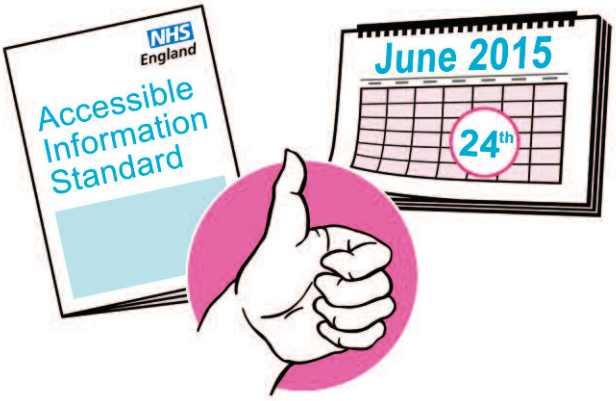
easy read

NHS England

Making health and social care information accessible
Update July 2015 – accessible information standard approved

Summary



The new Accessible Information Standard was agreed on 24th June 2015.

All organisations that provide NHS or adult social care must follow the Accessible Information Standard by law.

Organisations must follow the standard in full by 31st July 2016.

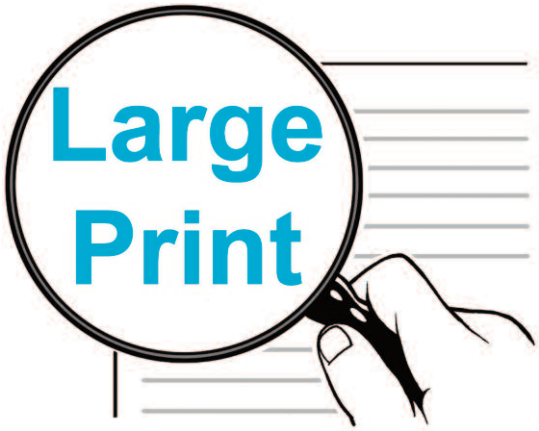
There are also some things they must do before then.

Aims

The Accessible Information Standard aims to make sure that disabled people have access to information that they can understand and any communication support they might need.

The standard tells organisations how to make information accessible to the following people:

- Patients
- Service users
- Their carers and parents.



This includes making sure that people get information in different formats if they need it, such as:

- Large print

- Braille

- Easy read

- Via email.

The Accessible Information Standard also tells organisations how to support people's communication needs, for example by offering support from a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter, deafblind manual interpreter or an advocate.

What does the Accessible Information Standard tell organisations to do?

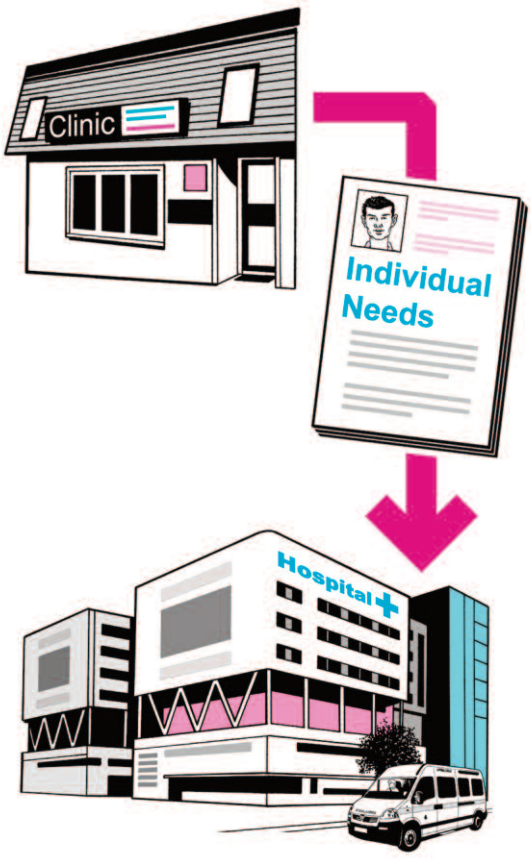
As part of the Accessible Information Standard, organisations that provide NHS or adult social care must do five things. They must:

