# Disability access policy

## Please refer to the Toolkit For Primary Care for more information

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## Quick Tips

ASK: All practice staff, especially GP receptionists, should ask people who have sight loss which is the best way for them to be given information. Giving standard printed information to people who have a visual impairment could mean they will be unable to read it and could miss out on online services or other valuable health and wellbeing resources. Instead think about:

* sharing passwords, guides and instructions in different formats like large print, email, braille or audio
* making sure you can email people, particularly if they say that is the only format they are able to read
* making sure how they want to receive information is clearly noted in their medical record
* making sure GP online services are given as an option.

ENCOURAGE: Every day, more and more people who are blind or who have sight loss are using computers and tablets. Knowing about GP online services may give them the confidence to take those extra steps to get online.

TALK: Talking is always best. Tell everyone about the benefits of online services and how they can make their lives easier

Make noise: Contact local ‘talking’ newspapers and groups that support people with sight loss to let them know about GP online services and the ways you can support people to use GP online service

## Following the Accessible Information Standard

​Compliance with The Accessible Information Standard [is mandatory](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/7/part/9/chapter/1/enacted) for all organisations that provide NHS or adult social care, including NHS trusts and GP practices.

It ensures people with a disability or sensory loss can access and understand information – eg in large print or braille, or from a sign language interpreter.

## Existing standards

* Further information on Wordski is available in Teams -> All Staff -> Files
* Contact Action Deafness for BSL interpretation and Wordski for other languages
* All sites have induction loops installed
* All displays have built-in screen magnification tools
* All practices are wheelchair-accessible and have disabled toilets.

### Audio screen readers to suggest

* Apple’s Voiceover
* Android’s Talkback
* Microsoft’s Narrator.

## What you are required to do

* Ask people if they have any information or communication needs, and find out how to meet their needs.
* Record those needs clearly and in a set way.
* Highlight or flag the person’s file or notes so it is clear that they have specific communication needs and how best to communicate effectively with them in their chosen manner.
* Share people’s information and communication needs with other providers of NHS and adult social care, when they have consent to do so.
* Ensure people receive information that they can access and understand, and receive communication support if they need it.

## Patients who the standard could apply to:

* patients who have information or communication needs relating to a disability, impairment or sensory loss
* parents and carers of those patients, where appropriate
* people with visual or hearing impairment, and people who have some hearing or visual loss
* people who are deafblind
* people with a learning disability.

# Practical considerations

## Requirements and compliance

**Recording patient needs**

* You can record communication and information needs using Read v2, CTV3 or SNOMED-CT codes, supported by free text.
* This information should be made available to patients where they choose to access their record online.
* In patients’ files, communication needs should be ‘highly visible’ so they are seen and acted upon.

**Your practice website**

All public sector websites or apps must:

1. meet accessibility standards
2. publish an accessibility statement.
* Read this guidance from W3 Web Accessibility Initiative on [how to look for accessibility issues on your website](https://www.w3.org/WAI/fundamentals/accessibility-principles/).
* More information on how to comply with the regulations are available on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/make-your-website-or-app-accessible-and-publish-an-accessibility-statement).

### Not complying

* Non-compliant organisations are open to legal challenge and at risk of complaints, investigation and negative media coverage.
* Organisations are not required to report on their adherence to the standard. They do need to publish or display an accessible communications policy which explains how they meet the standard, and an accessible complaints policy. This makes it easier for interested organisations to assess compliance, and enable patients and carers to give feedback about their experiences.
* The CQC looks at [evidence of implementation](https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-providers/meeting-accessible-information-standard) when judging whether services are responsive to people’s needs.
* Commissioners must help providers comply with the standard, including through contracts, tariffs, frameworks and performance-management arrangements.

