**Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA)**

**Summary:**

SMA is a genetic condition which makes the muscles weaker and causes problems with movement. It is a serious condition that gets worse over time. There are 4 types of SMA:

* type 1 – develops in babies less than 6 months old. Life expectancy is only a few years
* type 2 – appears in babies who are 7 – 18 months old. Life expectancy extends into adulthood and those with type 2 can lead long, fulfilling lives
* type 3 – develops after 18 months of age. Life expectancy is not affected
* type 4 – affects adults and does not restrict life expectancy

**SMA does not affect intelligence or cause learning difficulties**

**Symptoms:**

Typical symptoms include:

* floppy or weak arms and legs
* movement problems such as difficulty sitting up or walking
* twitching or shaking muscles
* bone and joint problems such as curved spine (scoliosis)
* swallowing problems
* breathing difficulties

**Strategies:**

Check Staff Advantage for individual needs. They may use a wheelchair to get around. They may need help with toileting and support with taking notes in class. Exam access arrangements may include extra time, rest breaks, use of a word processor and a practical assistant.

For further guidance see below.

[NHS Information](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/spinal-muscular-atrophy-sma/)

[Spinal Muscular Atrophy UK](https://smauk.org.uk/symptoms-diagnosis-effects-of-5q-sma)