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| **EXPECT GROUP OF COMPANIES** | | | | | |
| **ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION POLICY** | | | | | |
| **Scope**  This document describes the Accessible Information Standards and the responsibilities of staff to ensure the standards are maintained. | | | | | |
| **Related Documents**  Service User’s Care Plans  Easy Read Documentation | | | | | |
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EXPECT GROUP OF COMPANIES

**ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION POLICY**

# AIMS

* To develop a standardised approach to identifying, recording, flagging, sharing and meeting the information and communications needs of Service Users and their families where this need arises from a disability, impairment or sensory loss.
* Those who have a communication needs are not put at a disadvantage

# STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE

* Service Users have appropriate access to support, so that they understand information that is being shared with them (e.g. access to interpreters or easy read documentation);
* Service Users are involved and able to make decisions about their health, care and treatment;
* Service Users are enabled to participate in the management of their own care needs.
* There is a consistent approach to the identification and application of Service Users’ information and communication needs;
* The communication needs of each Service User are recorded;
* Staff understand the communication needs of each Service User.

# INTRODUCTION

## Despite equalities legislation, many users of public services continue to be at a disadvantage, because those services do not communicate with them in a way they can understand and which meets their communications needs. The equality act became law in October 2010. The purpose of this was to improve and strengthen, previous equalities legislation covering all of the groups that were protected by this legislation, known as protected characteristics, one of which is disability. The Care Act 2014 also places specific duties on local authorities to provide advice and information in an accessible format meeting the individual’s needs. Despite this legislation and guidance, in reality many Service Users and carers continue to receive information from health and social care organisations in formats which they are unable to understand and do not receive the support they need to communicate. This includes, but is not limited to, people who are blind or have some visual loss, people who are blind / deaf or have some hearing impairment, people who are deaf blind, and people with a learning disability. This policy aims to address that disadvantage for people who use any of Expect’s services, and to meet the National Accessible Information Standard (2015)

# PURPOSE

## The Accessible Information Standard (NHS England, July 2015) places a requirement on organisations like Expect to develop a specific, consistent approach to identifying, recording, flagging sharing and meeting the information and communications support needs of Service Users, Citizens and families, where this need arises from a disability, impairment or sensory loss. The Specification recommends (but does not require) organisations to include individuals with a learning difficulty within the scope of their activities as part of the Standard.

## Those who have a communication need should not be put at a disadvantage and this policy sets out a framework for Expect’s staff in meeting individual’s communication needs.

# RESPONSIBILITIES

## The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is responsible for ensuring compliance with the guidance set out in the Accessible Information Specification (NHS England, July 2015). The CEO may delegate this responsibility to a Senior Manager.

## Heads of Care/Senior Support Workers are responsible for:

### Being personally aware of the principles of the Standard and what it requires of their services.

### Putting in place arrangements to ensure there are systems and processes in their service to meet the requirements of this policy.

### Ensuring appropriate staff attend disability awareness training.

### Monitoring their staff teams’ compliance with the requirements and take action where they are not being met.

### Ensuring their staff have the right support and tools in place to meet the requirements e.g.: ready access to information about how to arrange a sign language interpreter or easy read translation.

### Finding out about, identifying, recording and flagging the communication needs of all Service Users who use their service.

### Alerting staff members, external organisations and the referrer in any communication, about an individual’s communication needs, when there is a need to share information in order to meet service requirements (In line with the Data Protection Act 2018).

### Communicating this policy to staff, so that they are fully aware of the requirements for implementation.

## Staff are responsible for:

### Ensure the individuals communication requirements are followed and met.

### Ensuring they receive information in an accessible format and any communication support they need. This includes being aware of how to access arrangements to meet needs.

### Being aware of this policy and the processes within their service in order to meet the required standards.

# IMPLEMENTING THE ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION STANDARD

## Communication needs are identified

### The Service User’s initial contact with The Expect Group, e.g.: the Head of Care, Senior Support Worker, should ask, and record in the Service User’s/Representative’s own words what additional communication support, if any, is required.

### It is important not to ask what the persons impairment is, but what their specific communication need is, in their own words, because this will differ between people.

## Recording of needs

### The needs of the Service User must be recorded in the Service User’s Person Centred Plan (PCP).

### The needs should be highly visible and consistent, where they relate to a disability, impairment or sensory loss, as part of Service User PCP.

### This may also include needs around memory as an additional aspect of communication.

## Sharing of Needs

### Where there is a need to share Service User’s information, e.g.: with day services or where the Service User is moving on etc. their communication needs are to be shared also.

## Meeting of Needs

### Once additional needs are identified, it is essential that they are met.

### Where a communication need is identified, steps should be taken to meet those needs by ensuring that the individual receives information in an accessible format and any communication support which they need.

### It is the responsibility of each Head of Care/Senior Support Worker to review information they hold and give consideration to what formats this is already available in. Where documentation is not already provided in alternative formats (e.g. braille, easy read, and large print) the Head of Care/Senior Support Worker will need to source appropriate translation on a bespoke basis as required.