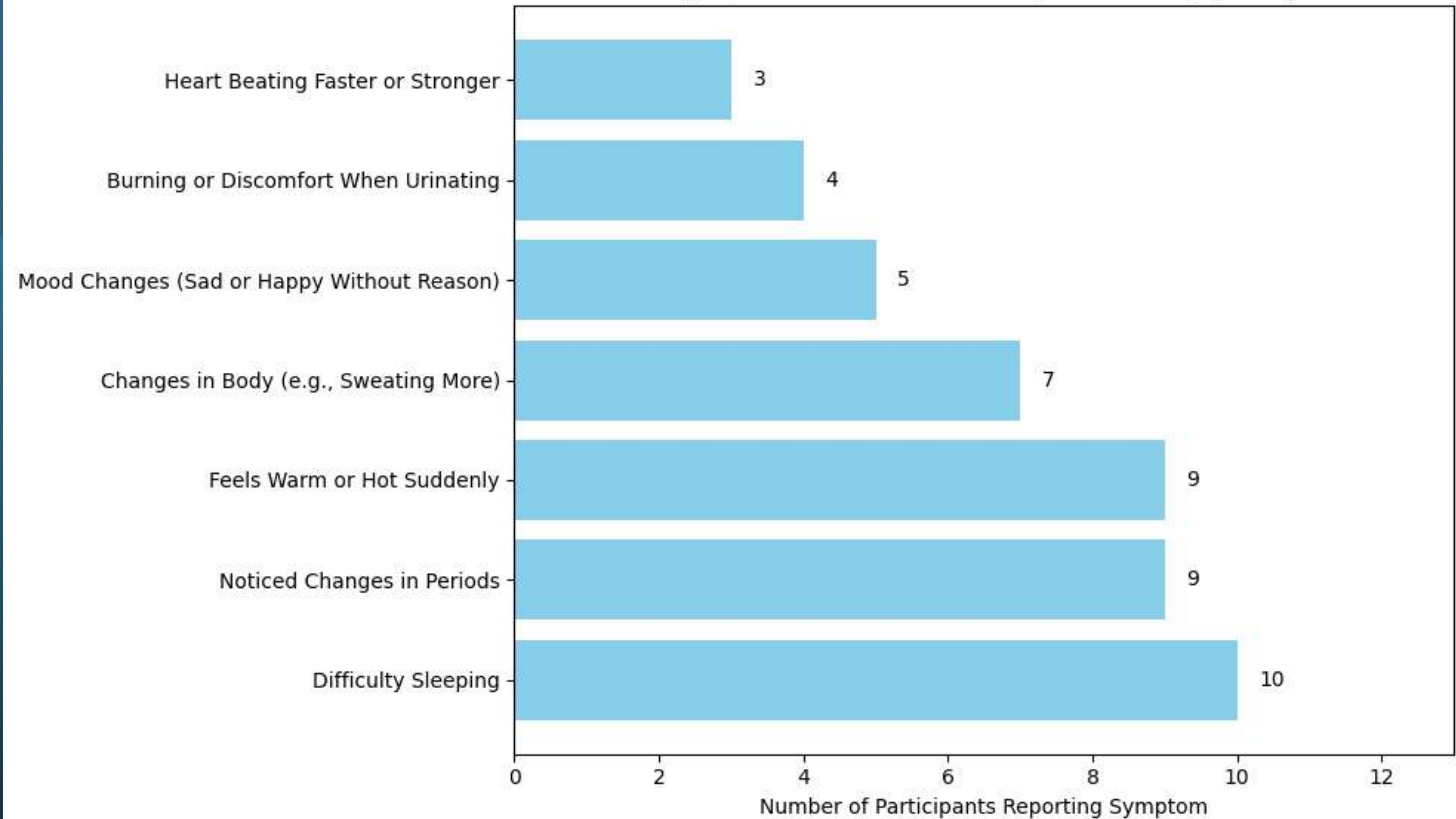
Consent: Verbal consent with carer/staff support; ethical principles upheld

