



# Accessible Information Standard

What the NHS and adult social care services need to do to follow the rules



# What is in this booklet

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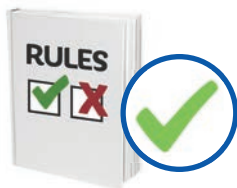
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# About this easy read booklet



This is the easy read of a bigger booklet called the **Accessible Information Standard: Requirements Specification**.



This easy read booklet tells you about the main things in the bigger booklet.



This is a long booklet. You do not need to read it all at once.

You could take a break or just read the part you are interested in.

# About the Accessible Information Standard



The Accessible Information Standard is a set of rules about making information easy to understand.

In this booklet we will call them **the standards**.



The law says all NHS and adult social care services must follow the standards.



NHS and adult social care services are things like:

- Hospitals.
- Your local doctors surgery or health centre.





- Ambulances.



- Dentists.



- **Social services.** This is a team in the local council. They look after people who need extra support and try to keep them safe.



- Care services. Things like day services and care homes.



In this booklet, we will call NHS and adult social care services **services** for short.

## Who the standards help



Sensory loss is when you don't see, hear or feel the things around you in the same way as other people.

You might not be able to see or hear very well.



The standards say that services must make sure disabled people and people with sensory loss can:



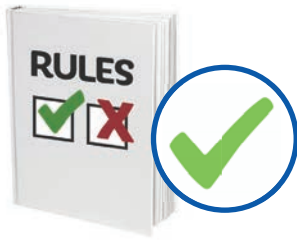
- Get information in a way they understand

and

- **Communicate** with services in the best way for them.

**Communicate** means being able to tell someone what you think and how you feel.





## How to follow the rules

This booklet tells you what services **must** to do follow the rules of the accessible information standard.



It also tells you what services **should do** to follow the rules.

**Should do** means they don't have to but they must have a very good reason not to do it.

# Part 1: Services

## Following the rules



Services **must** follow the rules in all the jobs they do.



They need to:

- Look at how they work now

and



- Look at if they need to make any changes so they can meet the standards.



Services **should** use the **self-assessment tool** to check how well they are following the rules.

A **self-assessment tool** is something that helps you check your work and see what things you can do better.



If a service needs to change how they work, they **must** write a plan. The plan will say what the service is going to do so they can follow the rules.



Services **should** have someone who is in charge of making sure they follow the rules. This might be a main manager.

# Collecting information



Services **must** make sure their **administration** and **recording systems** follow the rules when they can.



**Administration** means things like collecting information, making appointments, and sending letters or emails.



**Recording systems** are ways of writing down and keeping information about people.



This might be things like a person's name, address and date of birth.



Or it could be what happened when a person saw a doctor or a social worker.



The service might write it down on paper or on a computer.



Services **must** make sure that if they get any new administration and recording systems, it follows the rules too.

# Keeping information safe



**Information governance** means looking after information safely and keeping it private.



Services **must** have a manager who is in charge of keeping information safe.



The manager **must**:

- Think about how meeting the rules will affect how the service keeps information safe

and



- Find ways to follow the rules and still keep information safe.

## Staff and training



Services **must** be clear about how they are going to meet the standards.

This means they must tell staff what they need to do to follow the rules.



Services **must** support staff to follow the rules.

Things like training courses to help staff:



- Understand what the rules are  
and
- Know how to follow the rules properly.



NHS England has lots of information and online courses about the standards.



Services **should** help staff to find the information and do the online courses.

**Step 1: Find out how people like to get their information**

**Step 2: Record how people need to communicate**

When people first use a service, staff **should** ask them:



- The best way for them to get information

and



- If they need any support to communicate and understand information.



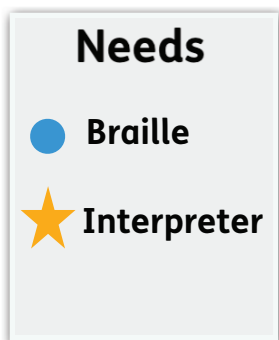
This **must** be done the first time the person uses the service.



Staff **must** check with the person when they can to see if their needs have changed. This might be at an appointment.



Services **must** have a good and clear way to write down people's needs.



Some recording systems use special codes for people's needs. Things like if they use Braille or they need an interpreter.



Services **must** follow rules to make sure they use the codes properly.



If services use special codes, they **must** also write down what the codes mean. This helps staff to understand it.



Services might need to update their administration and recording systems to use the special codes.



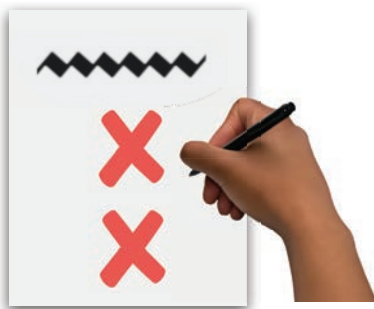
The codes **must** be easy for staff to use and collect people's information.

## Making sure the information collected is right



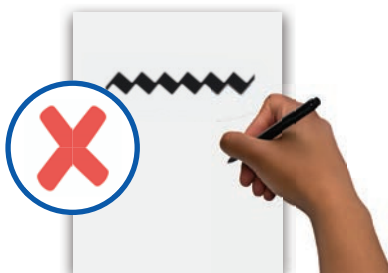
Services **must** make sure staff write down the right information about people's needs.

