

# Morecambe Bay



## Primary Care Collaborative

# Accessible Information Standard Policy

<b>Document Reference</b>	POL029
<b>Purpose</b>	The purpose of this document is to set out the organisation's approach to Accessible Information Standard and should be readily available to all staff.
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In August 2016 it became mandatory for all providers of NHS care to follow the Accessible Information Standard in line with section 250 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

The essence of the standard is that all services must identify, record, flag, share and meet people's information and communication needs. It applies to patients and service users (and where appropriate carers and families) who have information or communication needs relating to a disability, impairment or sensory loss. It covers the needs of people who are blind, deaf, deafblind and/or who have a learning disability. Additionally, it includes anyone with information or communication needs relating to a disability or sensory loss, e.g. people who have a communication disorder following a stroke or neurological damage (often known as dysphasia), autism or a mental health condition which affects their ability to communicate.

Morecambe Bay Primary Care Collective (MBPCC) is committed to ensuring that the Accessible Information Standard is fully implemented across all of its services.

## 2. Why is AIS important?

Millions of people in England have a disability or sensory impairment that affects how they communicate or receive information. In the UK there are:

- 12 million people with hearing loss, of which 900,000 are severely or profoundly deaf
- More than 2 million people living with sight loss, with 340,000 registered as blind or partially sighted and more than 450,000 deafblind
- 1.5 million people with a learning disability
- More than 350,000 people with dysphasia (difficulties finding and using the right words and often in understanding words, for example after a stroke)

## 3. What should services do?

Every patient should receive:

**Accessible information** = information which they can read or receive and understand

AND

**Communication support** = Whatever support is needed to enable effective, accurate dialogue between the individual health provider (GP, Nurse Paramedic, receptionist or other) and the patient

SO

They can access services appropriately and independently and make decisions about their health, wellbeing, care and treatment

All Morecambe Bay PCC services should ensure that:-



- Patients are able to contact and be contacted by services in accessible ways for example via email, text message, Text Relay, Video Relay ???others
- Patients can receive information and correspondence in formats they can read and understand, for example in audio, braille, easy read or large print
- Patients are supported by a communication professional at appointments if this is appropriate, for example a registered British Sign Language interpreter
- Patients get appropriate support from healthcare staff and partner organisations to communicate, for example to lip read or use a hearing aid
- All premises should be fitted with a hearing loop and staff trained to utilise it

## 4. Barriers to communication and informed consent

When patient's cannot understand information and do not get the support they need to communicate effectively it can stop them:

- Getting a correct diagnosis
- Attending appointment
- Receiving safe and effective care or treatment
- Giving informed consent
- Being treated with dignity and respect
- Being listened to and involved in their care

## 5. Five Steps to support people

All patients will be supported by MBPCC staff by :

1. Being **asked** if they have any information or communication needs, and staff checking how those needs should be met
2. **Recording** those needs clearly and systematically
3. Highlighting or **flagging** the patients file or notes so it is clear that they have information or communication needs and how to meet them
4. **Sharing** information about patient's information and communication needs with other health and social care providers (when they have consent to do this)
5. Ensuring that the patient's needs are **met**, including receiving information which they can access and understand, and communication support if they need it

## 6. Links to Care Quality Commission inspection

The Accessible Information standard is implicit in three of the CQC regulations, numbers 9, 10 and 13, which describe the parameters of appropriate person-centred care and treatment, how providers should ensure patients are treated with dignity and respect with due regard to their

protected characteristics- in this case disability and finally that care and treatment must not be provided in a way that discriminates against anyone using the service.

All staff should be aware of these regulations and deliver care and support which demonstrates compliance with them.

## 7. Questions for staff

When deciding whether they are working according to the Accessible Information Standard they should ask: -

- Are patients being treated fairly and equally?
- Do patients have access to written information if they are blind or have a sight impairment?
- Do patients have access to spoken communication if they have a hearing impairment?
- Do patients have access to appropriate communication for example if they have a learning disability or other disability related communication need?

## 8. Learning and Development for staff

All staff of MBPCC will complete mandatory training on the Accessible Information Standard which is available through Bluestream during their induction programme and then on a three yearly basis.

## 9. References

- Accessible Information Standard NHS England 2016
- Health and Social Care Act 2012
- Hearing Link Services 2022
- Sense.org 2022
- Mencap.org.uk/Office for National Statistics 2020
- The Brain Charity.org.uk 2022
- Care Quality Commission- Guidance for Providers 2022

## 10. AMENDMENT HISTORY

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V1.0	01/07/2023	N/A	New policy approved	01/07/2026