# Accessible information survey findings



# About our research

**Clear, understandable information is important to help you make decisions about your health and care and get the most out of services.**

The Accessible Information Standard gives disabled people and people with sensory loss the legal right to get health and social care information they can understand and communications support if needed. But is the standard being delivered by services and does it go far enough?

As part of our campaign, ‘Your Care, Your Way’, we asked the public about their experience of getting accessible health and care information.

Although we heard from a wider group of people, this analysis looks specifically at 605 people who said that they need support communicating with healthcare staff.

They shared their views from 26 February to 29 May 2022.

Our findings aim to help NHS and social care decision-makers hear what is working and what could be better from the public's perspective.

**The specific conditions people reported**

**We heard from 605 people in England who said they required communications support from health and care services to understand their care.**

Of this number, 489 cited specific conditions that they had including:

* 73 with sight loss;
* 143 with hearing loss;
* 112 with mental health challenges;
* 60 with a learning disability;
* 101 with another condition that affects their ability to communicate or understand information.

**Who we heard from**

* Almost three quarters (73%) were over the age of 50.
* Nearly two-thirds (68%) of respondents were women.
* We heard from people in 119 out of 150 local Healthwatch areas. Fourteen areas made up over a third (37%) of responses.
* Eight in ten (80%) said they were from a White background.
* Eight in ten (84%) said they can speak, understand and read English well.
* Almost a third (30%) said they had just enough income for basic necessities and little else.

**What did people tell us?**

**Understanding information**

* One in five (20%) said they struggle to understand most of the information given by services.

**Asking for help to understand information**

* Over half (51%) had asked for support to understand information.

**Asking for help to contact services**

* Five in ten (53%) had asked for support to contact services.

**Asking for help to communicate with staff**

* Four in ten (44%) had asked for support to communicate with staff.

**Experience of asking for support**

* Three in ten (30%) said they rarely or never get the support they need.

**Information in the right format or language**

* Two in ten (22%) had been refused information in a format they need.

**Support to understand information**

* Over one in four (28%) had been refused support to understand healthcare information.

**Impact of not getting support**

* Over a third (38%) said it affected their mental health and wellbeing.

**Problems accessing services**

* Over half (57%) had problems accessing GP services.

**Confidence in asking for support**

* Nearly half (48%) feel uncomfortable asking for accessible information.

**Factors affecting confidence**

* Over half (53%) said staff attitudes affected their ability to ask for support.

**Knowing how to complain**

* Nearly half (46%) do not know how to complain if they do not get support.

**Impact of COVID-19**

* Nearly half (47%) think how services communicate has got worse.

**About us**

**Your health and social care champion**

Healthwatch is your health and social care champion. If you use health services or need care, we want to hear about your experiences. We have the power to make sure NHS and social care leaders listen to your feedback and improve standards of care. We can also help you to find reliable and trustworthy information and advice.

Wherever you live in England, you’ll also have a local Healthwatch nearby. Last year, we helped over two million people like you to have your say and get the support you need.

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