There **should** be a way of checking if they are:



- Writing down the wrong information

or



- Not writing all of the information down.



This might be an **alert** on a computer recording system if information is wrong or missing.

An **alert** is a bit like an alarm.



Services **must** make sure that people's information is kept up to date.



When staff update people's **personal information**, they **should** check the person's information and communication needs.

**Personal information** is things like your address, phone number and email address.



Patients **should** know how they can:

- Ask what information services keep about them

and

- Ask to change any information that is wrong.

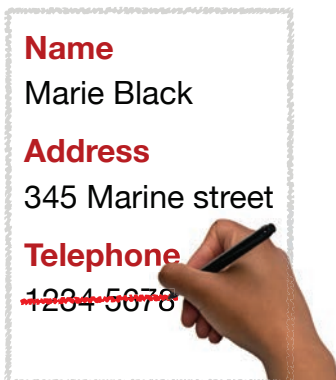




Patients might be able to look at their own medical records online or on the NHS app on their phone.



People **must** be able to see what is written about their information and communication needs.



They **must** be able to ask to make changes, if the information is wrong.



People **should** also be able to write down their own needs.

## How to share more information about a persons needs



A **care plan** says what needs a person has and how they will be supported.



People's information and communication needs must be written in their care plan.



The service who helped to write the care plan must make sure the things in the plan happen.



People may have other things that help staff understand their needs. Things like a Hospital Passport or an NHS Help Card.



These things **must** say what information and communication needs the person has.

### Step 3: Flagging needs and telling staff they need to act on that need



**Flag** means making an important note about somebody or something.



Services **must** make sure that computer recording systems have flags or alerts.



These can be used to show if a person has information or communication needs.



The flags **must** remind staff to give the person information in a way they can understand.



Paper recording systems **must** also use flags to show a patient's needs.

This might be things like a sticker on the front of the person's information.



Computer recording systems **must** be able to tell if someone has an information or communication need.



The computer must then be able to send out letters or reminders in the way that is best for the person. Things like in large print.



Or if the computer cannot do it then it must remind staff to send letters in the best way for the person.



Services **must not** send letters to people in a way they find hard to understand.

## Step 4: Sharing needs



Services **must** share information about a person when they move to or start using a different service.



This means the new service knows how best to support the person straight away.



Services can only share this information if the person or their carer agrees.



If people do not want their information to be shared, they can say no.



Services **must** follow rules about sharing information and keeping information safe.

## Stage 5: Meeting people's needs



Services must make sure that people:

- Are given information in a way that they can easily understand.

and



- Can get in touch with the service in the way that is best for them. This might be by phone, email or text message.



Services **must** give people support to communicate. This might be things like staff speaking slowly or a hearing aid loop.



Services **must** give people the support they need as quickly as possible.

People might need an interpreter if they:



- Use Makaton. This is a way of using hand signs and speech to communicate.

or



- Communicate using British Sign Language.



Services **must** make sure interpreters have the right certificates and are safe to work with patients.



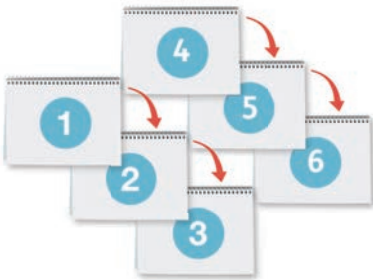
To help people understand information properly, services **must** give people longer appointments, if they need it.

## Checking and showing they are meeting the standard or trying to meet the standard



A policy is a booklet that tells staff how to follow the rules for different parts of their jobs.

A service might have lots of policies.



Services **must** have a **policy** about how they are following the 6 stages of the Accessible Information Standard.



They **should** share their policy so other people can read it.



Services **must** make sure that they give people information and support.



They should work closely with people who use the services to do this.



People **must** be able to tell services about how easy or hard it is for them to:

- Get information in the way that is best for them.
- Get the communication support they need.
- Tell services if they are unhappy about something.



Services **should** talk to local groups and people with about their experiences.



People can share their thoughts about what works well and what needs to be better.



This will help services to get better at meeting the standards.



Services **should** be able to show proof that they are doing all these things.



The self-assessment tool can help them to do this.

## Part 2: Commissioners



A **commissioner** is someone who plans and buys services.

Commissioners must follow the standard too.

Commissioners **must** follow the standards in all their work. Things like:



- When they work with other people.



- When they are dealing with **complaints**. A **complaint** is when someone says they are unhappy about something.



- In meetings with other people.



Commissioners **must** make sure that any new services will also follow the standards.



New services should look at their work and check how well they are meeting the standards.

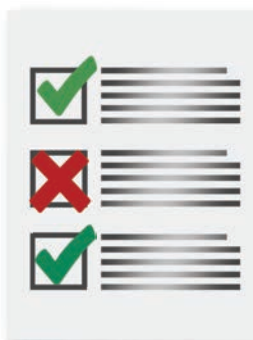


Commissioners **should** look at what the services find out. They should:

- Understand what things the services need to do to follow the rules

and

- Make sure the services make changes to meet the standards.



## Part 3: Information Technology



**Information Technology** means looking after information on things like computers, tablets and phones. It is called **IT** for short.



Services have people in charge of looking after their IT.

They make sure computer recording systems work properly.



IT need to make sure they follow the standards and all of the things in this booklet.