Age Group Distribution

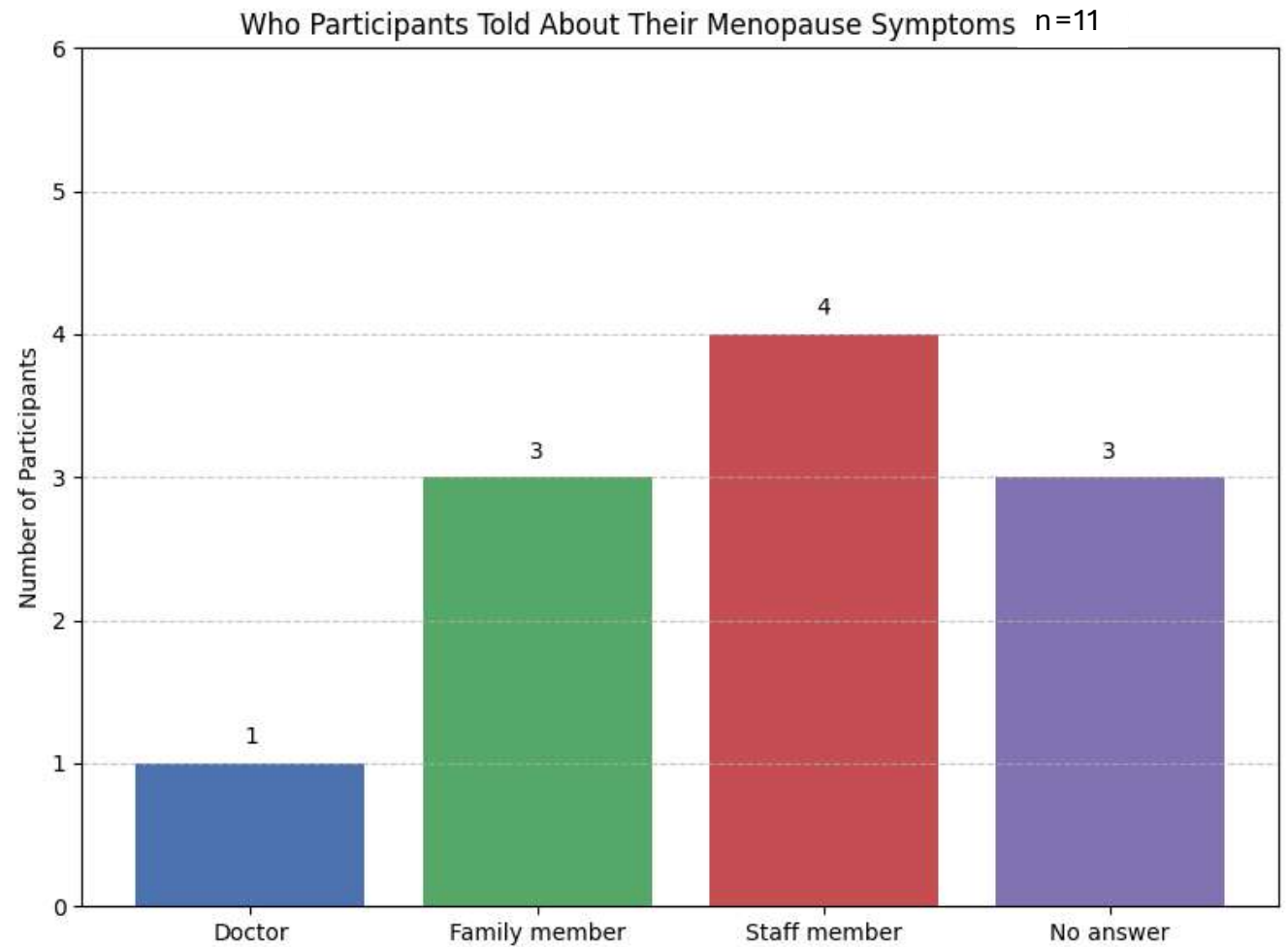


Symptom Awareness

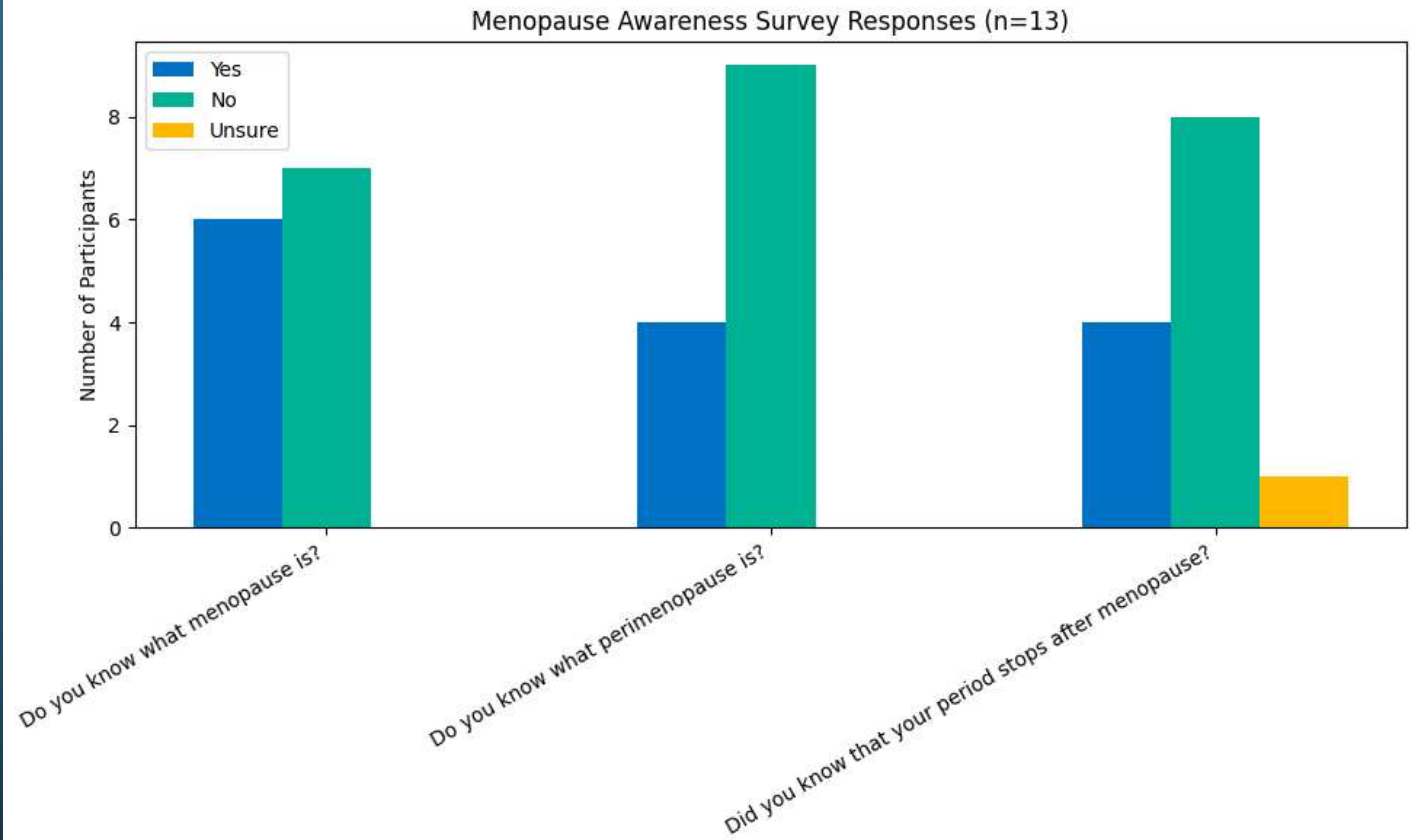
