**Accessible Information Standard Policy**

**Document Control**

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# Introduction

## Policy statement

The [Health and Social Care Act 2012](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/7/section/250) states that Burscough Family Practice must have regard to, and implement the [Accessible Information Standard](https://www.england.nhs.uk/about/equality/equality-hub/patient-equalities-programme/equality-frameworks-and-information-standards/accessibleinfo/) (AIS).

The AIS sets out a specific, consistent approach to identifying, recording, flagging, sharing and meeting the information and communication support needs of patients, service users, carers and parents with a disability, impairment or sensory loss.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the [CQC’s GP Mythbuster 20: Making information accessible](https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-providers/gps/gp-mythbuster-20-making-information-accessible) and its document titled [Meeting the Accessible Information Standard](https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-providers/meeting-accessible-information-standard).

## Status

The organisation aims to design and implement policies and procedures that meet the diverse needs of our service and workforce, ensuring that none are placed at a disadvantage over others, in accordance with the [Equality Act 2010](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents). Consideration has been given to the impact this policy might have regarding the individual protected characteristics of those to whom it applies.

This document and any procedures contained within it are non-contractual and may be modified or withdrawn at any time. For the avoidance of doubt, it does not form part of your contract of employment. Furthermore, this document applies to all employees of the organisation and other individuals performing functions in relation to the organisation such as agency workers, locums and contractors.

## 1.3 KLOE (England only)

In England, the Care Quality Commission would expect any primary care organisation to have a policy to support this process and this should be used as evidence of compliance against CQC Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE).[[1]](#footnote-1)

Specifically, Burscough Family Practice will need to answer the CQC Key Question on ‘Effective’, ‘Caring’ and ‘Responsive’.

The following is the CQC definition of Effective:

*By effective, we mean that people’s care, treatment and support achieves good outcomes, promotes a good quality of life and is based on the best available evidence.*

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| **CQC KLOE E1** | Are people’s needs assessed and care and treatment delivered in line with current legislation, standards and evidence-based guidance to achieve effective outcomes? |

The following is the CQC definition of Caring:

*By caring, we mean that the service involves and treats people with compassion, kindness, dignity and respect.*

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| **CQC KLOE C2** | How does the service support people to express their views and be actively involved in making decisions about their care, treatment and support as far as possible? |

The following is the CQC definition of Responsive:

*By responsive, we mean that services meet people’s needs.*

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| **CQC KLOE R1** | How do people receive personalised care that is responsive to their needs? |
| **CQC KLOE R2** | Do services take account of the particular needs and choices of different people? |

## Training and support

The organisation will provide guidance and support to help those to whom it applies to understand their rights and responsibilities under this policy. Additional support will be provided to managers and supervisors to enable them to deal more effectively with matters arising from this policy.

# The Accessible Information Standard

## Aim

[NHS England](https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/accessilbe-info-specification-v1-1.pdf) explains that the aim of the AIS is to establish a framework and set a clear direction such that patients 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 (“information which is able to be read or received and understood by the individual or group for which it is intended”)
* Communication support (“support which is needed to enable effective, accurate dialogue between a professional and a service user to take place”)

This includes accessible information and communication support to enable individuals to:

* + Make decisions about their health and wellbeing and about their care and treatment
  + Self-manage conditions
  + Access services appropriately and independently
  + Make choices about treatments and procedures including the provision or withholding of consent

## Five steps of the AIS

The [NHS England Accessible Information Specification](https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/accessilbe-info-specification-v1-1.pdf) explains that to achieve compliance with the AIS, there are five distinct steps this organisation must complete. Each step is detailed below with an overview of how this organisation will achieve compliance.

|  |  |
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| Step | Action(s) |
| 1. Identification of needs | * This organisation will ensure there is a disability and reasonable adjustment section on the new patient registration and health check questionnaire, enabling needs to be identified and recorded when patients first interact or register with the organisation * This organisation will opportunistically identify patients who may need reasonable adjustments during consultations and contact with the organisation * This organisation will promote self-identification on the organisation website and in waiting areas by means of posters |
| 2. Recording of needs | * This organisation will use the reasonable adjustments impairment and adjustment codes provided by [NHS Digital](https://digital.nhs.uk/services/reasonable-adjustment-flag/impairment-and-adjustment-codes) when recording reasonable adjustments. |
| 3. Flagging of needs | * This organisation will create a local digital flag on the clinical records of patients, ensuring staff are prompted and can respond to the individual’s reasonable adjustment requirements |
| 4. Sharing of needs | * This organisation will share the reasonable adjustment needs of patients with other organisations involved in the care of the patient (consent must be sought from the patient) |
| 5. Meeting needs | * This organisation will ensure the reasonable adjustment needs of patients are met by involving patients in their own care and recognising what matters to and is important to them * This organisation will ensure a hearing loop is available at reception and a portable loop is available for use during consultations * This organisation will ensure there is timely access to interpreter and translation services |

Additional information on meeting the needs of patients can be found in the organisation’s [Reasonable Adjustment Digital Flag policy](https://practiceindex.co.uk/gp/forum/resources/reasonable-adjustment-digital-flag-policy.2077/).

