

Accessibility toolkit: Primary care

This toolkit can be used by those working in Primary Care to help when supporting people with different accessibility needs.



Communication tips

People with hearing loss



Book an interpreter. A patient should not use a friend or family member to interpret for them. They will not be trained to interpret medical jargon and it will remove the patient's right to independence and privacy.

Even if an interpreter is present, it is respectful **to speak directly to the patient.**

Make sure you have the patient's attention before talking. You can wave to get their attention and make sure they are watching the interpreter.

Avoid covering your face or mouth and speak clearly at your normal pace and volume.

Reduce background noise.

Make sure the room is well lit. This is so the patient can see your face clearly. Avoid strong directional light which can cause harsh shadows and make it harder to see you clearly. Use blinds or move to better lighting if this is a problem.

Use plain English if writing. Remember not all British Sign Language users can understand written English so it is important to find out their communication preferences.

Use written notes, pictures or diagrams if you have trouble explaining something.

Use gestures and facial expressions and **point** to parts of the body.

Check the patient understands you.

For more information about communicating with people who are d/Deaf or have hearing loss you can visit www.rnid.org.uk

Communication tips

People with dementia



Focus on the person - make sure you are fully present.

Treat the patient as an adult - be careful not to patronise them or speak for them if they are capable of speaking for themselves with time and support.

Limit distractions like the radio and other background noises.

Use positive body language - smile and show warmth and compassion. Turn your body towards the person and make eye contact when speaking.

Say the person's name when talking to them.

Be specific - use people's names or the name of objects rather than he/she/it.

Touch the person's arm to make physical connection and **attract their attention**, if they feel comfortable with this.

Speak slowly, clearly and in short sentences.

Listen carefully with empathy - don't try to argue, reason with or correct the person.

Give plenty of time to answer questions or respond in conversations so they can organise their thoughts and find the right words.

Use gestures to act what you are saying and point to body parts if you need to.

Use pictures to illustrate what you are saying.

Avoid open-ended questions or offering too many choices.

For more information about communicating with people with dementia you can visit www.nhs.uk/conditions/dementia/living-with-dementia/communication

Communication tips

People with learning disabilities



Use accessible language - avoid jargon or long words that may be hard to understand.

Ask what their communication preference is and be prepared to use different communication tools. Check if the person has a communication passport.

When speaking on the phone **speak slowly and clearly**, using easy to understand words.

Make sure information given is accessible for everyone. Easy read formats are best for people with learning disabilities. Use bigger text and bullet points and keep writing to a minimum. Don't use too much colour either.

A lot of people with a learning disability prefer face to face and one to one appointments so **check what they prefer**.

You may have to help people use computers, tablets and mobile phones. For example, to show them how to book an appointment online.

Allow a good amount of time when communicating - **don't rush people**. People with learning disabilities may need a double appointment to allow them time.

Make sure the person understands what you are telling them.

Use gestures and **facial expressions** and **point to body parts** if you need to.

Use real objects, photos and pictures to communicate, which patients may find helpful.

Use **open ended questions**.

For more information about communicating with people with learning disabilities you can visit www.mencap.org.uk/learning-disability-explained/communicating-people-learning-disability.

Communication tips

Blind or partially sighted people



Sight loss can sometimes be hidden - some people may have useful vision which allows them to move around independently but they may need help with signing in, completing forms, reading standard print or finding rooms.

Ensure the surgery is accessible to people with sight loss - signs need to be clear with good colour contrast and at eye level. There should be appropriate lighting in all areas and there should be audio and visual options for announcing appointments.

Find out what communication format the person needs. This may be in large print, braille, audio or electronically. Make sure any forms of communication to the person are in the format they need.

Helping the patient - make sure you introduce yourself to the person with sight loss. Offer them support, they may need help with filling in forms and getting around the surgery. Ask them how they would like to be guided, i.e. preferred side, hand on shoulder, hand on elbow or follow.

Let patients know about any written information. This includes any additional information a health professional wants to give the person such as instructions for prescribed medication.

