

# The Accessible Information Standard

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## Background and Scope



- With partners, NHS England has developed a new 'Accessible Information Standard' (SCCI1605 Accessible Information).
- The Standard provides direction to the health and care system on **accessible information** and **communication support** for patients, service users, carers and parents with a disability, impairment or sensory loss.



# Who does the Standard apply to?

- The list of organisations which must have regard to information standards is defined within the [Health and Social Care Act 2012](#).

In effect:-

- **The Accessible Information Standard applies to – and therefore must be implemented and adhered to by – all providers of NHS and publicly-funded adult social care.**



## Why do we need the Standard?

- The Equality Act 2010 places a **legal duty** on all service providers to make “reasonable adjustments” to support disabled people, including providing information in “an accessible format”.
- Service users with communication needs often receive inaccessible information and are not provided with the communication support they need. This has implications for patient choice, safety, and experience.



## Aim of the Standard

To establish a framework and set a clear direction such that patients and service users who have information or communication needs relating to a disability, impairment or sensory loss receive:

- ‘Accessible information’ and
- ‘Communication support’

So that they can access services appropriately and independently, and make decisions about their health, wellbeing, care and treatment.



## Implementing the standard

- The Standard applies to service providers across the NHS and adult social care system
- Effective implementation will require such organisations to make changes to:
  - Policy
  - Procedure
  - Human behaviour
  - Electronic systems



## The Process

The Standard sets out a consistent approach to:

- **Identify**
- **Record**
- **Flag**
- **Share**
- **Meet** communication needs of users.



# A quick overview – 5 basic steps

These mirror the process:

- **Ask:** identify / find out if an individual has any communication / information needs (relating to a disability or sensory loss) and if so, what they are.
- **Record:** record those needs in a clear, unambiguous and standardised way in electronic and / or paper based record / administrative systems / documents.
- **Alert / flag / highlight:** ensure that recorded needs are 'highly visible' whenever the individuals' record is accessed, and prompt for action.
- **Share:** include information about individuals' information / communication needs as part of existing data sharing processes (and following existing information governance frameworks).
- **Act:** take steps to ensure that individuals receive information which they can access and understand, and receive communication support if they need it.





## Impact of the standard

As a result of the Standard, patients, service users, carers and parents should:

- Be able to make contact with, and be contacted by, services in accessible ways
- Receive correspondence and information in accessible formats, including alternatives to 'standard' printed forms
- Be supported by a communication professional at their appointments if this is needed to enable effective, accurate two-way discussion
- Receive support from health and care staff and organisations to support effective communication.



# Timescales and requirements

- Approved in June 2015 / published on 3 July 2015
  - Plan for implementation by **1 September 2015**
  - By **1 April 2016** all organisations that provide NHS or publicly funded adult social care must have made necessary changes such that they can routinely identify and record the information and communication needs of their patients or service users (and where appropriate their carers or parents) at first registration or interaction with their service



# Timescales and requirements

- From **1 April 2016** services must identify the communication or information support needs of their existing registered or known patients or service users (and where appropriate their carers or parents) during routine appointments or interactions with the service.
- Full implementation required by **31 July 2016**
- Mandatory for **all organisations that provide NHS or adult social care.**



# PILOT SITE TOP TIPS #1

- Provide access to a specific budget to produce accessible documents and resources.
- Use and develop existing systems that people already use
- Explain to staff how it can help them assess and manage patients with additional communication needs.
- Ensure the solutions are in place before you roll out the assessment
- Consider ascertaining service users' needs versus their preferences



# TOP TIPS #2

- Make all general information leaflets accessible for everyone
- Ensure there is a process of approving, storing and reviewing patient information leaflets
- Develop a formal policy on how to assess and manage communication needs within the organisation BUT provide a quick reference guide for staff to know what help to get and how.
- Use terminology that is meaningful to your organisation
- Involve carers.



# TOP TIPS #3

- Allow additional time for interactions initially
- Support staff with face to face training / awareness raising.
- Produce information through a collaborative process, involving the person and their circle of support, in the same way that a Communication Passport is made.



# NHS England central guidance, templates and resources

- Promised in the Implementation Plan
- Aim to publish and signpost guidance and links to resources as they come available via the NHS England website pages
- E-learning –planning to make an e-learning module available to support organisations in implementing the Standard. Whilst this is in development, you may be interested in the collection of modules available on the [Disability Matters website](#)



# NHS England guidance / factsheets

- Information governance advice
- Checklist to support local assessment of compliance
- Improving the accessibility of standard documentation
- Top Implementation Tips
- Quality assurance advice
- Web accessibility and usability
- Quick user 'How to' guides for the five steps
- Supporting people with particular information or communication needs
- Assistive technology
- Legal guidance
- Examples of different types of accessible information and communication support
- Glossary of terms and definitions
- Myth busters
- Effective easy read information
- Frequently asked questions





# NHS England templates and resources

## Case studies on:

- benefits of accessible information and communication support
- supporting mental health service users with communication needs
- achieving value for money and added value

## Examples / Templates:

- Accessible Information Policy
- Patient / service user registration form
- Communication passport
- Posters, statements and prompts to raise awareness of AIS with staff and public



# Summary Care Record (SCR) support for AIS

- SCR is an electronic summary of key health information from the GP record
- 96% of patients in England have an SCR
- GP practices can enrich SCRs with additional information including communication needs.
- The additional information dataset includes all the clinical codes in the Standard
- Once the patient's consent for additional information is recorded, relevant codes are automatically included in SCR.
- A leaflet is available to support conversations with patients
- For further resources and information on using and viewing SCRs see [www.hscic.gov.uk/scr](http://www.hscic.gov.uk/scr) or contact [scr.comms@hscic.gov.uk](mailto:scr.comms@hscic.gov.uk)



# The Information Standard

- The Information Standard is a voluntary programme run by NHS England.
- ‘Quality Mark’ for all information produced by your organisation
- Better information for all your service users
- More efficient ways of producing information

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/tis/>

email: [England.informationstandard@nhs.net](mailto:England.informationstandard@nhs.net)



## How can I find out more and further help?

- Find out more :  
[www.england.nhs.uk/accessibleinfo](http://www.england.nhs.uk/accessibleinfo)
- Sign up to updates or email queries to:  
[england.nhs.participation@nhs.net](mailto:england.nhs.participation@nhs.net)



**Thank you**  
**Jane Fox**

