



## **Accessible Communication Policy**

The Accessible Information Standard aims to ensure that disabled people have access to information they can understand and the communication support they may need.

### **We will aim to:**

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.
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.
4. Share information about a person's needs with other NHS and adult social care providers, when we 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.

### **We will do this by:**

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

- New patients will be asked at the point of registration or soon thereafter (e.g. on the registration form, over the phone, face-to-face);
- Existing patients may be asked opportunistically (e.g. when making an appointment, with repeat prescriptions, newsletters, posters, text message, during consultations);
- Patients will be asked to self-define their communication/information needs and these needs (and not the disability) which will be recorded.

#### **2. Recording those needs in a set way:**

- We will record any identified needs within the patient record using Read codes and free text.
- This information is available to patients where they choose to access their record online (where technically possible and when requested). In the future

patients may also be enabled to record their own communication and information needs in the record, where appropriate.

### **3. Highlighting a patient's file, so it is clear that patients have information or communication needs, and clearly explain how those needs should be met.**

- Any communication and information needs identified will be made 'highly visible'.
- For electronic records, this could be via an alert, flag or banner, or a note on the home screen.
- For any paper records, this information will be flagged on the cover/front page through a sticker (where we use paper records).

### **4. Sharing information about a person's needs with other NHS and adult social care providers, when we have consent or permission to do so.**

- We will ensure that information on a patient or carer's information/communication needs is included as a routine part of referral, discharge or handover.
- Information will be included within any local shared electronic records.

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

- We will provide one or more contact methods which are accessible to the patient. The method will allow the individual to contact the practice, and staff must use this method to contact the individual. Methods include text message, telephone and face-to-face.
- Where information/communication needs are identified, information will be provided in one or more accessible formats (e.g. non-standard print). Patients may not always receive information in their preferred format. What is important is that they can access and understand the information.
- Interpreters and other communication professionals (e.g. British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters and deafblind manual interpreters) will have appropriate qualifications, Disclosure and Barring Service clearance, and be signed up to the relevant professional code of conduct.
- A patient's family member, friend or Carer may also provide necessary support in certain circumstances and where this is the patient's explicit preference (which should be recorded).

- Patients or carers themselves will not be asked to meet the costs of any information or communication needs.

## **Conclusion**

The Accessible Information Standard is a legal requirement for practices and we will take steps to ensure the communication/information needs are met for patients with a disability, impairment or sensory loss.

**Reviewed November 2018**