Symptom Prevalence in Menopause Survey (n=13)



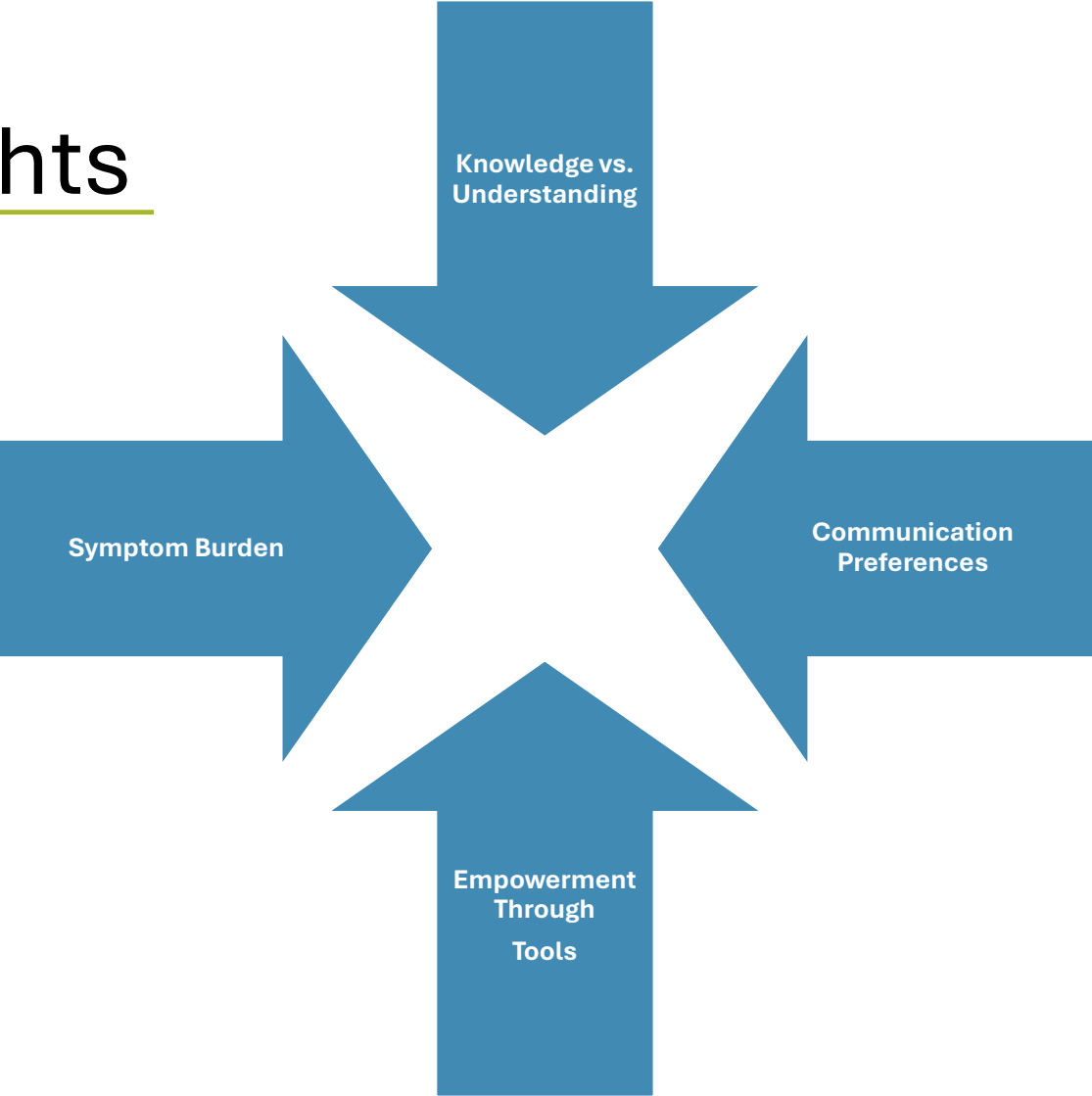
Who Did They Talk To?