1 2 3 4 5

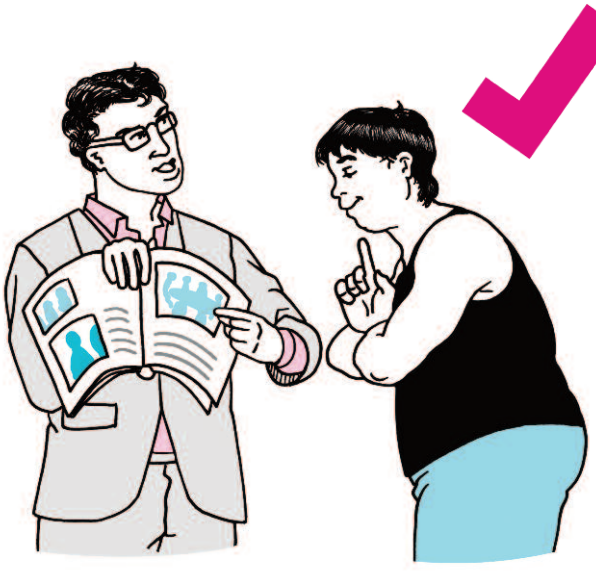
1. Ask people if they have any information or communication needs, and find out how to meet their needs.

2. Record those needs in a set way.

3 Highlight a person's file, so it is clear that they have information or communication needs, and clearly explain how those needs should be met.

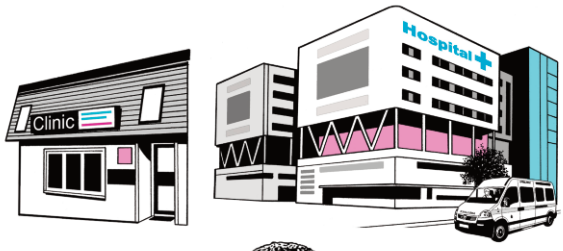


4 Share information about a person's needs with other NHS and adult social care providers, when they have consent or permission to do so.



5 Make sure that people get information in an accessible way and communication support if they need it.

Who must follow the Accessible Information Standard?



All organisations that provide NHS or adult social care must follow the standard.

This includes NHS Trusts and Foundation Trusts, and GP practices.

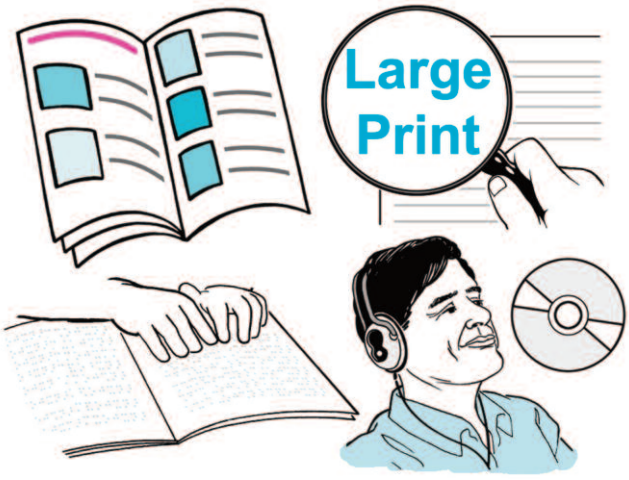
Organisations that pay for and make decisions about NHS and adult social care services must also support the standard.

Why must organisations follow the standard?

Organisations must follow the standard by law. This is explained in Section 250 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

More Information

More information on the Accessible Information Standard can be found on the NHS England website www.england.nhs.uk/accessibleinfo



More information will be published during summer and autumn 2015. This will include more information in alternative formats.

Charities including Action on Hearing Loss, CHANGE, Sense, and the Royal National Institute of Blind people (RNIB) will also be providing information.

The 'Information Standards Notice,' which tells organisations how and why they must follow the standard, can be accessed via the Health and Social Care Information Centre website at www.hscic.gov.uk/isce/publication/scci1605.

For more information, please contact NHS England via email at england.nhs.participation@nhs.net or call 01138 253002.

You can also write to:
Accessible Information Standard,
NHS England, 7E56,
Quarry House, Quarry Hill,
Leeds, LS2 7UE.