

Supporting people with sight and/or hearing loss to have a better experience when accessing health services

How can staff support? Become a Digital Champion



I will listen to the challenges people are having, & do my best to help them have a better experience in accessing health services

I am open to trying something new, if it helps someone with a sensory impairment



I will actively share information about GP Services Online and Accessibility Apps, that can support people have a better experience of their healthcare

A Brief Context

Background – Legal:

From 1st Aug. 2016 all organisations that provide health and care were legally required to follow the Accessible Information Standard (section 250 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012).

Background – Pathfinder projects

At this time Good Things Foundation was in its last year of the first phase of reducing digital exclusion (part of 'Widening Digital Participation'), and in 2017 moved to the second phase which was to be 20 Pathfinder Projects nationally. As it stands this month there's over 100k people engaged in the programme across the country.

In 2017, the West Yorkshire and Harrogate Partnerships (WY&HP) undertook research into the local area to understand the challenges for people with sensory impairments when accessing healthcare services; they published their [report of findings](#) last November.

Meanwhile, a successful bid for funding to become 1 of 20 pathfinder projects was awarded and it was agreed that the engagement focus would be in Kirklees with a broader sharing of information across WY&HP.

In June there was over 100k people engaged in the pathfinder programme - Find out more on the progress of [Digital Pathfinders](#)

For a quick overview on mHabitat's work in the Kirklees area, you can read their [June blog](#)

The Standard 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.”

Health and care staff must:

1. Ask people if they have any information or communication needs, and find out how to meet their needs.
2. Record those needs clearly and in a set way.
3. Highlight or flag the person’s file or notes so it is clear that they have information or communication needs and how to meet those needs.
4. Share information about people’s information and communication needs with other providers of NHS and adult social care, when they have consent or permission to do so.
5. Take steps to ensure that people receive information which they can access and understand, and receive communication support if they need it.

The Standard says that patients, service users, carers and parents with a disability, impairment or sensory loss should:

- Be able to contact, and be contacted by, services in accessible ways, for example via email or text message.
- Receive information and correspondence in formats they can read and understand, for example in audio, braille, easy read or large print.
- Be supported by a communication professional at appointments if this is needed to support conversation, for example a British Sign Language interpreter.
- Get support from health and care staff and organisations to communicate, for example to lip-read or use a hearing aid.

A link to the full standard and associated learning materials is included later in this pack

1. Understanding & Promoting - GP Online Services

NHS England have provided a number of promotional and guideline documents to either download or order. GP Practice managers need a customer login to order supplies.

- NHSE - [Information Booklet](#)
- NHSE - Overview & Promotion [Patient online](#)
- NHSE - Comprehensive [Support, Resources & Guides](#)
- NHSE - [Patient guides](#)
- NHSE - Video guides *see below inks
- NHSE - [Promotional materials](#) to *order or download
- NHSE - [Digital tool kit](#) including templates and information you can use on your website, blogs etc.

***NOTE:** Once on the website for promotional materials, select the GP Patient online option from the right hand box (see below)



A patient's perspective - [Hear Hugh's story](#)

*Video/Audio Guides from NHSE

EMIS

Apple devices - <http://bit.ly/2vY4qft>

Android devices - <http://bit.ly/2vXDxZ3>

Website - <http://bit.ly/2x6C1qD>

TPP SystemOnline

Apple devices - <http://bit.ly/2x1c4tv>

Android devices - <http://bit.ly/2weH5dO>

Website - <http://bit.ly/2weHkpe>

Evergreen Life (compatible with either system).

From the website

Access: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tXM8dC317cU&list=PLkgW2Cz1X00LmULUwplS6_qdfWe368hW

From a mobile device:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_MmFNxotAlc&list=PLkgW2Cz1X00JWCnD0nSvWFvX0pmPft7nV

2. Mindful Practice: Accessibility & Inclusion in the workplace

Simple things make a big difference:

Being mindful of supporting people with sight or hearing loss when they're accessing your service. This could be highlighted on your patient record system and/or you may simply ask what help they would like.

Being aware of inclusivity when designing information or arranging the environment where people sit and how they access the rooms leading to the Doctors

- NHSE approved: Inclusion guidance for sight loss from [RNIB](#)
- NHSE approved: Inclusion guidance for hearing loss from [Action on Hearing Loss](#)
- DoH accessible information [formats](#) guidelines
- [NHSE Guidance & Resources](#) including factsheets, [Accessible Standards e-learning](#), GP toolkit, case studies, webinars, and more
- Creating accessible documents - guidance from [AbilityNet](#)
- [Tips for communicating](#) with deaf children, including video, posters etc.

A Patient's Perspective - [Watch Dan's story](#)

The Grange Group Practice - [Patient & Staff perspective](#)

Some snippets from what patients have told us:

- Finding a button that opens a door is harder than just finding the door's handle
- Signing in on the computer at the GP surgery presents more challenges than talking to a receptionist.
- A visually impaired person may find it hard to initiate the request for help for personal reasons (e.g. perceived loss of independence) or physical reasons (they don't know where reception staff are).
- A consistent room layout is helpful for visual impaired patients
- Room Lighting and reading signs can be an issue
- Finding a chair can be an issue
- Knowing when your name has been either called or put up on the board is an issue
- and responding to visual cues summoning patients.
- Waiting a long time to get BSL interpreters can cause anxiety and additional health problems
- When clinicians don't verbalise what they are doing or going to do, including the various steps in procedures and leaving the room, this is an issue.
- Appointments may have to take longer, so that the clinician is able to explain verbally what other patients would receive as a letter or leaflet and ensure the patient has understood and somehow made a record if necessary.
- Good communication empowers patients and enhances their contribution to managing their condition.