

Response to physical health concerns for non-health professionals



NHS

Background and Context

A multi-agency learning review has identified the need for non-health professionals to have guidance in response to physical health concerns.

M told non-medical professionals on a number of occasions that he was ill and sometimes mentioned specific symptoms.

Key Learning/Messages

Where there is a history of non-engagement, professionals should be especially alert to the potential for the escalation of untreated illnesses.

Resources

- NHS 111
- NWAS 999

Guidance

Never dismiss or ignore physical symptoms reported by the person you are supporting.

Ensure that the person knows you don't have medical expertise and that it is important to obtain the correct help.

Don't assume that the person you are supporting will do what they say they will; offer to help call a GP or ambulance services, or accompany them to an appointment.

Check the capacity of the person and if necessary use the best interest decision process.

Red flags where you must seek help include:

- Chest Pain
- Shortness of breath
- Bleeding
- Blood in stools , vomit or urine , excessive bruising
- Signs of a stroke - FAST test <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stroke/>
- Changes in conscious levels.

This list does not cover everything. Always be cautious and if a person shares concerns about their health, always support them to get the right help and support to deal with their health issue.

Record Keeping

Always keep clear, accurate, timely records of your interventions and advice given to the person.