

Accessible Information Standard

Introduction:

On the 1 August 2016, the Accessible Information Standard (AIS) was introduced. This legislation aims to make sure that anyone with a disability, sensory impairment or learning disability which affects their abilities to communicate can get information in a way that they can access and understand. To find out more about the AIS

W: <http://bit.ly/2cLFXFg> or W: <https://bit.ly/2iYjGUa>

Through this project Healthwatch wanted to understand the impact that the legislation had had on people's experiences of using local health and social care services since its introduction. We carried out a series of visits to community groups and organisations in order to gather people's feedback, in addition to hosting a survey that was shared online and in paper format with key groups. To read the report from our AIS engagement and survey W: <https://bit.ly/2lJfKZp>

Workshop for professionals:

Healthwatch's work on the AIS culminated in a workshop for professionals, giving them a chance to share and learn from each other's experiences of implementing the legislation within their organisation. The workshop was aimed at staff from NHS, adult social care services and voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations across B&NES, Bristol and South Gloucestershire.

The group received three presentations from local providers who shared their experiences of implementing the AIS within their organisation. In addition to sharing feedback on barriers that they have faced in implementing the Standard, the presenters also shared examples of what they have done and their plans for the future. Healthwatch would like to thank Julie Musk (Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust), Philippa Cozens (Bristol Community Health) and Andrew Owens (Royal United Hospitals, Bath) for sharing their experiences.

Attendees were posed five questions to help them share experiences, identify which sources of support or information they had found most useful to date and what more they feel they would benefit from in order to increase compliance with the Standard.

This report captures their feedback and, where possible, links to the resources or websites that they have discussed.

Accessible Information Standard

What has your organisation done to comply with the AIS to date?

- Use Language Line for translation support at appointments
- Worked with Centre to develop materials in Easy Read or large font
- Bought Browse Aloud software for website W: <https://bit.ly/2jRAg8t>
- Use BSL signers (interpreters) and have a BSL Space on website
W: <http://www.awp.nhs.uk/bslspace/>
- Assessments to identify each individual's care and communication needs
Care Programme Approach W: <https://bit.ly/2lVHryl>
- Software updated to record large print
Changed forms for referral to include info where people have communication needs
- Flag to clinicians and alert them to people's needs
- Centre of Deaf and Hard of Hearing - all our info is Deaf supported. We are in the very early stages of rebuilding and growing our organisation. Multi-cultural city Bristol - we are trying to identify groups to work with. BSL is not known internationally.
- Action on Hearing Loss - not sure frontline staff have been given info [about AIS], neither have service users
- Multiple impairments in SENSE users
- Good understanding from staff of hearing loss so they can simplify
- RNIB - we have been banging the drum across sensory loss. Still hearing from lots of service users who are being let down by providers
- Challenges are mixed - computer systems/resources across the organisations
- Shared responsibility for monitoring compliance
- Lots of people like Easy Read and find it easier to use - why have two versions?
- South Glos Council is focusing on their digital upgrade of the info system (they are aware they need to consider AIS)
- Display AIS notices in office, reception and interview rooms
- Education of frontline staff on AIS awareness
- Raising casual awareness on a daily and regular basis
- AIS part of induction for new staff
- Using NHS England's AIS E-Learning module W: <https://portal.e-lfh.org.uk/>
- Make staff and public know what is out there

Accessible Information Standard

What sources of information and support have you found useful to help you with this? Please be specific.

- Photo symbols/templates
- Instruction videos with BSL
- Browse aloud/widget on website W: <https://bit.ly/2jRAg8t>
- Readability - Online website [There are lots out there W: <https://bit.ly/2NvJHJp>]
- Have a bank of interpreters that you trust
- We are specialist interpreters W: <https://www.signingworks.co.uk/> but a lot of providers use companies that don't have specialist knowledge. There are financial constraints but the quality of interpreters is KEY!
- RNIB - Visual impairment toolkit and template letters that people have found really useful. RNIB can send letters for people which has a good take up W: <https://bit.ly/2KBbN8i>
- Still lack of knowledge from the public and staff - AIS needs more awareness raising!
- Action on Hearing Loss - Browse Aloud and change our picture bank cards W: <https://bit.ly/2KV8hFa>
- Communication needs (website used to be RNID) W: <https://bit.ly/2IXZqNV>
- SENSE is not just deaf/blind W: <https://bit.ly/2KOi6EJ>

Following today's discussions are there any 'quick wins' that you think your organisation may be able to put in place to implement the AIS?

