

## Governing Body meeting (held in public)

DATE: 21 July 2016

Title	Accessible Information Standard	
This paper is for <b>Information</b>		
Recommended action for the Governing Body	That the Governing Body: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Note</b> the contents of the report outlining the impact of the Accessible Information Standard</li> </ol>	
Potential areas for Conflicts of interest	None.	
Executive summary	<p>The Accessible Information Standard (AIS) is a requirement on all providers of NHS and publicly-funded adult social care services. It is mandatory requirement and comes into effect on 31 July 2016.</p> <p>The AIS details how these organisations are required to meet information needs of people who have a disability, impairment or sensory loss so that they receive information in formats that they can access and receive appropriate support to help them to communicate.</p> <p>The standard sets out how commissioners of NHS and publicly-funded adult social care need to have regard to this standard and ensure that ‘contracts and performance-management arrangements with providers promote the standard’s requirements’. The report details how through its contract monitoring the CCG will monitor providers’ implementation of the AIS.</p> <p>The CCG has also provided support to practices in Bexley to assist them in understanding and complying with the AIS. The report sets out the various ways it has done this. It also sets out other ways the CCG is supporting the implementation of the standard.</p>	
How does this paper support	<b>Patients:</b>	The AIS will support patients with particular disabilities and information access requirements to have their needs better

## Clinical Commissioning Group

the CCGs objectives?		met.
	<b>People:</b>	Through monitoring the CCG will be more aware of the differing information requirements of some patients.
	<b>Pounds:</b>	Supporting the implementation of AIS will support the CCG deliver on its commissioning duties.
	<b>Process:</b>	Through ensuring that patients have better access to information the AIS helps the CCG commission services that deliver better patient outcomes.
What are the Organisational implications	Key risks	None arising specifically from this report.
	Equality	The AIS is principally about ensuring that NHS and social care organisations are meeting the needs of people with disability, impairment or sensory loss receive information in formats that they can access and receive appropriate support to help them to communicate.
	Financial	None arising specifically from this report.
	Data	Additional details in relation to patients' information requirements will be kept in line with standard existing data protection and IG policies.
	Legal issues	The AIS is mandated by NHSE.
	NHS constitution	The AIS is consistent with the aims and values of the NHS constitution - especially meeting the value, 'Everyone counts', and its pledge to ensure that people are not excluded and that some people may need more help.
Engagement	None in relation to this report.	
Audit trail	None.	
Comms plan	Information on the AIS has been widely shared with practices and the Patient Council, and will be further information will be shared with practices, CCG staff and stakeholders.	
Author: Jon Winter, AD Communications and Corporate Services	Clinical lead: Dr Nikita Kanani NHS Bexley CCG Chair	Executive sponsor: Sarah Blow Chief Officer
Date	12 July 2016	

# Accessible Information Standard

## Background

The Accessible Information Standard (AIS) is a new mandatory and statutory requirement that applies to all providers of NHS and publicly-funded adult social care services and comes into force from 31 July 2016.

The AIS tells organisations how to ensure that people who have a disability, impairment or sensory loss receive information in formats that they can access and receive appropriate support to help them to communicate.

It is underpinned by the Equalities Act, and provides specific direction around how organisations should work to understand every patients' communication needs and arrange bespoke communications to support them. The Standard establishes a framework and sets a clear direction such that patients and service users who have information or communication needs relating to a disability, impairment or sensory loss receive 'Accessible information' and 'Communication support' so that they can access services appropriately and independently, and make decisions about their health, wellbeing, care and treatment.

NHS England agreed the AIS in June 2015 and all health and care organisations must follow the standard by 31 July 2016.

As well as applying to service providers, the guidance also says that commissioners of NHS and publicly-funded adult social care must also have 'regard to this standard, in so much as they must ensure that contracts, frameworks and performance-management arrangements with provider bodies enable and promote the Standard's requirements'.

Whilst there are no plans for NHS England to conduct an audit of the implementation of the Standard in individual organisations, the Care Quality Commission and local Healthwatch organisations have been asked to monitor progress. The CQC recognises the role of the AIS as an indicator of high-quality care for people with particular information and communication support needs: "... as part of our inspection work, CQC will look at evidence of how services implement the AIS when we make judgements about whether services are responsive to people's needs."

The AIS is now incorporated in the Health and Social Care Information Centre Information Governance toolkit version 14, and practices who are in the process of implementing the standard, can use any information relating to its implementation as evidence for requirement 213 of the GP practices IG toolkit.

## Requirements of the AIS

The requirements are more complex than simply ensuring information is available in different formats. There are five steps that have been identified for the implementation of the standard as follows:

**Identify** - Ask people if they have any information or communication needs and find out how to meet their needs

**Record** - Record those communication needs in a set way

**Flag/alert** - Highlight a person's file, so it is clear that they have information or communication needs, and clearly explain how those needs should be met

**Share** - Share information about a person's needs with other NHS and social care providers, when they have consent or permission to do so

**Meet** - Make sure that people get information in an accessible way and communication support if they need it. This should include: large print, Braille, easy read, via email or offering a British Sign Language interpreter, deaf blind manual interpreter or an advocate.

NHSE has provided a detailed specification as to the requirements, which is available at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/access-info-spec-fin.pdf>

## Implications for the CCG

### Commissioning and contract management

All NHS or adult social care providers that the CCG commissions must be following the Accessible Information Standard in full by 31 July 2016. The 2016/17 NHS standard contract includes a clause (service condition 12.2) which stipulates a requirement that providers must comply with the standard. The standard places a statutory obligation on providers to improve communication with and involve service users, carers, the public and staff.

To ensure consistency with implementation, a national standard specification has been published. During the 2016/17 contract negotiation process providers were asked to provide assurance and evidence that they are compliant with the AIS. The CCG asks that this is adhered to and will seek assurance as necessary through the standard contract monitoring process.

### Supporting Bexley's practices

The CCG has provided a range of support to help practices them prepare for and be compliant with the implementation of the AIS. This includes:

- Engaging with practices through a survey to gauge what was currently available to meet patient needs and what needed developing

- Produced a guidance pack giving quick references to the standard, a guide on clinical systems, posters for display, service user contacts page listing the relevant organisations that can provide supporting communication tools to practices (eg details of where documents could be printed in Braille)
- Raised awareness through presentations at various forums, such as the primary care development group, the Bexley Patient Council and clinical system user group meetings
- Regular inclusion of information in the CCG's communication channels, such as the bulletin and GP zone

### **CCG activities**

The CCG is working to ensure that it where it directly interacts with patients is consistent with the standard. To this end:

- The CCG's privacy statement is being updated to reflect the standard.
- Website accessibility is out of the scope of the AIS. The Standard though is relevant where a health or social care professional may refer a patient or service user (or their carer or parent) to a website for information. The CCG's website is already designed to meet Web Accessibility Initiative standards, and has the Browsealoud plug in embedded, which is aimed at improving access to those with range of access requirements to enable visitors to the website to listen to web content and to change how text is presented to make it suitable for their needs.
- The CCG's continuing healthcare team is developing its processes to be in accordance with the AIS.
- The CCG's patient experience team is similarly ensuring its process are in line with the AIS
- CCG staff have been advised of the standard and its aims through its regular communication channels, and access to the AIS training tool to support understanding and delivery of the AIS has been shared with relevant staff.