

Accessible Information Standard

Accessing health services if you're deaf or have hearing loss

By Harriet Owen, Community Support Officer

Action on Hearing Loss



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- Founded 1911
- Provide support for the **11 million people in the UK who are deaf or have a hearing loss** through:
 - Day-to-day care/outreach services
 - Supply of communication services/training (e.g. interpreters)
 - Providing advice
 - Campaigns
 - Supporting research

Barriers Accessing Health Services

- Action on Hearing loss research into accessing health services found:
 - 28% of people with hearing loss come away unclear of their diagnosis
 - 19% of people with hearing loss are unsure of their medication
 - 14% missed an appointment as they didn't hear their name being called out
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- People with hearing loss missing appointments costs the NHS **£14 million a year** (NHS England Estimate)

Accessible Information Standard

- A legal requirement that came into force on **31st July 2016**
 - Affects all NHS and adult social care providers in England, e.g. GPs, hospital departments, care homes etc.
 - For all people with sensory loss and disabilities, including people with a hearing loss.
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Identify

Providers must ask people with a disability and/or sensory loss if they need help to be contacted, to communicate well, and to understand written information

What to Expect

- Health professionals should ask:
 - Details about your communication needs
 - How would you like to be contacted?
E.g. Next Generation Text, email, textphone etc.
 - What is your preferred communication method?
E.g. Lipreading, having things written down, BSL etc.
- We have created communication cards so you can approach your health provider with this information

Record

- **Record:** record communication and information needs in a standardized way
 - Information must be recorded using **defined and clear terms** so it can be easily understood
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- You can ask for the information to be recorded on your **Summary Care Record** which is accessible if you visit hospital or an urgent care centre

Flag

Flag: details, while confidential, must be highly visible or linked to an electronic alert to prompt staff to take action.

This information needs to be **highly visible**

This may include updating software to have **electronic alerts** that let staff know your communication needs and preferred method of communication

For example, there needs to be a clear alert if you must have a BSL interpreter to ensure they are booked in advance

Share

Providers should share communication and information needs with other services as part of a routine referral, discharge and handover process, in line with data-protection

Meet

People with disabilities and sensory loss need a variety of ways in which they can get in touch with services. This variety should be available along with communication support being provided when needed. Information should be sent out in an appropriate format.

Meet



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- Health services should make sure that one or more accessible contact and communication methods are available:
 - Email
 - Online booking
 - Text
 - Textphone/Next Generation Text (NGT Lite) (this uses typed messages relayed to the other caller via an operator)
 - Video relay (conversation relayed through a BSL interpreter using video)
- They should get in touch with you using methods you understand and can access

Communication Professionals



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Communication professionals should be used when needed, including: BSL interpreters, notetakers or speech-to-text-reporters

They must be booked in advance - leave around 4 weeks

The standard sets out that they must be appropriately qualified



Action on Hearing Loss recommends the use of **NRCPD registered** professionals

Next Appointment



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You should be asked about your needs and communication methods at your next appointment!

Receptions and waiting areas should now be ready.

They may have new technology or systems in place such as:

- Pager systems
- LED displays
- Staff to collect you for your appointment

Staff should have good deaf awareness:

- They should face you when talking to you
- They should speak clearly (but not shout)
- They should not obscure their face

Hearing Loop systems should be clearly signposted and in working order

What to do if your health services aren't accessible



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- Give feedback directly or make a formal complaint
- If making a formal complaint make sure you:
 - Follow the right process
 - Make your points clearly
 - Explain what you would like them to do
 - Take the complaint further if you don't get a satisfactory response
- **Complaints process also has to be accessible**
- You can follow your complaint to the Parliamentary and Health Ombudsman
- Go to actiononhearingloss.org.uk/NHShowtocomplain for more details

Further Information

Action on Hearing Loss Website

- ON THE RECORD
- Visit our website
- Includes a summary of the standard and some useful templates:
- Letter template for your GP Practice Manager
- Communication card (on our website or leaflets)

Accessible Information Standard Website

- You can download a copy of the standard in various formats
- You can also download implementation guidance
- <https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/accessibleinfo>

Thank You!



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Leaflets are available with further information or you can contact the Action on Hearing Loss Information Line with details below:

Information Line

Action on Hearing Loss, 9 Bakewell Road, Orton Southgate, Peterborough, PE2 6XU

Telephone: 0808 808 0123 (freephone)

Textphone: 0808 808 9000 (freephone)

Fax: 020 7296 8199

SMS: 0780 0000 360

Email: Information.Line@hearingloss.org.uk