- Survey of communication needs
- Sharing knowledge of where information can be translated or can be accessed through audio formats etc.
- Establish advocates for AIS within the organisation
- Ask people what they need!
- 'AIS Alliance' concept would help a lot - a way to stay in touch with other organisations and share best practice, resources etc.
- Electronic help that can be upgraded
- 'Do not reinvent the wheel'
- Sharing is power

Accessible Information Standard

- Highlighting what is useful to help others become more accessible
- E-learning - looking at recommended resources
- Face to face training/video
- Sharing resources between organisations

Are there any longer-term plans or activity that your organisation may be able to carry out?

- Having resources where to go for translators/different formatting
- Have service users info on their rights under AIS
- Promote AIS internally/externally
- We are making planned changes
- Help to make AIS the foundation for all information
- Top down starting with our Equality and Diversity policy
- Accountability lines - who is responsible for implementing the Standard and assuring what we are doing?
- Focus Group going through the AIS, target setting/competitions etc.

Is there any further information or support that you would find useful to help with your work around the AIS? If so, what?

- Resources - Are there any AIS resources from government or NHS England?
- Sharing of resources, progress and resources within health and social care and voluntary sector (x4)
- Some resources are too expensive
- Connecting Care platform W: <https://bit.ly/2BFIKqI>
- Mandatory training for staff
- Accessibility of AIS is the key, not just information, e.g. environments, lighting, noises etc. Companies with Braille (5-7% of blind community use it)
- Time is key. Make sure it is given at appointments to give the service user time to understand info.
- Reminders for people is really important (iPlato text service W: <https://www.iplato.net/>). Need to slow processes down - this will be cultural shift for healthcare staff

Accessible Information Standard

- Can small VCSE organisations tap into training online or face to face by larger providers, e.g. AWP or Royal United Hospital Bath.
- No specific AIS training available
- Follow-up AIS session six to 12 months' time (mixed organisations very useful today)
- Shared examples of communication needs questionnaire
- Standardised resources as generic - patients move between services
- AIS resource sharing group - can Healthwatch run this?
BILD - British Institute of Learning Disabilities - guidance on standardising Easy Read information W: <http://www.bild.org.uk/>

Other comments:

- Data protection has put some boundaries
- Focus should also be on Deaf and hard of hearing
- Is BSL a 'bandwagon'? Signing is 'sexier' than other hearing losses
- Never assume something about someone with a disability
- Presentations focused on most expensive disability (e.g. focus on BSL). The Deaf/hearing loss community is much bigger than that. Also other sensory loss.
- Care Quality Commission has recently been in touch with organisations saying don't forget about the AIS.

What will happen next?

The Care Forum is planning to set up an online forum for providers to share resources and information regarding the Accessible Information Standard. In due course you will be sent a link inviting you to join the group. We anticipate that there will be other people who would like to join this group too, so we will offer it to colleagues from across the areas in which we work.

Healthwatch will also be making contact with attendees in about six months' time to see how what was learnt at the workshop has been implemented and what difference it has made. This will be done electronically.

Accessible Information Standard

Workshop attendees

Gillian Adams	Age UK
Carmen Arnaiz	North Bristol NHS Trust
Fay Benefield	We Care and Repair
Mayur Bhatt	Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust
Victoria Carr	Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust
Philippa Cozens	Bristol Community Health
Nick Dean	The Care Forum
Christina Dibden	ExtraCare Charitable Trust
Andrea Eugene	Centre for Deaf People
Nia Hall	We Care and Repair
Andrew Harris	Action on Hearing Loss
Scott Hopkinson	Cintre Community Limited
Rachel Hoskins	Cintre Community Limited
Steve Hyde	Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB)
Geraldine Leavy	Priory Group
Kim Lewis	South Gloucestershire Council
Christian Leyland	BSL INTERPRETER
Harriet Lupton	Hearing Impaired Support Scheme (HISS)
Liz Mitchell	Bristol City Council
Bruce Mulcahy-Bowman	The Care Forum
Julie Musk	Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust
Gloria Ogborn	BSL Interpreter
Riek Oosterhof	Cintre Community Limited
Sarah Oughton	Swan Transport
Andrew Owens	Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust
Nicola Shephard	ExtraCare Charitable Trust
Steve Skidmore	Oldland Parish Council
Tracy Smith	Public Health Bristol City Council
Emma Tucker	Bath and North East Somerset Carers Centre
Suaad Walker	Bristol Disability Equality Forum
Helen Watts	Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust

