

Accessible Information Standard Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that West Heanton meets the requirements of the Accessible Information Standard (SCCI1605 Accessible Information). The Standard ensures that people with a disability, impairment or sensory loss receive information they can access and understand, and are provided with any communication support they need.

2. Aim

The aim of this policy is to ensure that all Service Users are able to communicate effectively, understand information provided to them, and receive appropriate support to meet their individual communication needs.

3. Policy Statement

- **Individual Assessment:** Each Service User will be individually assessed to identify their communication and information needs, including any disability, impairment or sensory loss.
- **Care Planning:** Identified needs will be clearly recorded in the Service User's care plan and reviewed regularly, including after any change in health or communication ability.
- **Accessible Information:** West Heanton will provide information in formats the Service User can understand, such as large print, easy-read, audio, plain language, digital formats compatible with screen readers, or British Sign Language interpretation.
- **Communication Support:** Appropriate communication support will be provided, including interpreters, communication aids, assistive technology, or specialist professional input.
- **Sharing Information:** Communication needs will be shared with other professionals (e.g., hospitals, community teams) when necessary for safe and effective care, and with consent wherever appropriate.
- **Staff Competence:** All staff will receive training in effective communication and the Accessible Information Standard. Staff must understand how to identify, record, flag, share and act on communication needs.
- **Visibility of Needs:** Communication needs will be clearly flagged within the Service User's record to ensure they are visible to all staff involved in their care.
- **Review:** Communication needs will be reviewed at regular care plan reviews, after incidents, and whenever a change in ability or preference is identified.

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4. Procedure

West Heanton follows the five mandatory steps of the Accessible Information Standard:

Ask

Identify whether the individual has any communication or information needs related to disability, impairment or sensory loss.

Record

Document these needs clearly in the Service User's care plan and electronic record.

Alert / Flag / Highlight

Ensure the needs are highly visible whenever the Service User's record is accessed.

Share

Share communication needs with other professionals involved in the individual's care when necessary for safe and effective care.

Act

Ensure the individual receives information in an accessible format and receives communication support as required.

5. Assessment and Review

- Communication needs are identified during pre-admission assessment.
- Needs are reviewed regularly and after any change in health or communication ability.
- Service Users are involved in decisions about how information is provided.
- Staff must escalate any concerns about communication barriers immediately.

6. Referral to Specialist Services

Where required, Service Users will be referred to appropriate community support specialists, including:

- Interpreters (including British Sign Language)
- Speech and Language Therapists
- Advocacy services
- Audiology services
- Visual impairment services
- Learning disability teams

7. Communication Aids and Equipment

West Heanton will arrange appropriate communication aids or equipment to support Service Users, including:

- Hearing loops
- Amplifiers
- Communication boards
- Picture-based communication tools
- Specialist software or devices
- Easy-read materials

8. Staff Training

All staff will receive training on:

- The Accessible Information Standard
- Effective communication techniques
- Supporting individuals with sensory loss, cognitive impairment or communication difficulties
- How to source interpreters, aids and specialist support

9. Monitoring and Compliance

West Heanton will:

- Audit care plans to ensure communication needs are recorded and flagged
- Review incidents where communication may have been a factor
- Seek feedback from Service Users and families
- Ensure staff training remains up to date

10. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation or best practice changes.