

Accessible Information Standard

What NHS services are
doing now



easy
read

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In this Easy Read document, difficult words are in **bold**. We explain what these words mean in the sentence after they have been used.



Some words are pink and underlined. These are links which will go to another website which has more information.

Introduction



We are Healthwatch. We work to make sure health and care services are the best they can be for the people who use them.



We have started a **campaign** called Your Care, Your Way.

A **campaign** is a plan of things to do over time, to try and change something.



Your Care, Your Way tries to make sure that services follow the **Accessible Information Standard**.



The **Accessible Information Standard** is a law that says all health and care services have to:

- communicate in different ways for people with different needs.
- provide information that is clear and easy for people to understand.





We asked 200 NHS services what they were doing to follow the Accessible Information Standard.



150 got back in touch with us.



We asked them questions to find out:

- whether they followed the Accessible Information Standard.

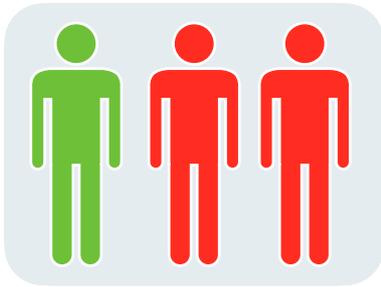


- whether they followed it all of the time, to all patients.



This information will tell you what they told us.

What we found out



Only 1 in 3 NHS services follow the Accessible Information Standard.



Lots of services said that they don't follow the Accessible Information Standard all the time.



Services told us that the reasons they don't always follow the Accessible Information Standard include:



- not having enough time, money or staff.



- not having computer systems that would make it easier to tell different services about a patient's needs.



- staff not knowing about the Accessible Information Standard.



Services did not have good ways for people to complain about how information was given to them.



This means that they weren't sure how many people were unhappy about getting information in a way they didn't understand.



We have written a plan for things that should change so that more services follow the Accessible Information Standard.



You can read about them here:
www.healthwatch.co.uk/news/2022-02-21/accessible-information-standard-our-recommendations

More about what we found out



We asked about 3 things that the Accessible Information Standard says services must do.

Ask people

The Accessible Information Standard says services must ask people:



- if they have any information needs.



- what to do to meet those needs.



Just over half of services said that they ask patients about information needs.



1 in 6 services said that they always ask when a patient first comes to them.



1 in 4 services said that they didn't ask.



Some services said that they only ask sometimes.

Writing notes



The Accessible Information Standard says that services should write notes about people's needs.



This means that they don't have to explain them every time they talk to health and care staff.



3 in 4 services said that they always write notes about people's needs.



1 in 10 services said they didn't always write notes, because their computer systems wouldn't let them.



1 in 6 services said they didn't write notes.

Sharing information



The Accessible Information Standard says that services should tell each other if a patient has communication needs.



They should only do this if the patient says they can.



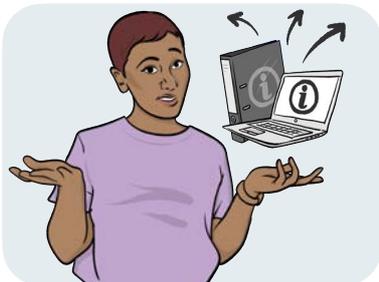
A little over half of services said that they follow this.



A little over 1 in 3 said they didn't share information.



Most of the services who said 'no' said it was because their computer systems wouldn't let them share information.



A small number of services said that they sometimes share information, depending on the person.

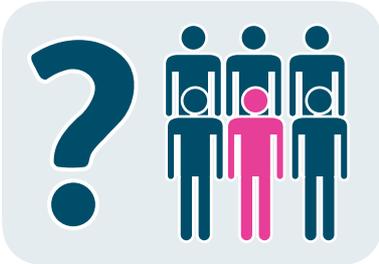
Other questions



We also asked NHS services if they had checked they were following the Accessible Information Standard in the last 3 years.



1 in 5 said they had, and told us what they had found out.



1 in 6 said they had not properly checked, but had asked some people.



A little under 2 in 3 services said they hadn't checked at all in the last 3 years.



We asked how many complaints people had made.



2 in 3 services said they had no complaints.



1 in 4 services said that the **Patient Advisory and Liaison Services** dealt with complaints.

The **Patient Advisory and Liaison Services** are a part of the NHS that supports and gives advice to patients and their families.



A small number of services had up to 10 complaints.



A small number of services had more than 10 complaints.



Most trusts said they did not have an easy way to make a complaint about the Accessible Information Standard.



This means they weren't sure how many people were unhappy about how information was given to them.