Menopause Awareness



Further Insights



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○

Activity

+
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+ . “Could this be o . menopause?”

Discuss how these symptoms might present in a person with a learning disability, for example through changes in behaviour, communication, or daily functioning

Symptoms to consider:

Mood changes

Anxiety

Irritability

Night sweats and hot flushes

Brain fog or poor concentration

Aches and joint pain

Recurrent UTIs

Feedback:

Each group should choose one person to feed back key discussion points to the wider group at the end of the activity.

+

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o

Could this be menopause?

Common Menopause Symptoms

Mood changes

Anxiety

Irritability

Night sweats & Hot flushes

Brain fog / poor concentration

Aches and joint pain

UTIs

**How might these
changes be
manifested?**

Project Tools



SYMPTOM TRACKER: SUPPORTS
COMMUNICATION AND CARE
PLANNING

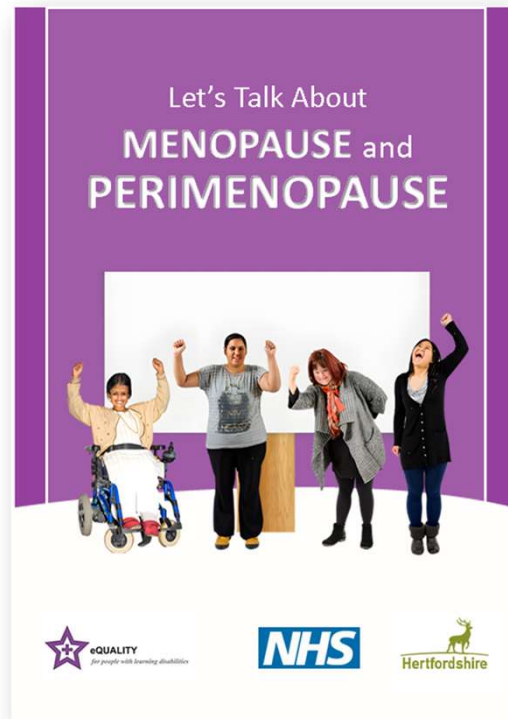


EASY READ GUIDE: ACCESSIBLE
EDUCATION FOR PATIENTS



**MEDICATION
PATHWAY:** STRUCTURED
GUIDANCE FOR PRESCRIBING

Easy Read Guide



Symptom Checker

MPATH

Menopause and Perimenopause Assessment Tool for Health Support

Complete this tool if you or the person you support may be showing signs of menopause or perimenopause. This symptom checker is designed for people with learning disabilities and those who support them, to record symptoms over time. It helps build a clear picture of what's happening and supports conversations with GPs and other health professionals, so the right care and treatment can be offered.