## Information in different languages

[CQC GP Mythbuster 20: Making information accessible](https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-providers/gps/gp-mythbuster-20-making-information-accessible) advises that there is no need for this organisation to have information leaflets in multiple languages. However, this organisation must be responsive to the needs of the population that it serves, ensuring information is available in a format they understand and by enabling access to interpretation and translation services when necessary.

# Useful resources

Listed are useful links to NHS England guidance on implementing the Accessible Information Standard (AIS).

This [link](https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/accessibleinfo/resources/) provides the full list of factsheets and clarifying information. It also provides a further link to the comprehensive NHS E implementation guidance to support AIS. At Burscough Family Practice, we are aware that it is our responsibility to implement and to fully adhere to the AIS.

Within this NHS E link, there are numerous factsheets that can support implementation of AIS and the full implementation guidance to support AIS can be found [here](https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/accessible-information-standard-implementation-guidance/).

Further information:

1. Disabled people’s experiences and advice for healthcare professionals:

* This [video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Huq_WTwLW8Q) shows members of Manchester People First talking about what helps them to attend health appointments
* A film about enabling communication with local Deaf people for front-line medical staff can be found [here](https://youtu.be/7b2hcwb9y6Q)

In this YouTube clip, Deaf people talk about the importance of front-line staff having some basic sign language skills. The School of Sign Language provides [free](https://www.schoolofsignlanguage.com/learn-online/learn-online-free-only/) introductory resources into understanding British Sign Language (BSL).

1. Alternative format and communication support providers:

* [AbilityNet](https://abilitynet.org.uk/accessibility-services/products-and-services)

Support to ensure websites, apps and other digital services are accessible and compliant with access legislation. AbilityNet also provides guidance to disabled IT users to optimise accessibility to computers and smart phones (My Computer, My Way).

* [BSL Health Access](https://bslhealthaccess.co.uk/?s=health+access)

BSL Health Access was set up by Sign Health. It delivers immediate, on-demand non-emergency access to British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters for communication with Deaf people in health settings free of charge during the current COVID-19 situation.

* [CHANGE People](https://www.changepeople.org/)

A human rights organisation led by disabled people. They create bespoke accessible information in easy read and video formats for organisations and much of the content has a health focus.

* [Hearing Link](https://www.hearinglink.org/living/loops-equipment/hearing-loops/hearing-loops-best-practice/)

Hearing Link has some advice and best practice tips for hearing loops for service users.

* [Inclusive language](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inclusive-communication/inclusive-language-words-to-use-and-avoid-when-writing-about-disability)

Gov.uk (Office for Disability Issues) provides guidance on words to use and avoid when discussing disability.

* Live Transcribe & Sound Notifications [App](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.google.audio.hearing.visualization.accessibility.scribe&hl=en_US&gl=US)

This is an app that makes everyday conversations and surrounding sounds more accessible among people who are deaf and hard of hearing, using just a phone.

* [National Registers of Communication Professionals working with Deaf and Deafblind People (NRCPD)](https://www.nrcpd.org.uk/)

NRCPD exists to protect the public by regulating communication and language professionals who work with deaf and deafblind people.

They hold a searchable register of interpreters for d/Deaf and deafblind people and also lipspeakers, notetakers, sign language interpreters, sign language translators and speech to text reporters.

* [Relay UK](https://www.relayuk.bt.com/)

Relay UK supports d/Deaf people and people with speech impairments to communicate with anyone over the phone using an app based national relay service.

* [RNIB Business - Transcription Services](https://www.rnib.org.uk/rnib-business/transcription-services)

RNIB’s transcription team takes original copy and transforms it into accessible formats including braille, large and giant print and audio.

* [Breakthrough UK](https://breakthrough-uk.co.uk/)

Breakthrough UK is a Manchester based disabled people’s organisation led by disabled people who support other disabled people to work and live independently.

Breakthrough is able to provide training for staff arranged at practice, PCN or CCG level.

1. [www.cqc.org.uk](https://www.cqc.org.uk/sites/default/files/20180628%20Healthcare%20services%20KLOEs%20prompts%20and%20characteristics%20FINAL.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)