

**Accessible Information and Communication-Adult Social
Care Policy for Customers with Sensory Support Needs**

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1. Policy Statement

Adult Social Care (ASC) is committed to putting customers who use our services at the centre of our work. This includes collecting and using their views and experiences and making sure that they can access the information they need to make good choices about their care. Adult Social Care ensure that everyone can access and understand the information we provide and that they can communicate with us in ways that meet their needs.

2. Introduction

The Equality Act 2010 requires all organisations to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people and requires public organisations to ensure they do not discriminate and promote equality between disabled people and those who are not disabled. Providing accessible information and communications ensures that this duty is met both in practice and in principle.

Accessible information and communication are essential to ensure equal access and experience of services. People who use our services, carers and those who may wish to access our services may require adjustments because they are blind, sight impaired or deaf and or deaf/blind. So, languages and formats that are easily used and understood by the intended audience need to be used.

Providing accessible information and communications improves access to services, promotes inclusion and enables people to make more informed choices. Providing accessible communications and information also support staff in aiding communication with customers to support choice, personalisation, and empowerment.

3. Scope

The scope of this policy ensures that Adult Social Care:

- complies with both the law and good practice
- respects individuals' rights
- provides appropriate training and support for staff who engage with customers requiring alternative communication methods
- provides appropriate training and support for staff who engage with carers and or customers family members requiring alternative communication methods.

4. Background

The Accessible Information Standard (AIS) was introduced by the government in 2016 to make sure that people with a disability or sensory loss are given information in a way they can understand. It is now the law for the NHS and Adult Social Care services to comply with AIS.

This policy should be read with reference to the following policies:

- GDPR Policy
- Information Governance Policy and Procedures.

5. Accessible Information Standard

The Accessible Information Standard tells organisations how to support people's communication needs, for example by offering support from a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter, deafblind manual interpreter, or an advocate, producing information and Key documents in Easy read versions.

As part of the standard organisations that provide NHS or Social Care must do five things. They must:

5.1 Identify

- How does the service assess for disability related information or communication needs?
- How does the service find out if people have any of these needs?
- How does the service plan how it will meet those needs?

5.2 Record

- How does the service record those identified needs clearly?
- What systems are in place as part of the assessment and care planning process?

5.3 Flag

- How does the service highlight or flag people's information and communication needs in their records?
- This could be in paper or electronic records.
- The chosen method must make it possible for all staff to quickly and easily be aware of (and work to meet) those needs.

5.4 Share

- Services sometimes need to share details of people's information and communication needs with other health and social care services.
- This means that other services can also respond to the person's information and communication needs.
- How does the service do this (when they have consent to do so)?

5.5 Meet

- How does the service make sure it meets people's needs?
- How does the service make sure that people receive information which they can access and understand?
- How does the service arrange communication support if people need it?

6. What ASC Will Do to Meet the Standard

6.1 Identify

- As part of the assessment process, we will ask customers or their advocate to tell us if they have any communication

or information needs relating to a disability, impairment or sensory loss, and if so, what they are.

- Existing customers or their advocate will be asked as part of the Care and Support Plan Review process
- Customers or their advocate will be asked to self-define their communication/information needs, and these will be recorded.

6.2 Record

- Once a customer or advocate has informed ASC that they have communication or information needs relating to a disability, impairment or sensory loss, the information will be recorded in the appropriate section of the customer's Record.

6.3 Flag

- ASC customer records have a section that records Key Demographic information relating to that customer.
- Any specific needs regarding communication will be referenced here in the first Instance.

6.4 Share

- Customers who are blind, deafblind or have visual loss may require information to be sent or shared with them electronically (via email) instead of in a written or printed format. This is because use of email enables the recipient to use their own assistive technology or software, for example a 'screen-reader' which converts text to speech.
- Using images, symbols or photographs which support the text and aid the reader in understanding meaning and key messages.
- We will share information in accordance with ASC GDPR and Information

Policies

6.5 Meet

- ASC provides one or more communication methods which are accessible to our customers or advocates.
- Methods include, but not exclusively, email, text message, telephone, Easy Read document versions, Large Print.
- ASC will ensure that documents are made available in appropriate languages for those customers, advocates, or carers who do not speak or read English.

7 Roles and Responsibilities

7.1 ASC Manager Responsibilities

All managers are responsible:

- For ensuring that they themselves have read and understood the contents of this procedure document.
- For the dissemination of this procedure to, and briefing of, all colleagues they manage
- For ensuring all new starters are briefed in this procedure as part of their induction.
- For making this procedure document easily accessible at all times to all Colleagues.

7.2 Adult Social Care Staff Responsibilities

Compliance with this procedure is mandatory for all colleagues.

All colleagues are responsible for

- Ensuring that they have read and understand this policy and how to put it into practice.
- Identifying language, communication and advocacy needs of customers, carers and family with whom they or their team come into contact and this should be

recorded in the customer's record.

- Acting in a way which is respectful and supportive of colleagues with communication needs.
- Adapting their communication style and adopt techniques to enable them to communicate effectively with individuals who have specific communication needs.
- Seeking clarification from their line manager for any issues or circumstances they feel unable to process.