SECTION 1: Personal Details

Name _____ NHS no _____
Date of Birth _____ Assessor _____

How to Rate Symptoms

Intensity Scale (0-3)
0 - Not at all (no symptoms noticed)
1 - A little (mild symptoms, not affecting daily life)
2 - Quite a bit (noticeable symptoms, affecting some daily activities)
3 - Extremely (strong symptoms, clearly affecting daily life)

First check - End of first month Menopause or peri menopause are being considered
Second check - End of the following month
Third check - End of the following month [if periods provide 3 cycles information]

SECTION 2: Menstrual Cycle Changes

(If the person does not have periods, they may still go through menopause. Go to Section 3)

	(3-month period of observation) State months observed			Notes - e.g. frequency, what the changes are, were they reported or observed and any other info relating to impact
	0-3	0-3	0-3	
Menstrual periods less or more frequent	less more no change	less more no change	less more no change	
Menstrual flow heavier or lighter	heavier lighter no change	heavier lighter no change	heavier lighter no change	
Period duration lasting longer or shorter	longer shorter no change	longer shorter no change	longer shorter no change	
Spotting or bleeding between periods	yes no	yes no	yes no	



The MPATH was created by the Hertfordshire Community Learning Disability Nursing Service, Version 1, October 2025.

MPATH

Menopause and Perimenopause Assessment Tool for Health Support

SECTION 3: Physical Symptoms

	Month Intensity scale			Notes - e.g. frequency, what the changes are, were they reported or observed and any other info relating to impact
	0-3	0-3	0-3	
Hot Flashes: Appearing flushed or complaining of feeling hot suddenly				
Night sweats: Excess sweating at nights				
Sleep Disturbances: A change in sleep patterns (trouble falling asleep, staying asleep, or waking up too early)				
Fatigue: Appearing more tired than usual				
Joint and Muscle pain: Complaints of aches and pains in joints or muscles				
Increased heart rate: experience of heart beating quickly or strongly				
Headaches: Complaints of more frequent headaches in general, but especially around the time of a period				

Section 4: Emotional, Behavioural and Cognitive Symptoms

	Month Intensity scale			Notes - e.g. frequency, what the changes are, were they reported or observed and any other info relating to impact
	0-3	0-3	0-3	
Mood Changes: Increased irritability, sadness, excitability, or mood swings				(Explain what this looks like e.g. increased tearfulness.)
Memory Issues: More frequent instances of forgetfulness or difficulty concentrating				
Behavioural Change: An increase in behaviours that challenge. E.g. lashing out, self-harm, problems interacting with other				
Loss of interest in activities				



The MPATH was created by the Hertfordshire Community Learning Disability Nursing Service, Version 1, October 2025.

MPATH

Menopause and Perimenopause Assessment Tool for Health Support

Section 5: Urogenital Symptoms

	Months Intensity scale			Notes - e.g. frequency, what the changes are, were they reported or observed and any other info relating to impact
	0-3	0-3	0-3	
Vaginal Dryness or Discomfort: Indication of discomfort or dryness in the vaginal area (e.g., discomfort when sitting, itching)				
Urinary Issues: New or increased issues with urinary incontinence or frequency				

Section 6: Other Observations

	Months observed			Notes - e.g. what the changes are, were they reported or observed and any other info relating to impact
	0-3	0-3	0-3	
Changes in Weight: Significant weight gain or loss	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No	
Changes in Skin or Hair: Changes in skin texture, hair thinning, or hair loss	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No	
Sexual Interest: Noticeable change in interest in sexual activities (including masturbation)	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No	

Section 7: RECOMMENDATIONS

Section 8: Summary and Next Steps

Summary of Observations:
Based on the above observations, does it appear that the individual might be experiencing symptoms of menopause or perimenopause?
 Yes No
Next Steps: if you answered "yes" Book an appointment with the GP




Share this completed assessment with the GP to help them understand the level of impact the observed symptoms are having on the persons wellbeing and consider the risks and benefits of available treatment options
The GP can then Complete the Menopause Treatment Decision Tool. This is available here <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/LDHEALTHPROFmenopause>

References:
1. NICE Guidelines: "Menopause: diagnosis and management. NICE guideline [NG218]. National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). Last updated: 07 November 2024."
2. Primary Care Guidance: "Guidance on the management of menopause in primary care. [NHS.uk](https://www.nhs.uk) London: Integrated Care Board, 2018."
3. British Menopause Society: "NICE: Menopause, Diagnosis and Management - from Guidance to Practice. British Menopause Society."



The MPATH was created by the Hertfordshire Community Learning Disability Nursing Service, Version 1, October 2025.

Medication Pathway

Menopause Medication Management Decision Tool

Patient Name: _____
NHS Number: _____
Date of Birth: _____
Who was involved in the assessment: _____

This tool is designed to support carers, clinicians, and supporters of people with learning disabilities in making informed decisions about menopause medication. It follows a structured, step-based approach to ensure understanding, assess capacity, and guide shared or best interest decision-making.

