



Policy Name	Accessible Information and Communications
Policy Number	
Date of issue	July 2016 v4
Policy author(s)	S. Morris
Officer responsible / accountable	Chief Executive
Who policy applies to	All staff employed by the Society, students, those working on placement and volunteers. The policy is particularly relevant to service users and their families and/or carers
Relevant policies to be read in conjunction with	Equality and Diversity Policy, Complaints Policy, Data Protection Policy
Date approved	20.07.16
Date of review	

It is a contractual requirement that employees familiarise themselves with all policies and procedures which are relevant to their employment within the Society.



## **Accessible Information and Communications Policy**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 In 2016 the NHS introduced an Accessible Information Standard. This standard applies to all providers of NHS and publicly funded adult social care. This includes:
- providers of publicly funded Adult Social Care or services Adult Social Care or services bodies (in their role as service providers);
  - providers of Adult Social Care from the voluntary and community or private sectors;
  - providers of Public Health, including advice and information.
- 1.2 The aim of the Standard is to establish a framework to ensure and service users (and where appropriate carers and parents) who have information or communication needs relating to a disability, impairment or sensory loss receive accessible information and communication support appropriate to their needs.
- 1.3 This policy sets out how the Society will meet its requirements under the Accessible Information Standard
- 1.4 Accessible information means information which is able to be read or received and understood by the individual or group for which it is intended. This can mean that it is provided in an alternative format to standard printed or handwritten English in order to meet the specific communication needs of a group or individual. Such alternative formats can include large print, braille, email or providing information by audio.

### **2. Relevant legislation and guidance**

2.1 The relevant legislation and guidance which informs this policy includes:

- NHS Accessible Information Standard 2016;
- The Equality Act 2010;

- Health and Social Care Act 2012;
- The Care Act 2014.

### **3. Responsibilities**

3.1 The Executive Committee is responsible for approving this policy. The operational responsibility for implementing this policy lies with the Chief Executive supported by the Heads of Children and Adult Services, Operational Leads, Locality Managers and relevant Business Support managers.

### **4. Implementation of the standard**

4.1 The Society will take the following steps to implement the standard:

- ensure systems and processes are in place to consistently and routinely identify, record, flag and share service users', carers' and parents' information and communication needs, where they relate to a disability, impairment or sensory loss, as part of service user records;
- have a consistent approach to identification of information/communication needs of an individual at first point of contact with the Customer Pathway team;
- have a consistent process for recording of information/communication needs as part of service user and or parent/carer records;
- ensure that communication needs are met by providing information and communication/ correspondence in alternative formats upon request;
- ensure that service users with communication needs have those needs met when having meetings/appointments with Society staff eg. Support Planner, Locality Managers;
- have a mechanism in place to ensure systems and processes for meeting communication needs are regularly reviewed and are working;

- Implement guidance for arranging and booking professional communication support;
- include any recorded data about individuals' information and/or communication support needs as part of existing data-sharing processes, and as a routine part of the referral and handover process between the Customer Pathway Team, Locality Managers and external organisations or service providers with the individual's consent;
- establish and use electronic flags or alerts on the CRM system to indicate that an individual has a recorded information and / or communication need, and prompt staff to take appropriate action and / or trigger generation of information in an accessible format;
- ensure that steps are taken so that individuals receive information in an alternative, accessible format;
- ensure that staff continue to follow relevant existing legal duties, in particular, those set out in the Data Protection Act 1998 around the handling and processing of data;
- implement an accessible complaints policy and ensure there are mechanisms in place for individuals to make a complaint, raise a concern or pass on feedback in alternative formats and with communication support;
- develop a mechanism to support individuals with information and communications needs to provide feedback on their experience of services, and of receiving information in appropriate formats and / or communication support.