## For PMs/APMs implementing the standard

1. Think about how to identify individuals with information and communication needs when they contact the service (eg at the reception desk, over the phone), and when they register. Who will ask, when, and how? This is most likely to be the role of ‘first point of contact’ staff, such as receptionists.
2. It can be helpful to agree on a ‘standard question’ which staff feel comfortable asking.
3. Brief staff about the standard, preferably in a face-to-face session, and follow up with email information about what it entails. Include or point to local policies and procedures for arranging the production of information in alternative formats and communication support.
4. Inform patients about the Accessible Information Standard via posters or on-screen. Encourage patients to tell staff of their communication needs.
5. The Accessible Information Standard does not include environmental or facilities matters, but certain aspects are very relevant. Consider whether some rooms are ‘better’ than others for people with communication needs (eg less cluttered, better light, more soundproof). Lighting can help or hinder a person trying to lip-read – aim for good light but not blinding, and consider whether curtains or blinds can be drawn.
6. Consider your workforce. What training have individuals and teams had on disability awareness or communication? Consider if any individuals are best placed to support people with particular needs, eg a learning disability liaison nurse or staff who have had specific training.
7. Be aware some patients may have difficulty communicating with certain members of staff. People who lip-read often struggle to lip-read those with a beard or large moustache, for example.
8. Can you easily access information in easy read and braille? Clarify the policy for arranging conversion of documents and consider having the most commonly used documents converted ahead of any request.

## Policy and compliance steps you can take

To begin raising awareness with staff and patients or service users, some initial actions include:

* amending registration forms so they are more accessible and include a question or section about communication needs
* adding a statement to letters and leaflets prompting patients to inform the service if they have communication needs
* displaying posters and information in different formats, encouraging patients to inform the service if they have communication needs
* checking to see if there is an induction loop system available (to support hearing aid users) and, if so, checking that it works and that staff know how to use it
* engaging with your patient group to seek their support and advice. They may also have contacts in local voluntary groups with relevant expertise (eg blind groups, self-advocacy groups for people with learning disabilities)
* review existing policy and practice around the use of email and text message to communicate with patients; these can be quick, cheap and convenient ways of contacting many people with hearing or visual loss.

**Resources**

1. [NHS England - accessible information standard resources](https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/accessibleinfo/resources/)
2. [NHS e-LFH - accessible information standard e-learning](https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/accessible-information-standard/)
3. [NHS England - implementation plan](http://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/access-info-imp-plan.docx)
4. [NHS England - communications plan](http://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/access-info-comms-plan.docx)

# Information for Disabled Patients

**If you have any support needs please let our staff know so that we can help and ensure you get the same support in the future.**

### Wheelchair access

Where possible, a wheelchair will be made available for patient’s use, at their own risk, should you require one whilst visiting our premises.

### Blind/Partially Sighted

If you or family members are blind or partially sighted we can give you a CD or large print of our practice leaflet upon request. Please ask Reception for further information.

For more advice and support for blind people please access the following websites:

* [Royal National Institute of Blind People (RIND)](http://www.rnib.org.uk/Pages/Home.aspx)
* [Action for Blind People](http://www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk/)
* [Blind.org.uk](http://www.blind.org.uk/)
* [British Blind Sport](http://www.britishblindsport.org.uk/)

### Guide Dogs

Guide dogs are welcome at the surgery but we ask that you be aware of other patients and staff who may have an allergy or fear of dogs.

Further Information:

* [Guide Dogs](http://www.guidedogs.org.uk/)

### Other Disability Websites

* [British Deaf Association](http://www.bda.org.uk/)
* [The Deaf Health Charity – SignHealth](http://www.signhealth.org.uk/)
* [Action Hearing Loss](http://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/)
* [Royal Association for Deaf People](http://www.royaldeaf.org.uk/)
* [National Deaf Children’s Society](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/)
* [BID Services](http://www.bid.org.uk/)
* [Disability Go](http://www.disabledgo.com/)
* [Disabled People, your Rights, Benefits, Carers and the Equality Act](https://www.gov.uk/browse/disabilities)
* [Disability Rights UK](http://disabilityrightsuk.org/)
* [Living with a Disability NHS Choices](http://www.nhs.uk/livewell/disability/Pages/Disabilityhome.aspx)
* [Disability Action](http://www.disabilityaction.org/)
* [Mencap](http://www.mencap.org.uk/)