Step 1: Initial Identification and Support

- Use the MPAT-LD symptom checker to identify menopause-related symptoms.
- Use Easy Read materials or visual aids to explain what menopause is and why treatment may help.
- Record the person's understanding

Step 2: Assessing Capacity

The health professional or supporter can use Easy Read materials, pictures, or symbols to help the person understand what menopause is, why treatment might help, and what the risks and benefits are.
Tick all that they could understand and retain:

- Menopause is when your body changes and periods stop. It can cause symptoms like hot flushes, mood changes, and trouble sleeping.
- There are medicines that can help with these symptoms, like HRT or other tablets.
- Medicines can help you feel better, but they can also have side effects.
- You can talk to your GP about what might help you and decide together.
- You can stop the medicine if it doesn't help or causes problems.

Please tick:

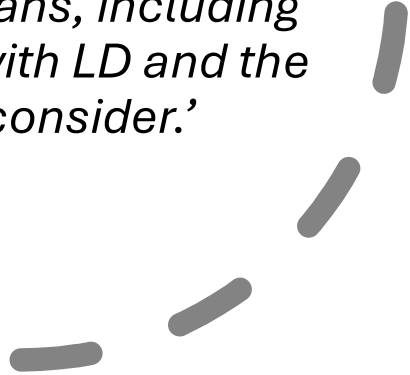
Understood what menopause is	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Understood what the medicines are for	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Understood the benefits of treatment	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Understood the possible side effects	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Understood they can say yes or no to treatment	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>


Feedback from Focus Groups & GP's

'MPATH covers all major domains of the Greene Climacteric Scale AND adds the appropriate clinical nuances for learning disability'


*'...it looks really useful. I can particularly see the **easyread** resource being very helpful to give to patients to read through between consultations or consider providing to women of an appropriate age at learning disability reviews.'*

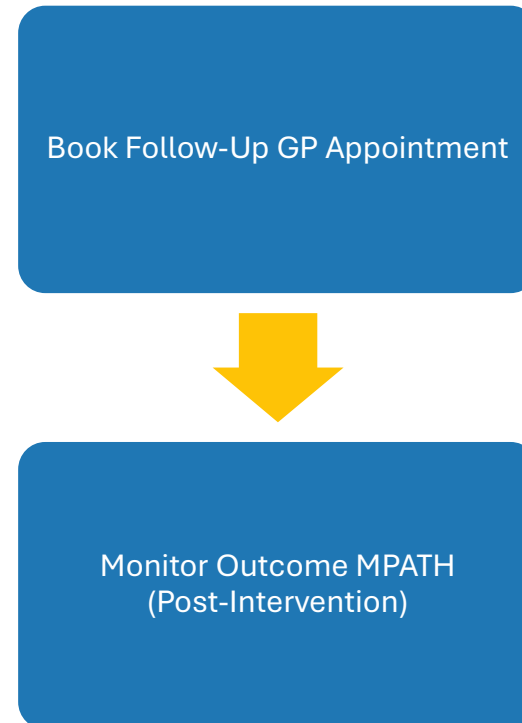
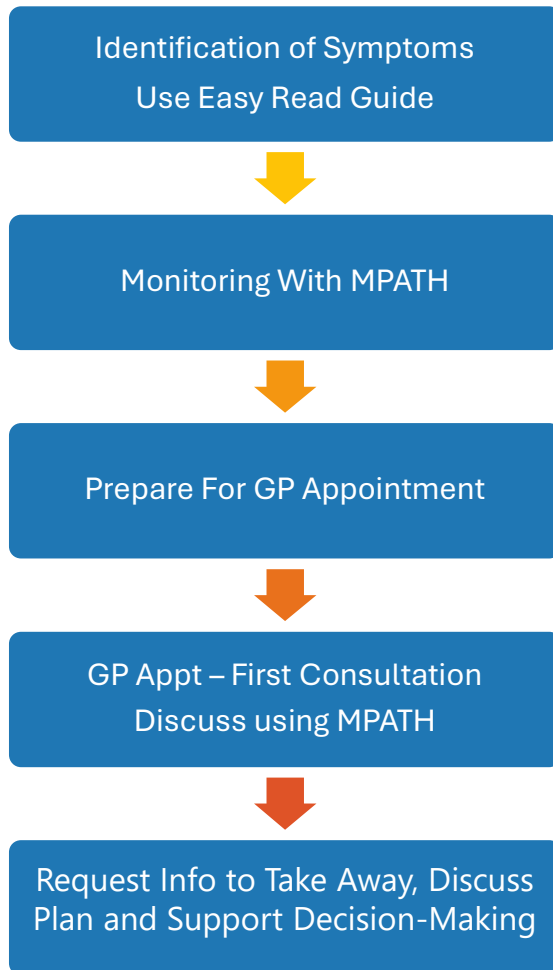
*'A generally good reminder ... to all clinicians, including GPs to think about menopause in those with LD and the **MPATH** is a helpful reminder of things to consider.'*





Case Example 'Sarah'

