

Your care, your way

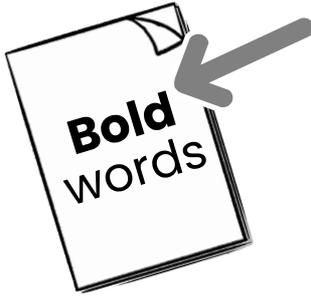
Giving everyone information about health and care in the way they need it



easy
read

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In this Easy Read document, difficult words are in **bold**. We explain what these words mean in the sentence after they have been used.



Some words are pink and underlined.

These are links which will go to another website which has more information.

Introduction



We are Healthwatch. We work to make sure health and care services are the best they can be for the people who use them.



We have started a **campaign** called Your Care, Your Way.

A **campaign** is a plan of things to do over time, to try and change something.



Your Care, Your Way is trying to get more health and care services to follow the **Accessible Information Standard**.



The **Accessible Information Standard** is a law that says all health and care services have to:

- communicate in different ways for people with different needs.
- provide information that is clear and easy for people to understand.



This information will tell you:



- your rights to do with the Accessible Information Standard.



- how well health and care services are following the Accessible Information Standard.

Accessible Information



Everyone should be able to make choices about their health and care.



But health information can be difficult to understand.



If you don't understand your health information, you might not make choices that are good for you.



You can only make the right choices if you understand all the information you are given.



Some people find getting clear information even harder because they need support to communicate.

For example, they might need a British Sign Language interpreter.



If people cannot easily understand information, they often ask friends, family or carers to help them.



People tell us that this:

- makes them feel less independent.



- means they have to share private information.



- makes them feel less in control of their choices.

Your rights



The Accessible Information Standard says you have the right to be given information in a way you can understand if:



- you have a disability.
- you are a parent or carer of someone who has a disability.

What health and care services should do



Health and care services should:

- ask if you have any needs to help you communicate.



- ask how they can meet your needs to help you communicate.



- write down your needs in your file, so all staff know about them when they meet you.



- share information about your needs with other health and care services, if you say they can.



- give you information in a way that you can understand.



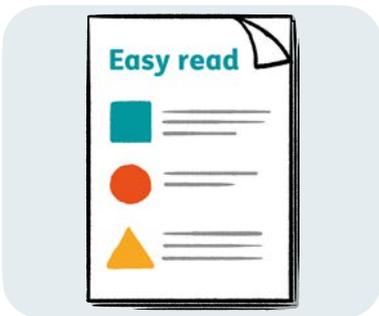
- offer extra support to help you communicate if you need it.

What you should expect

When you communicate with health and care services, you should expect:



- them to get in touch in ways you find accessible, like text messages.



- services to give information in ways you can read and understand, like Braille, Easy Read or large print.



- to be supported at appointments if you need it, like by a British Sign Language interpreter.



- health and care services to support you to communicate, like helping you to use a hearing aid.

Giving these rights to more people



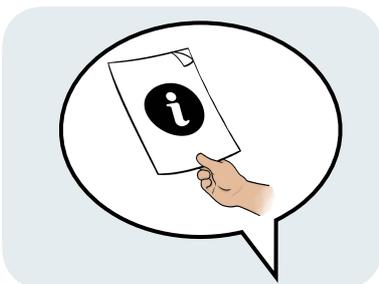
Some people think that more people should get these rights.



For example, people whose first language is not English, or people with dyslexia.



We need to hear from more people to decide what the best thing to do is.



Please get in touch with us about times you have been given information from health and care services.



These can be good or bad times.

Making sure people get information they can understand



A lot of people told us about whether they were getting information in a way they could understand.



Some people were getting information in a good way, but many more were not.



Often, when health services are made, they do not think about people with different communication needs.



Some services do not offer basic support that people should get.



Sometimes, even if a service knew that a person had communication needs, they still sent information in a way that was difficult to understand.



These problems can be because health and care services do not know about:

- the Accessible Information Standard.
- how to give people information in the way they understand.



Doctors, nurses and care staff should get training to understand people's communication needs.



People should know what they should expect from the Accessible Information Standard.



This will make it easier for them to ask for support if they need it.

COVID-19



COVID-19 is also called Coronavirus. It is an illness that has spread around the world. It can affect your lungs and breathing.

COVID-19 led to more problems for a lot of people, like:



- not being able to understand government rules because the information wasn't clear and easy to understand.



- not getting information from the NHS in the way that they needed.



- not being able to lipread what staff were saying because of masks.



- not being able to get help from family and friends at appointments because of rules about who could go.

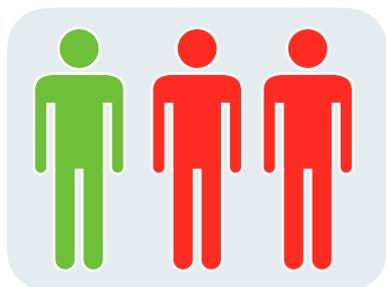
What services are doing



We asked the NHS some questions to understand how well they were following the Accessible Information Standard.



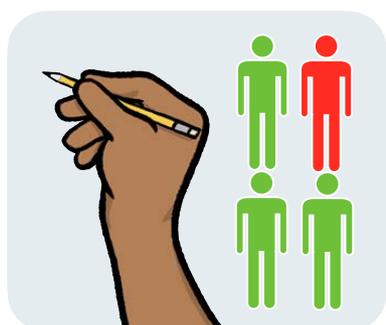
150 NHS organisations answered.



Only 1 in 3 were doing everything they should be doing.



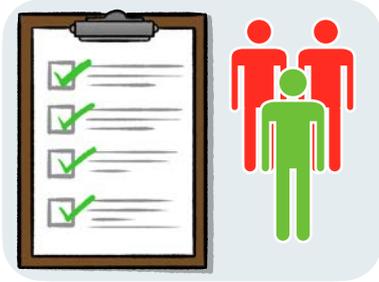
Only half of NHS services said they ask patients about their information needs when they first get in touch.



1 in 4 services said they do not write people's communication needs on their file, or only do it some of the time.



Only a little over half of services share information about people's needs with other services.



Only 1 in 3 organisations had tried to find out if they met the Accessible Information Standard in the last 3 years.

What we want to do



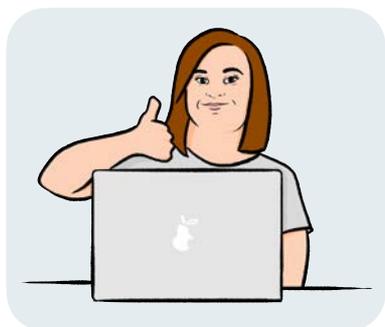
We are asking the Government and services to do 5 things to make sure more people are given information in the way they can understand.



1. The Government should check health and care services are following the Accessible Information Standard.



2. Every health and care service should have someone who checks their service supports people with all communication needs.



3. There should be better computer systems to let people tell services about their needs.



4. People with communication needs should be involved in making better services.



5. All NHS staff should get training to understand how to support people with different communication needs.

Get involved



You can help us to make sure people get health and care information in the way they need it.



You can look at our website here:
www.healthwatch.co.uk/yourcareyourway