

## Accessible Information Policy – Making Information Accessible for All

Version: 1.1

Date issued: November 2023

Next review date: January 2027

Target Audience: This policy applies to any person directly employed, contracted, working on behalf of the Practice or volunteering with the Practice

## Version Control Sheet

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| *Version* | *Section / Paragraph / Appendix* | *Description of Amendments* | *Date* | *Reviewed by* | *Next Review Due* |
| 1.0 |  |  | Nov 2023 | TPC | Nov 2024 |
| 1.1 | Whole Document | Full Review | Jan 2025 | TP | Jan 2027 |
| 1.2 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1.3 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1.4 |  |  |  |  |  |

Introduction

The Accessible Information Standard aims to ensure that people who have a disability or sensory loss have access to information they can understand and the communication support they may need. The Standard applies to service providers across the NHS and adult social care system. As organisations that provide NHS services, GP Practices are required by law to follow the Standard under Section 250 of the Health and Social Care Act.

Key requirements

There are five key requirements of the Standard:

1. Ask patients and carers if they have any information or communication needs and find out how to meet their needs.

2. Record those needs in a set way eg SystmOne, using relevant clinical codes (further guidance see the admin how to guide under registrations.

3. Highlight a patient’s file, so it is clear that they have information or communication needs, and clearly explain how those needs should be met eg as a 'Reminder' on the patients home screen.

4. Share information about a person’s needs with other NHS and adult social care providers, when they have consent or permission to do so.

5. Make sure that people get information in an accessible way and communication support if they need it.

What we do to meet the standard

1. Ask patients and carers if they have any information or communication needs, and find out how to meet their needs:

* We will ask patients and their carers to tell us if they have any communication or information needs relating to a disability, impairment, or sensory loss, and if so, what they are.
* Patients will be asked at the point of registration if they have any communication or information needs relating to a disability and/or additional needs (there is a section on the New Patient Questionnaire V2 that covers this question). This is also covered during the SystmOne registration process.
* Existing patients can be asked opportunistically (e.g. when making an appointment, with repeat prescriptions, newsletters, posters, email, text message, information screens, website).
* Patients should be encouraged and given the opportunity to self-define their communication/information needs (and not the disability), which can then be recorded.

2. Record those needs in a set way:

* Once a patient has informed the practice that they have communication or information needs relating to a disability, impairment or sensory loss, this is recorded on their patient records in as much detail as possible. This is to enable us to have as much accurate information as possible to assist the patient. There is a reasonable adjustments template that is completed on system on. This will then pop up when the patient record is open and direct you straight to what adjustments are needed

3. Highlight a patient’s file:

* Ensure it is clear that they have information or communication needs, clearly explaining how the Practice can best meet the needs of the patient.
* To inform all users and provide the opportunity to keep information up to date the protocol will launch each time the patient’s record is entered informing the user of the patients access needs and giving the opportunity for these to be updated if required.

4. Share information about a person’s needs with other NHS and adult social providers, when they have consent or permission to do so:

* As the information is being recorded in a standardised way via Read Code and users are being informed of any needs every time they enter the record the information recorded will be shared subject to patient’s choice regarding the sharing of information.

5. Make sure that people get information in an accessible way and communication support if they need it:

* The Practice provides one or more contact methods which are accessible to the patients. Methods include email, telephone and text.
* Where information/communication needs are identified, information (e.g. correspondence) will be provided in one or more accessible formats (e.g. non-standard print). Alternative formats can be provided if available either through auto-generated systems, or through prompting staff to make alternative arrangements. The adjustments made should be reasonable – but this does not mean that the patient must always receive information in their preferred format. What is important is that they can access and understand the information.
* Where needed, appropriate professional communication support is arranged by the practice to enable patients and carers to effectively receive NHS care i.e. Text Talk, Interpreters.
* A patient’s family member, friend or carer may also provide necessary support in certain circumstances and where this is the patent’s explicit preference (which should be recorded).

For more information about Accessible Information please click on the link below

[LearningDisabilityAccessCommsGuidance.pdf (england.nhs.uk)](https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/LearningDisabilityAccessCommsGuidance.pdf)