

Accessible Information Standard

At Wandsworth CCG, we are aiming to follow the Accessible Information Standard came into effect on 31 July 2016.

The NHS Accessible Information Standard directs and defines a specific, consistent approach to meeting the information and communication support needs of people whose needs relate to a disability, impairment or sensory loss.

This includes:

- patients
- service users
- carers
- parents

It supports the communications needs of people using publicly funded adult care services. It also tells organisations how to make information accessible.

It makes sure that when people contact adult care and support services they have access to information they can understand and receive any communication support they need.

We have recently delivered a Dyslexia Awareness Workshop, where we have looked at the standard in brief. This will be followed by more guidance and training for staff around the Accessible Information Standard.

About the Standard.

From 1st August 2016 onwards, all organisations that provide NHS care or adult social care are legally required to follow the Accessible Information Standard.

The Standard aims to make sure that people who have a disability, impairment or sensory loss are provided with information that they can easily read and understand and with support so they can communicate effectively with health and social care services.

In implementing the Standard, applicable organisations are required to complete five distinct stages or steps leading to the achievement of five clear outcomes:

1. Identification of needs:

A consistent approach to the identification of patients', service users', carers' and parents' information and communication needs, where they relate to a disability, impairment or sensory loss.

2. Recording of needs:

- Consistent and routine recording of patients', service users', carers' and parents' information and communication needs, where they relate to a disability, impairment or sensory loss, as part of patient / service user records and clinical management / patient administration systems;

- Use of defined clinical terminology, set out in four subsets, to record such needs, where Read v2, CTV3 or SNOMED CT® codes are used in electronic systems;
- Use of specified English definitions indicating needs, where systems are not compatible with any of the three clinical terminologies or where paper based systems / records are used;
- Recording of needs in such a way that they are 'highly visible'.

3. **Flagging of needs:**

Establishment and use of electronic flags or alerts, or paper-based equivalents, to indicate that an individual has a recorded information and / or communication need, and prompt staff to take appropriate action and / or trigger auto-generation of information in an accessible format / other actions such that those needs can be met.

4. **Sharing of needs:**

Inclusion of recorded data about individuals' information and / or communication support needs as part of existing data-sharing processes, and as a routine part of referral, discharge and handover processes.

5. **Meeting of needs:**

Taking steps to ensure that the individual receives information in an accessible format and any communication support which they need.

5.3 **Applicable organisations**

The list of organisations which must have regard to information standards is defined within the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

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. This includes (but is not limited to) the following organisations:

- All providers of NHS care or treatment;
- All providers of publicly-funded adult social care;
- Adult social care or services bodies (in their role as service providers);
- Independent contractors providing NHS services including primary medical services (GP practices), dental services, optometric services and pharmacy services;
- NHS Foundation Trusts and NHS Trusts;
- Providers of NHS and / or adult social care from the voluntary and community or private sectors;
- Providers of public health services, including advice and information.

The Standard must also be implemented and adhered to by suppliers of IT systems, software and hardware to health and adult social care organisations and providers.

Note that because the Standard is concerned with enabling individuals to make decisions about their own health and care, organisations who make contact with individual service users (for example to invite them to attend screening or vaccination) are included within the scope of the Standard as the outcome of their correspondence / the information they provide (and an individual's ability to read and understand this information) may have a direct impact on their health or wellbeing.

Although commissioners (including Wandsworth CCG) are exempt from implementing the Standard themselves, they must ensure that their actions, especially through contracting and performance-management arrangements (including incentivisation and penalisation), enable and support provider organisations from which they commission services to implement and comply with the requirements of the Standard.