



# Accessible Information Standard



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# What is the AIS?

- The Accessible Information Standard - known as SCCI1605 Accessible Information – is a standard for implementation by **all** organisations that provide NHS or adult social care.
- All organisations that offer NHS or Adult Social Care **must** follow the Standard by law.

# Why do we need the AIS?

- **The Equality Act 2010** places a legal duty on all service providers to make “reasonable adjustments” to support disabled people, including providing information in “an accessible format”.
- Service users with communication needs often receive inaccessible information or are provided with inadequate communication assistance. This has serious implications for patient choice and safety.



# Who does the Standard apply to?

*The scope of the Standard extends to ‘individuals (patients and service users, and where appropriate the parents and carers of patients and service users) who have information and / or communication support needs which are related to or caused by a disability, impairment or sensory loss.’*

- **Disability:** A person (P) has a disability if – P has a physical or mental impairment, and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on P’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities (The Equality Act 2010 )
- **Disabled people:** Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis (Article 1 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities)
- **Impairment:** A functional limitation which may lead to a person being defined as disabled (Equality and Humans Rights Commission)
- **Sensory impairment:** A hearing and/or sight impairment. These include deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing and blind.

# Impact of the AIS

The Standard dictates that people with a disability or sensory loss should:

- Be able to contact, and be contacted by, services in accessible ways
- Receive information and correspondence in formats they can read and understand
- Be supported by a communication professional at appointments if this is needed to support communication
- Get support from health and care staff to communicate.

# Benefits of the AIS

1. Improved health and wellbeing amongst patients in the key affected groups due to increased take-up of early intervention and prevention opportunities as part of national programmes (for example NHS Health Checks and 'flu vaccination), ability to participate in decision-making and improved compliance with treatment / medical advice.
2. Improved patient safety due to ability to understand and follow information regarding care and treatment, including medicines management and pre- and post-operative advice.
3. More appropriate use of services by patients in affected groups including increased use of primary / routine care and services and reduction in urgent and emergency care usage.
4. Improvement in the effectiveness of clinical care due to addressing barriers to communication.
5. Improvement in patient experience and satisfaction, and reduction in complaints and litigation associated with failure to provide accessible information and communication support

(Accessible Information Standard Specification v.1.1, Page 45)

# Statutory Obligations

- Accessible Information Policy must be published
- Accessible Complaints Policy must be published
- NHS Trusts/CCGs must support providers to comply
- CQC must assess evidence of compliance





# Implementation of AIS

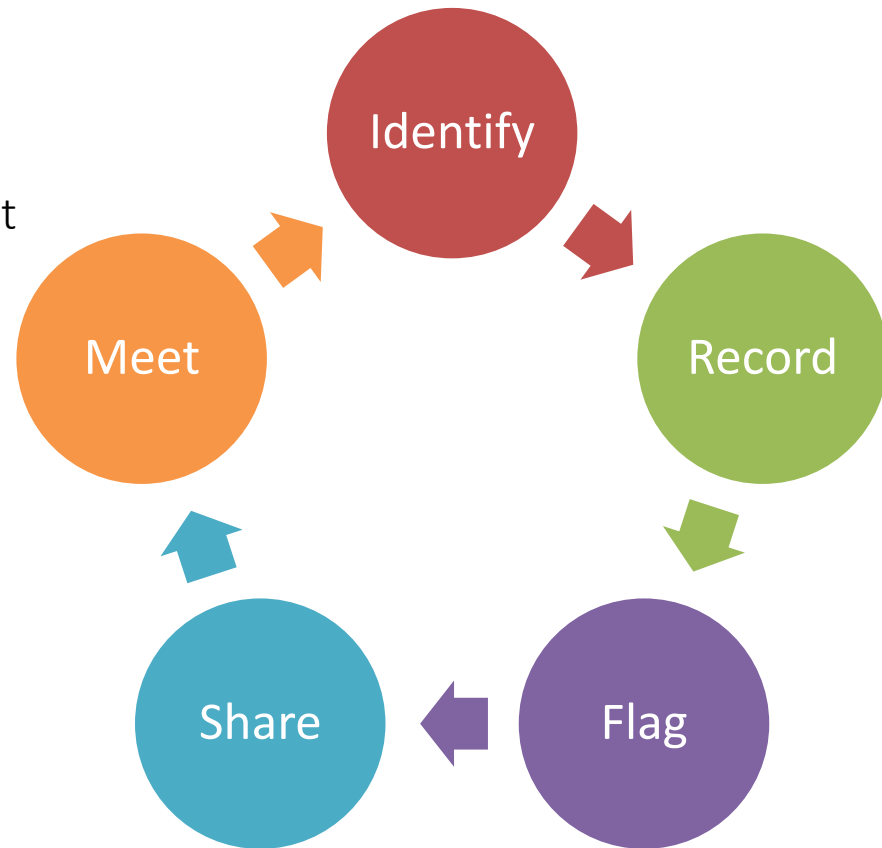
The standard applies to service providers across the NHS and implementation will require organisations to make changes to:

