

Lambert Medical Centre

Accessible Information Policy

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Introduction

The Accessible Information Standard aims to ensure that disabled people have access to information they can understand and the communication support they may need. The Standard applies to service providers across the NHS and adult social care system. As organisations that provide NHS services, GP practices are required by law to follow the Standard under Section 250 of the Health and Social Care Act.

Key requirements

There are five key requirements of the Standard:

1. Ask patients and carers if they have any information or communication needs, and find out how to meet their needs;
2. Record those needs in a set way;
3. Highlight a patient's file, so it is clear that they have information or communication needs, and clearly explain how those needs should be met;
4. Share information about a person's needs with other NHS and adult social care providers, when they have consent or permission to do so;
5. Make sure that people get information in an accessible way and communication support if they need it.

What We Will Do To Meet the Standard

1. Ask patients and carers if they have any information or communication needs, and find out how to meet their needs

We will ask patients or their carers 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.

New patients will be asked at the point of registration if they have any communication or information needs relating to a disability, impairment or sensory loss, and if so, what they are (there is a section on the New Patient Questionnaire that covers this question).

Existing patients can be asked opportunistically (e.g. when making an appointment, with repeat prescriptions, newsletters, posters, email, text message, information screens, website)

Patients should be asked to self-define their communication/information needs and it is these needs (and not the disability) which should be recorded.

2. Record those needs in a set way

Once a patient has informed the practice that they have communication or information needs relating to a disability, impairment or sensory loss, the document will be scanned and a coded entry added to their medical record.

3. Highlight a patient's file, so it is clear that they have information or communication needs, and clearly explain how these needs should be met

In order to inform all users and provide the opportunity to keep information up to date a Major Message will also be added to the medical record so that any user will be aware of the needs each time the medical record is accessed.

4. Share information about a person's needs with other NHS and adult social providers, when they have consent or permission to do so

As the information is being recorded in a standardised way via Read Code and users are being informed of any needs every time they enter the record the information recorded will be shared subject to patient's choice regarding the sharing of information.

5. Make sure that people get information in an accessible way and communication support if they need it

The Practice provides one or more contact methods which are accessible to the patients. Methods include email, text message or telephone.

Where information/communication needs are identified, information (e.g. correspondence) will be provided in one or more accessible formats (e.g. non-standard print). Alternative formats can be provided if available either through auto-generated systems, or through prompting staff to make alternative arrangements. The adjustments made should be reasonable – but this does not mean that the patient must always receive information in their preferred format. What is important is that they can access and understand the information.

Where needed, appropriate professional communication support is arranged by the practice to enable patients and carers to effectively receive NHS care.

A patient's family member, friend or carer may also provide necessary support in certain circumstances and where this is the patient's explicit preference.

Patients or carers themselves will not be asked to meet the costs of any information or communication needs.