Introduction:
Mortality rates among people with moderate to severe learning disabilities (LD) are 3 times higher than in the general population. This study was designed to examine Critical Care admissions with learning disabilities in terms of mortality, demographics and reason for admission.

Methods:
Data was retrieved for adult patients (>16 years old) between Sept 1993 and 2016. The Ward Watcher database for ICUs within Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust was interrogated using search words including, learning disability, cerebral palsy, Down’s syndrome and autism.

Results:
There were 154 episodes (1.4% of all admissions) of patients admitted with LD. 10% of the LD patients had more than 1 admission. Respiratory is the most common system affected (46%). Logistic regression suggests survival is highest in those with a neurological reason for admission (p=0.007)
Proportionally LD patients were young compared to the total population (figure 1). We found that mortality appears to increase rapidly in those over 60 years of age and overall mortality is greater in those with LD (figure 2).

Conclusion:
From April 2018 all UK Trusts will be required to complete a detailed review for patients with LD who die whilst in hospital care. This follows MENCAP’s report ‘Death by Indifference’ which exposed deficiencies in the care of 6 people with LDs who died whilst in NHS care and the subsequent Confidential Inquiry into premature deaths of people with learning disabilities. In our population, LD patients have an earlier death than the general population and the overall mortality from critical illness is greater.

References:
Health Inequalities & People with Learning Disabilities in the UK: 2010 Emerson & Baines
Death by Indifference. MENCAP 2004
Confidential Inquiry into premature deaths of people with learning disabilities. CIPOLD 2013

Image 1:

[Graph of admission age in LD vs all patients]

Image 2:
Graph of total mortality in LD vs all patients