- Policy
- Procedure
- Behaviour



# Implementation of AIS

1. **Identify** the service users that require communication support, and the type of support required
2. **Record** this information to ensure it is available to those accessing the patients records
3. **Flag** the patients specific needs to allow other organisations to view this information and ensure they are 'highly visible'
4. **Share** as part of existing data sharing process and ensure this becomes a routine part of discharge and handover
5. **Meet** the service users communication needs



# Identify

Groups of people likely to be affected by the standard:

- Blind
- Deaf
- Deafblind
- Hearing or visual loss
- Learning Disability
- Autism
- Dementia
- Parents and carers, if appropriate

The Standard also includes people with communication needs relating to different types of disability or sensory loss, eg. following a stroke or brain injury, and/or a mental health condition that affects their ability to communicate.

# Record, Flag and Share

- **Record** needs in a clear, unambiguous and standardised way in electronic and/or paper based records
- **Flag** any communication needs and ensure that recorded needs are highly visible whenever the record is accessed, and ensure that a prompt for action is included.
- **Share** information about individuals' communication needs as part of existing data sharing procedures (follow existing information governance frameworks)

# Meet - Information Formats

Services **must** provide information in accessible formats for those who need them. This applies to all information given to the service user. Below are information formats that can be requested and they are all services offered by **The Language Shop**.

- **Audio** - Information is presented in an audio format instead of written. This is a recording of someone speaking and stored on to CD (compact disc) or electronic file, such as MP3.
- **Braille** - A reading format used by some people who are blind, deafblind or who have a visual impairment. There are a various versions of braille so it is important to ask the individual which they require
- **Easy Read** -Written information in an 'easy read' format in which words and phrases are supplemented by pictures, diagrams, symbols or photographs to support understanding and to clarify the text.
- **Large Print** - Printed information is enlarged. It is a form of accessible information that may be needed by a person who is blind or has a visual impairment. Different font sizes may be needed by different people, so it is important to check with the service user.



# Meet – Alternative Communication Methods

Services **must** arrange for support from an appropriate communication professional where this is needed. Below are some of the communication methods that can be requested and they are all services offered by **The Language Shop**.

- **British Sign Language Interpreters** – A visual- gestural language that is the first preferred language of many deaf people and some deafblind people.
- **British Sign Language video remote interpreting** – An online service in which a BSL interpreter is accessed via a video link. It works using a computer and webcam. It enables a direct connection to an interpreter.
- **Lip-speaker** – A person who repeats the words said without using their voice, so that others can read their lips easily.
- **Note-taker** – A note-taker produces a set of notes for people who are able to read English but need communication support, for example because they are deaf. Note-takers take handwritten or electronic notes to display to the service user.
- **Speech to text reporter (STTR)** – A STTR types verbatim account of what is being said and the information appears on the screen in real-time. A transcript may be available following the meeting.
- **Deaf Relay** – A face to face interaction between one or more hearing people and a deaf service user with specific language needs. A BSL interpreter must be present.



# Resources

- Access the Accessible Information Standard here:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/accessible-information-standard-specification/>

- The Language Shop:
  - [thelanguageshop@newham.gov.uk](mailto:thelanguageshop@newham.gov.uk)
  - 020 3373 4000