- Sarah, Age 46,
 - Lives in supported living
 - Moderate learning disability, no previous significant behavioural concerns.
 - Behaviour changes noticed:
 - Irritability and outbursts, difficulty sleeping, withdrawal from activities, tearfulness, unable to explain how she feels.
- 



What We Ask From Care Providers

Consider	Consider menopause early
Record	Record symptoms and changes using MPATH
Support	Support understanding using Easy Read
Prepare	Prepare for appointments with clear information
Request	Request information from the GP to discuss with the person later
Book	Book a follow-up appointment to discuss decision
Consult	Consult LD nurses when needed

Contacts and Links

Menopause Resources

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/LDHEALTHPROFmenopause>

Contact Person/s

Louise Jenkins Louise.Jenkins@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Karlene Green Karlene.Green@hertfordshire.gov.uk

General info

Health Professionals can find information on our service and tools available at: www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/ldprofessionals

Find out about learning disability nurses and how we can help with your health at: www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/LDmyhealth

References

British Menopause Society, *What is the Menopause?*, August 2023

[British Menopause Society PDF](#)

NHS, *Menopause – Symptoms*, August 2023

[NHS – Menopause Symptoms](#)

NICE, *Menopause: Identification and Management – Equity of Services*, November 2024

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng23/resources/equity-of-services-13553198605>

LeDeR 2024-2025

<https://humberandnorthyorkshire.icb.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/LeDeR-annual-report-2024-2025-Final.docx>

Royal College of Nursing, *All You See Isn't All There Is*, May 2018

[All you see isn't all there is | Congress Daily Bulletin | Royal College of Nursing](#)

British Menopause Society, *Understanding Menopause Your essential guide to navigating menopause successfully*, August 2023

[MEN0921351544-005_Menopause-Support-Booklet-5-3.pdf](#)

-
- Thank You
 - Any Questions?



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Training Zone
Taking Positive Risks

Taking risks can always be scary, especially when the person at risk of harm is a vulnerable individual you care for. However, taking no risks, and allowing someone to become sedentary to keep them safe, can be a riskier endeavour with severe consequences. We've put together some of the most important things to consider when it comes to taking positive risks to improve people's quality of life.

Understand the Risk Factors

To safely take risks you need to ensure you fully understand the likelihood and impact this risk could have on the individual.

Consider Mental Capacity

Now that you understand the risk, determine if the individual has the mental capacity to understand the risks and to weigh up the pros and cons of the risk.

COLD WEATHER ALERTS!
KEEPING EVERYONE SAFE IN COLD WEATHER



In light of the cold weather warning, HCPA would like to share some key messages and advice...

There is a 70% probability of severe cold weather/icy conditions/heavy snow between 6pm on Sunday the 15th January and 9am on Thursday the 19th of January in parts of England. This weather could increase the health risks to vulnerable people and disrupt the delivery of services.

Please refer to the national [Cold Weather Plan](#) and your emergency plan for appropriate preventative action.

This is a **Yellow level warning (level 2)** for East of England: "Becoming colder through Monday the 16th of January, with daytime temperatures falling and widespread overnight frosts. Any isolated showers becoming increasingly wintry through Monday."

If you have any questions about managing risks from cold weather, or need urgent support for your service, please do not hesitate to contact the HCPA Care Provider Hub: 01707 708 109 or assurances@hcpa.co.uk (Mon to Fri, 9am to 5pm).

Click here to visit...



Moving & Assisting:
Train the Trainer
STARTING
13TH JANUARY

Moving & Assisting: Train the Trainer
Starting 13th January - Book Now!

Moving and assisting people is a key part of the working day for most frontline workers, from moving equipment, laundry, catering, supplies or waste to assisting people to move.

If you know, poor moving, and handling/assistance practice can lead to:

- Back pain and musculoskeletal disorders, which can lead to inability to work, being moved and the employee.
- Discomfort and a lack of dignity for the person being moved.
- Whether you're an employer or employee, it's important to ensure you have the right training and equipment to do the job safely.

...and you're an employer, it's important to ensure you have the right training and equipment to do the job safely.

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IMPORTANT UPDATES!

Please take time to read below the following important updates...

Important information from the Department of Health and Social Care for CQC Regulated providers - The enforcement process for completion of the capacity tracker is about to start ACT NOW otherwise you may get fined.

Please read the message below from the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC). HCPA have been asked to circulate. If you are not updating the Capacity Tracker, then you will need to start to avoid fines.

Read more

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International Infection Prevention Week!

Jointly produced by HCC PH & HCPA

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DSPT BETTER SECURITY. BETTER CARE. LEGALLY REQUIRED.

