

Accessible information policy

This practice policy implements the requirements of NHS England's 'Accessible Information Standard' to ensure that patients and their carers obtain information in a way that they can understand and receive communication support (for example, interpreters, signers) when they have identified this as necessary.

We recognise that patients with a disability and their carers might feel disadvantaged when contacting the practice for information and will endeavour to help them obtain information easily and in a way that they can understand by:

- 1 Asking patients and carers to describe any communication or information needs they might have and how we might meet these needs
- 2 Recording any identified needs in the patient's record
- 3 Highlighting those needs in the patient's records, so it is clear that they have information or communication needs, and clearly explain how those needs should be met
- 4 Sharing information on communication needs (with the patient's permission) when making a referral to other healthcare providers
- 5 Providing patients and carers with the information they need in the most appropriate format – for example, large print, braille, audio-format or electronically. And making it easy for patients to contact the practice using their preferred method – for example, by offering email, text messaging, telephone and text relay.

Appointment times for patients with information or communication needs may need to be longer. All team members should check this when a patient presents at reception or makes contact with the practice to make an appointment.

Ask patients and carers

All patients must be asked if they have any communication or information needs relating to a disability, impairment or sensory loss and how these needs might be best met.

- New patients should be asked at their first appointment
- Existing patients should be asked when they next contact the practice.

The receptionist will ask each patient on arrival at the practice and will note the patient's response in their clinical records and bring it to the attention of the treating dentist. The dentist will assess the information or communication needs identified by the patient.

Recording communication needs

When the patient has informed us of a communication difficulty we will make a note on the computer systems (Software of Excellence) colour highlighted 'pop-up' note and medical history so that it is visible every visit by any staff member who has access to the records and suitable measures can be met before, during and after any appointment.

Patients are contacted for the necessary appointments via telephone and then letter if no response unless stated otherwise.

Patients who are visually impaired depending on the extent of impairment will receive a call, large print printed copies of information needed to relay and braille if necessary. In practice audio can also be used.

Patients who have hearing impairments will be mainly sent a letter, SMS or an email if we have access to an ear loop in the practice is available. BSL interpreters are also available.

Illiterate patients will be given information over the telephone and can have information read to them to gain consent and any personal information such as medical history forms to be completed can be done in surgery with the clinical staff members.

Text messages are sent to all patients routinely 48 hours prior to appointments unless the patient has requested otherwise.

Patients that do not speak English or broken English will need an interpreter service in which case the patient will be given the choice of language from Language line service list and then we can contact for the appropriate language interpreter.

Available formats

- Information about the practice is available in the following formats: large print, braille, audio and electronic
These formats can be obtained by the practice from NHS England
- British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter services are available from Action hearing loss [0845 6858000](tel:08456858000) / [07537410086](tel:07537410086) or communication.services@hearingloss.org.uk
- Deafblind manual interpreter services are available from: <https://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/how-we-help/support-and-care/communication-support/deafblind-intepreters/>

Practice contacts

The following team members have skills that can be useful when patients with information or communication needs attend the practice:

All staff members have the relevant experience, equipment and contacts to deal appropriately with any communication needs of patient's that attend the practice.

Date: July 2018

Review date: July 2019
Updated by Katey Blakemore