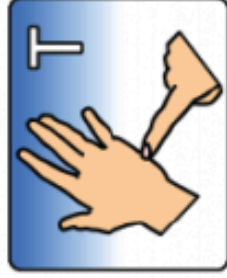
Make sure touch screen signing in systems are accessible - good font size, colour contrasts and includes audio. Or make sure people with sight loss get help with it.

Include details of any accessibility requirements in referral letters sent for the person. For example, 'The patient has sight loss and requires information in large print'.

Make sure people with sight loss are **offered a method of consultation that suits them**. For example they may prefer to have a face to face appointment rather than a video one.

For more information about supporting blind or partially sighted people you can visit www.rnib.org.uk

BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE - FINGERSPELLING



**RIGHT
HANDED**



british-sign.co.uk

LEARN BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE ONLINE
AT **WWW.BRITISH-SIGN.CO.UK**

BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE - FINGERSPELLING



**LEFT
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Accessible Information Standard

Introduced in 2016, the Accessible Information Standard (AIS) is a law that all organisations who offer NHS or adult social care services must follow to support people with a communication or information need.

Who is it for?



Anyone with a disability, impairment or sensory loss

5

Important steps need to be followed as part of the Standard

Aim: people to have information they understand and communication support they need



1

Identify

Staff must find out if people have any communication needs and if any support is needed



2

Record

People's communication needs should be clearly recorded in their patient records



3

Flag

An alert or flag should be used on their file so that all staff are aware of communication needs



4

Share

Information about communication needs must be shared with other health and social care services



5

Act

Services should make sure people get information in accessible ways and the support they need



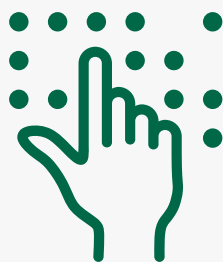
How do you

communicate?

Do you, or the person you are caring for, have a disability or sensory loss and need to receive information in a way that can be easily understood?



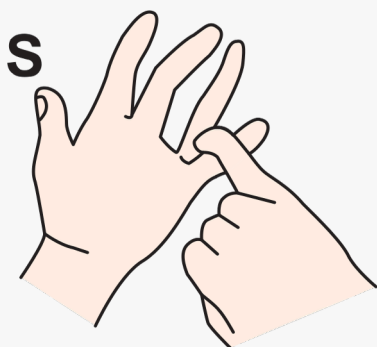
Large print



Braille



**Email or SMS
text**



BSL



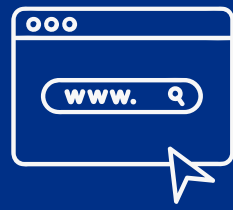
Easy read



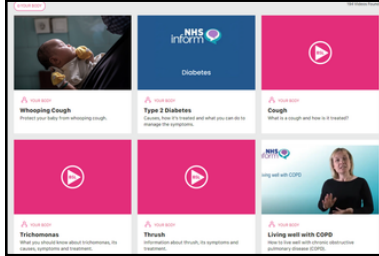
**Other
communication
support**

If yes, please let us know so we can make sure you have access to information you understand

Useful websites



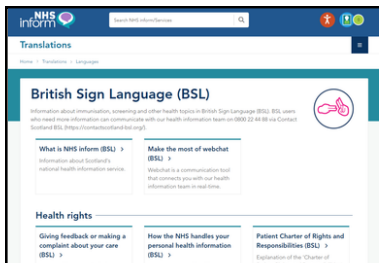
Sign Health



Sign Health have produced lots of great videos for Deaf people and have a BSL health video library as well as other resources.

Web link - www.signhealth.org.uk

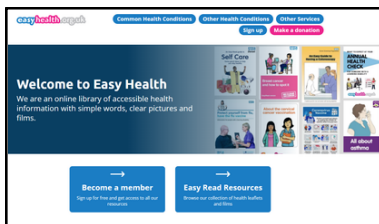
NHS inform



This website also has lots of videos in BSL around health topics.

Web link - www.nhsinform.scot/translations/languages/britishsign-language-bsl

Easy health



An online library of accessible health information. The library contains videos and easy read resources that can be downloaded for free.

Web link - www.easyhealth.org.uk

Mencap



Mencap have some great handy guides and information about learning disability for people working in health services.

Web link - www.mencap.org.uk/help-and-advice/resources-healthcare-professionals