

# Identifying Information and Communication Needs



The first step in the successful implementation of the Accessible Information Standard is based on 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.

Suggested questions which MAY be used to identify if an individual has any information and / or communication support needs, and the nature of these needs include:

- Do you have any communication needs?
- Do you need a format other than standard print?
- Do you have any special communication requirements?
- How do you prefer to be contacted?
- What is your preferred method of communication?
- How would you like us to communicate with you?
- Can you explain what support would be helpful?
- What communication support should we provide for you?
- What is the best way to send you information?

# Recording information and communication needs



- Some of the types or categories of information and communication support included in the Standard's subsets are mutually incompatible, i.e. it would not be possible for one individual to need some types of support in combination with one or more others. For example, someone who needs information in braille will not require support to lipread (because the former implies significant visual loss and the latter relies on sight).
- Conversely, some combinations of recorded needs are highly likely to occur, for example, 'does use hearing aid' and / or 'does lipread' plus 'requires contact by short message service text message' or 'requires contact by email'.
- Staff should consider both of these aspects when recording individuals' needs and when prompting patients, service users, parents and carers to identify their needs.

## Flagging Information and Communication Needs



- A record of communication and / or information needs MUST be flagged or otherwise highlighted / made 'highly visible' to staff to enable appropriate actions to be taken to meet those needs.
- 'Highly visible' is defined as follows:
  - ☐ Obvious and overtly apparent; and
  - ☐ Visible on the cover, title and / or 'front page' of a document, file or electronic record; and
  - ☐ Visible on every page of an electronic record (for example as an alert, flag or banner); and / or
  - ☐ Highlighted in some way on a paper record so as to draw attention to the information as being of importance

## Sharing Information and Communication Needs



- Information about individuals' information and / or communication needs should be included as part of referrals both within and between organisations, including (but not limited to) referrals from primary into secondary care, transfers and handovers between wards or units, and discharge from an inpatient setting into the community.
- Organisations **MUST** ensure that information about individuals' information and / or communication support needs is included as part of existing data-sharing processes, and as a routine part of referral, discharge and handover.

## Meeting communication and information needs



- Services MUST provide one or more communication or contact methods which are accessible to and useable by the patient, service user
- The method(s) MUST enable the individual to contact the service, and staff MUST use this method to contact the individual.
- Where needed, appropriate, professional communication support MUST be arranged or provided to enable individuals to effectively access / receive health or adult social care, to facilitate effective / accurate dialogue, and to enable participation in decisions about their health, care or treatment.
- Appropriate action MUST be taken to enable patients, service users, carers to communicate, including through staff modifying their behaviour and / or supporting the use of aids or tools. This includes provision of communication support for individuals accessing both outpatient and inpatient services, including long-term care, and those in receipt of publicly-funded social and / or NHS care whilst resident in a nursing or care home.
- In order to ensure equity and promote equitable access to services by people with a disability, impairment or sensory loss, organisations should be aware that it is their responsibility, and not that of the disabled person, to cover the costs of meeting an individual's information and / or communication support needs.