



Accessible Information Standard (NHS England)

The Accessible Information Standard is an NHS England initiative that tells organisations how to ensure that disabled patients and their carers receive information in formats that they can understand, as well as receiving appropriate support to help them to communicate. Such formats could include large print, braille or easy-read documents.

A disabled person is defined as “Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.”

The five basic steps that make up the standard are:

- **Ask:** Identify / find out if an individual has any communication / information needs. Patients should be asked what their individual needs are - this should be done when new patients register, and for existing patients as and when opportunities present themselves, e.g. during phone calls, and by sharing information materials in the practice in posters, leaflets etc.
- **Record:** Record those needs in a clear, unambiguous and standardised way using clinical coding and free text where appropriate.
- **Alert / flag / highlight:** Ensure that recorded needs are ‘highly visible’ – electronic records should have an attached flag or alert, while paper records should be clearly marked.
- **Share:** Include information about individuals’ information / communication needs as part of existing data sharing processes (and in line with 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.

The practice will ask patients if they have any information or communication needs, and find out how best to meet their needs. This information will be recorded clearly and in a set way.

The practice will highlight or “flag” individuals’ files or notes so it is clear that they have information or communication needs, as well as highlighting how those needs should be met. It is good practice to take existing data held by the practice that indicates which patients are more likely to have information or communication needs. This will aid in proactively targeting such individuals to identify and record their needs in line with the Accessible Information Standard.



Practices are not expected to work backwards through existing patients' records in order to identify their communication needs. The needs will be identified at the point of registration for new patients, and opportunistically for existing patients.

Exclusions to the Standard

Standards for signage in the practice, the provision of information in foreign languages, and meeting individuals' preferences for being communicated with in a particular way (e.g. requesting a print letter rather than an email) have been determined to be outside the scope of the standard.

Accessible Information Standard Deadlines

As of **1 April 2016**, all organisations that provide NHS or publicly funded adult social care must identify and record information and communication needs with service users:

- At the first interaction or registration with their service
- As part of on-going routine interaction with the service by existing service users

As of **31 July 2016**, all organisations that provide NHS or publicly funded adult social care must have fully implemented and conform to the Accessible information Standard.

For further information:

[NHS England - Accessible Information Standard](#)