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BE DATA WISE

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Data Processing workshop - FREE

Data Processing workshop - FREE

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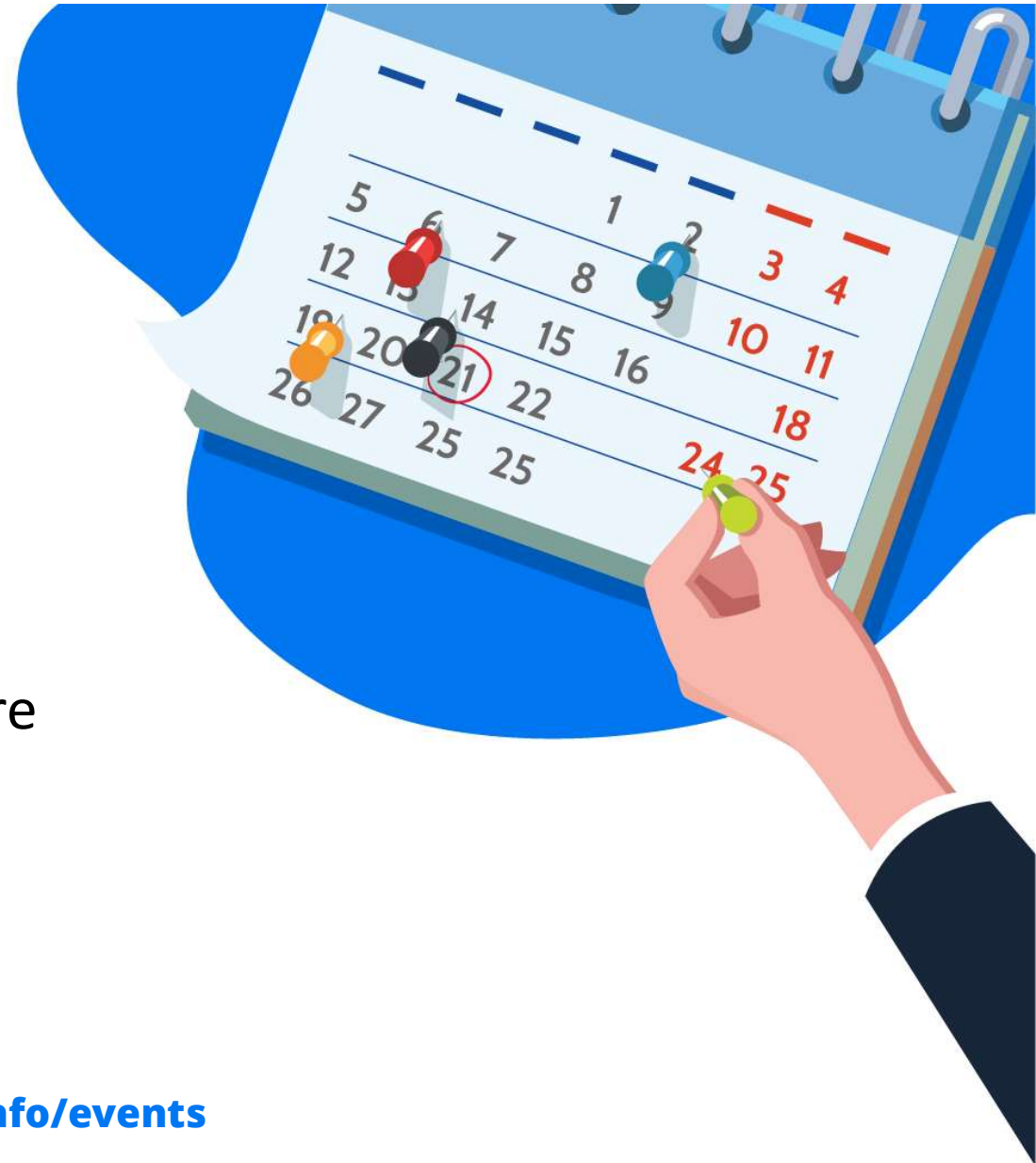
Data Processing workshop - FREE

Data Processing workshop - FREE

Data Processing workshop - FREE

Events

- HCPA Network Events
- HCPA Service Specific Manager Forums (Online)
- Topic Specific Webinars
- HCPA Topic Specific Study Days
- Partner Study Sessions including, Fire Safety, Tender Bid sessions, HR
- The Hertfordshire Care Awards



THE HCPA CARE PROVIDER HUB PROVIDING PEACE OF MIND.....



ASK us anything! We are your support service, here to answer your questions on all topics Adult Social Care related.

- Govt guidance, laws, standards and expectation
- Covid: PPE, vaccinations and infection control
- Liaison with Hertfordshire County Council
- Funding, contracting and commissioning
- Staff wellbeing and recognition
- HR, Staffing and recruitment
- Training and education
- Business continuity
- Data protection
- Monitoring
- Equipment
- Insurance

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Comfort break



We'll be back soon...



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Thanks for joining us



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