

Human factors : Co-producing design personas to support education and pathway improvement for people with learning disability

Overview of work

Four personas were co-produced with lived experience and specialist clinicians to reflect people with learning disability. The personas were developed to support a national medicines safety programme to enhance understanding of the users of services and pathways, support pathway improvement work, and educate clinicians on core user needs. The personas describe common scenarios where psychotropics could be considered/or were being used for behaviour that challenges.

Aim

To use a human factors approach, focusing on user centred design to co-produce a range of realistic personas for people with learning disability with experts by experience. The personas reflect common care needs and support the National Medicines Safety Improvement Programme .

What was the problem?

When reviewing and improving pathways of care for people with learning disability it is essential to understand the user needs and the variation in capability. It is also important to have a shared mental model of the user that the improvement is aiming to support.

It is unrealistic to have lived experience at every meeting, and it is important to represent the needs of a broad group of people.

Using personas as a design tool is an ideal way to support pathway improvement and clinician understanding.

Human Factors approach

- **User centred design** of personas
- **Literature review**
- **Co-production**

Main findings or outcomes

Four personas were created representing the categories of learning disability (mild, moderate, severe, and profound). The personas were co-produced and validated by a large group of stakeholders. These will be used in the national programme to both challenge the current pathways of care and improve them, but also to help clinicians better understand care needs.

The personas can be found [here](#)

A toolkit to support the use of the personas can be found [here](#).

The personas have been well-received and are supporting quality conversations about improvements that will improve care pathways and meet user needs.

What were the benefits of taking a human factors approach?

- **Authentic, user-centred pathways:** Co-produced personas reflect real experiences, ensuring pathways are grounded in genuine user needs and contexts.
- **Cognitive and emotional alignment:** They capture how people think and feel.
- **Inclusive, safe, and accessible design:** Lived experience ensures diverse needs are represented, supporting equity, safety, and usability across the pathway that the personas will support the design of.
- **Stronger team alignment and empathy:** They foster shared understanding and empathy across teams, improving collaboration and service quality.

*Human factors
delivered
user-centred
design.*

