

All Wales Standards for Accessible Communication and Information

What they are and what they mean for you



This document was written by the **Welsh Government**.
It is an easy read version of '**All-Wales Standards for
Accessible Communication and Information**'.

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About the Accessible Communication and Information Standards



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

We are the Welsh Government.



This document is about the
**Accessible Communication
and Information Standards Wales.**



The **Accessible Communication
and Information Standards Wales**
is a set of new rules.

We will call them **the Standards**
in this document.



The Standards say what healthcare
services must do to communicate
with people.

Why the Standards are important

These **Standards** help make healthcare fair for everyone.



They help people who find it hard to understand or share information.



They make sure health staff in Wales give the right support to everyone.

Who the Standards are for

These **Standards** support everyone who needs extra help with communication.

This includes people who:



- Are D/deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing.



- Use British Sign Language.



- Are blind or have poor eyesight.

- Are deafblind.



- Are disabled.



- Have dementia.



- Are neurodivergent. Neurodivergent means people whose brains work differently. For example, autism is a neurodivergent condition.



- Find reading or writing hard.



- Are parents or carers who find it hard to understand or communicate.



- Do not speak English or Welsh as their main language.

What the law says



The law says healthcare must be fair to everyone.



Healthcare services must make changes so people with different needs can get help easily.

Services must make these changes **before** problems happen.



Good communication is important. Bad communication can lead to poor care.

Good communication means people:

- Understand their health and care.
- Feel confident to ask questions.
- Can make good choices.
- Are more likely to stay healthy.



Accessible communication
means making sure everyone
can understand information.

What health services must do



Health services must use the right support to meet people's needs.

Accessible communication and information services help:



- Patients.



- Health staff.



- Carers.

They help stop communication problems and make care better.

All healthcare services in Wales must follow these Standards.

Patient records

Healthcare services must keep a record of:



- How each patient needs to get information.



- If a patient wants to use Welsh or another language.

This helps staff get ready before an appointment.



All staff must get this information.



Digital technology can help. This means using things like computers, laptops and online services.

Information for patients



Information leaflets and documents must be accessible. For example, in Easy Read.

All healthcare areas must support your communication and information needs.



This includes areas like hospital wards, accident and emergency, and GP practices.



Staff must ask you what support you need.

Each NHS department must have a person in charge of this work.

Reception areas



Reception areas must tell you about your rights to get an **interpreter**.



This includes British Sign Language interpreters.



You must be able to tell staff how you want to get information.

Reception staff must be trained to ask about communication needs.



All reception areas should have a hearing loop or other technology for Deaf people. A hearing loop is a special sound system for people with hearing aids.

Online services

Online services must be easy to use.

They should:



- Work with **screen readers**.
Screen readers read text on a screen out loud.
- Use clear colours and layout.
- Avoid flashing images and backgrounds that are hard to see.
- Use plain and clear language.



large text

- Use large clear text and good spacing.
- Give other options, like videos.

Letters



All letters must be easy to read and understand.



An appointment letter should include helpful pictures. For example, a photo of the building or nearest bus stop.



Information must be given in a way you can understand.

This includes:



- Written information.
- Phone calls.

Buildings and spaces

Healthcare buildings must be easy to use and help you understand what is going on.

Buildings and spaces should:



- Have good lighting that is spread out evenly.

- Use colours that are easy to see.



- Reduce noise where possible.



- Have private rooms for you to talk about personal issues.



- Include hearing loop systems or other technology to support Deaf people. A hearing loop is a special sound system for people with hearing aids.

Reception / Derbyniad

- Have clear signs that are easy to understand in English and Welsh.
- Use messages on screens that are also read out loud.



Face masks can make it hard to understand people. Health staff should use clear masks where needed so people can lip read.

The Standards in different places

GP Practices



When you register with a new GP, staff must ask about your communication needs.

Staff must check you understand the questions.

GPs must collect this information for current patients too.



GPs must share this information with other services. You should not have to repeat your needs.

You should be able to book appointments in different ways:



- Phone

- Text



- Email



- Website



When you arrive, staff must make sure you do not miss your appointment. For example, they should let you know when the GP is ready to see you.

Carers and parents with needs must get support too.



If your GP sends you to other health services, you must still get the right support with your communication needs.

You should not wait longer for care because you need help with communication.

Specialist services

This means services like:



- Learning disability teams.
- Mental health services.
- Diabetes teams.



GPs must share your needs with these teams.

You should be able to make or change appointments in different ways.



Staff should be trained to support you with your communication needs.

You must be told you have the right to accessible communication.



Support workers must be able to stay with you when needed. This includes outside of visiting hours.



Staff must make sure you understand all the information they give to you.

Emergency care



Emergency care is for when someone needs help quickly.

You must still get communication support in emergency care.



There must be language interpreters available.

Patient records must be **flagged**. This means staff can quickly see what support you need.



All information must be in a format you can understand. For example, in Easy Read.

Checking the Standards are working



These **Standards** need to be checked to make sure they are working well.

Checked every
2 years



They will be checked every 2 years.
They will be checked by NHS departments, Welsh Government and the people the **Standards** are for.

Feedback and complaints

Everyone must know how to:

- Give feedback.
- Make a complaint.



Information about complaints must be given to you in a way you can understand.



Staff should also be asked what they think about the **Standards**.

Staff training

All staff should learn:



- About different ways to communicate.
- Why good communication is important.



This includes people who do jobs for the NHS but are not NHS staff.

Staff must learn how to communicate well with people who have extra communication needs.

All health boards offer the **Paul Ridd Learning Disability Training**.

More information



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

This is 1 of 3 new documents made by the Welsh Government with partners.



The first document is the **Accessible Communication and Information Standards Wales**.

These **Standards** say what healthcare services must do to communicate with people.



The second document is the **Accessible Information Standard for GPs**.

The AIS helps GP practices give the right help to people who find communication harder.



There is an Easy Read document about the AIS here: www.gov.wales/accessible-communication-and-information-standards-healthcare



The third document is new **Rules for NHS staff using interpreters and translation services in healthcare.**

These rules explain how to arrange translation or interpreting services for patients.



Translation means changing written words into another language.
Interpreting means changing spoken words into another language.



There is an Easy Read document about these rules here:
www.gov.wales/accessible-communication-and-information-standards-healthcare

All together these rules and standards will help people:

- Understand their health and care



- Feel confident to ask questions

- Make good choices



- Stay healthy

For more information about
the new rules and standards:



Go to our website: www.gov.wales/accessible-communication-and-information-standards-healthcare



Or email us at:
hsceyg.equalityteam@gov.wales

Easy Read Health Information



For Easy Read health information
try the NHS Wales Easy Read Health
A-Z: 111.wales.nhs.uk/easyreads/easyread.aspx

Easy Read Annual Health Checks Information



Public Health Wales has made an easy read resource pack for **Annual Health Checks**.

It has useful information and easy read resources to help you get your Annual Health Check.



You can find it here:
bit.ly/EasyReadAHC