Enhancing healthcare access and support for people with a disability and their carers: Working together to improve hospital experiences

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This service improvement project has included the development of resources and processes which support hospital presentations for people with a disability who have complex needs and behaviours, particularly those with Autism and/or Intellectual Disability. The input and involvement of two carer representatives has been instrumental in monitoring, guiding and supporting the development of resources.

Key developments have included:

❖ The Hospital Passport, for staff to access information about the person’s background, abilities and how to approach care
❖ Guidelines for assisting patients with a disability who present with complex needs and behaviours, including strategies for communication, environmental modification and managing distress
❖ Photo libraries of hospital and dental services to assist with planning and preparation for admissions and appointments
❖ An educational video with carers discussing their experiences of supporting a person with a disability to access healthcare services.

The resources developed emphasise communication access and health equity, which is relevant to all Allied Health clinicians providing care to patients with disability. They also demonstrate the value in co-design and consumer participation for service improvement.