

## Healthwatch Bristol Accessible Information Standard Networking Event - summary report

Healthwatch Bristol hosted a networking event about the Accessible Information Standard on 24 January 2017. The meeting is summarised below. Full meeting notes are also available on request.

### Contents:

- 1) What is the Accessible Information Standard?
- 2) AIS successes
- 3) AIS challenges
- 4) Key themes from networking meeting
- 5) Next steps/ pledges
- 6) Useful links and information

### 1) What is the Accessible Information Standard (AIS)?

W: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/accessibleinfo/>



## 2) Accessible Information Standard successes

- **Empowering people to ask for their needs to be met:** Action on Hearing Loss has developed and promoted a record sheet for people to give to GPs/hospitals regarding their communication needs.
- **Patient recording systems:** Main patient recording system across Bristol Community Health services is now working to the AIS...others soon to follow.
- **Text messages** to remind patients of health appointments are great for Deaf people, but there is no way of replying to ask questions, cancel or postpone the appointment. This means the person still needs to find someone to make the call!
- **Online information:** Bristol Public Health is developing a web page to bring together all things AIS within Public Health
- **Partnership working:** Action on Hearing Loss and Bristol Community Health are working together to make BCH services accessible to people who are hard of hearing.
- **Training:** Public Health/Bristol City Council is providing Learning Difficulty training for GPs.
- **Taster sessions:** It is possible to make email appointments with the breast screening service. We have a website with basic information about breast screening in different languages. We offer taster sessions to women with learning difficulties

## 3) Accessible Information Standard challenges

- **Different data systems:** Working across multiple patient/data service systems.
- **Interpreter preference:** Patients can't currently indicate preference of interpreter when booking GP appointments.
- **Keeping information up to date:** Checking every year to see if patient's needs have changed - resource issue.
- **Lots of training resources, but how do we get all providers to use them?** Getting services to take up Public Health offer of helping them implement the AIS.
- **Culture of services:** Seeing the AIS as an opportunity not a tick box! Change culture of services.
- **Actions not talk.**
- **More funding.**
- **Making feedback mechanisms accessible:** Friends and Family test is not accessible! A commentator said that the NHS England surveys about the implementation of the AIS are not accessible to Deaf people.
- **Checklist for adherence to AIS:** Checklist for the AIS to make sure everyone is using it.
- GP online and **Choose and Book:** no option to choose BSL interpreter. A commentator said they had emailed Choose and Book about booking an

- interpreter and had no response. They said that the Choose and Book system, which is nationally delivered, is not accessible.
- **Evaluating compliance:** How are services supposed to evaluate how well they're delivering the AIS?
  - **Time:** More hours to engage in the process! We can address the issue that our letters to practice managers do not include flagging up disabilities other than learning difficulties.

#### 4) Key themes in comments from people attending the networking meeting:

- **Increase public awareness:** There is a need to raise awareness amongst members of the public/ service users about their rights to accessing services and about how they can give feedback on their experiences. (Action on Hearing Loss and RNIB have produced resources for informing members of the public about the AIS.)
- **Accessible feedback mechanisms:** There was recognition that feedback mechanisms may not be accessible (including Friends and Family Test). There is always a need to go back to service users/ public and tell them about the outcomes of them giving their feedback.
- **Multiple communication needs:** People may more than one 'access need' or 'communication need' and this must be recognised by services. For example, a person may be hard of hearing and have dementia both of which will affect their ability to access and use health and social care services. Not meeting a person's communication needs can lead to misdiagnosis.
- **Unplanned contact:** South West Ambulance Service are working on making their services (999 calls, ambulance service, 111) meet the AIS. This is difficult as the contact is unplanned.
- **British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters:** There is an issue with appropriate interpreters being booked and arriving at appointments. This is often due to a breakdown in communication between primary and secondary care services. Progress is being made regarding booking appropriate interpreters for hospital appointments (University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust has worked with Sign Solutions to add a box on the referral form where a preferred interpreter/ preferred gender of interpreter can be recorded).
- **Training for health and social care staff:** There are opportunities for health providers to work with voluntary and community sector groups to design and deliver training to their staff - for example, Action on Hearing Loss and Bristol Community Health have been working together on training for staff.
- **GPs/ Primary Care:** There were not any primary care staff at this networking meeting. There was concern in the room that primary care services are not meeting AIS, for example, booking appointments by email is

- good for Deaf people, but then they have to telephone to book an interpreter (which isn't possible!)
- **Monitoring compliance to AIS:** how are services being monitored?

## 5) Next steps:

**Healthwatch Bristol** is gathering feedback from members of the public about their experiences of using health and social care services with specific reference to access. We will report on this work in April 2017.

**Healthwatch Bristol** has requested that service providers share with Healthwatch a summary of what they have done to meet the requirements of D/deaf and hard of hearing people. Healthwatch Bristol will produce a subtitled and BSL video to respond to the feedback gathered during its April consultation event. W:

<http://bit.ly/2eJOgRz>

**NHS England** has launched three surveys to gather feedback on the implementation of the AIS. W:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/accessibleinfo/>

### The attendees at the meeting made the following pledges:

- Bristol Community Health (BCH) will ensure our feedback systems are accessible to all patients (and families/carers) so we can implement best practice across all of our services
- Action on Hearing Loss
  - continue working with BCH staff to implement staff training
  - AOHL - set up information stands in walk-in centres and hospitals to inform people about hearing loss
  - AOHL - work with Healthwatch to reach out to GP forums
- Basically ongoing of updated new information and spread the word within the community
- Keep on improving (Thank you for this event)
- We will listen carefully to our staff about what is working that ensures our patients' needs are acted upon - before rolling out the AIS across our other data systems?
- To contact the SW Ambulance Service
- To inform Deaf Health Charter Signatories
- Public Health Bristol are working with GP practices to help them make their service more accessible to people with learning disabilities
- CSU, BCH - checklist for measuring compliance to the AIS - CSU 21 Questions (give us the evidence): CSU start monitoring!
- AWP - to pass the questions to the AIS working groups
- Better understanding about the progress local organisations are doing

- Ideas for future training sessions - thoughts about things we should focus on - AIS
- Very interesting session providing an opportunity to network with key people in this speciality. Helpful insight into needs of those with physical disability especially the deaf experience of the health service

## 6) Useful links and information

**NHS England** has now launched its post-implementation review of the AIS. Please see information here: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/accessibleinfo/>

**NHS England** Accessible Information Standard information, guidance and resources (including examples from across England):  
<https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/accessibleinfo/>

**Patient Information Forum:** <http://www.pifonline.org.uk/groups/accessible-information/forum/topic/examples-of-good-practice/>

### **New Accessible Information Standard Online Forum**

- The Patient Information Forum (PIF), supported by NHS England, has launched a new online group to support organisations with following the Accessible Information Standard.
- The group is free to join, and is for anyone involved in implementing the Accessible Information Standard, or producing and providing accessible health and care information.
- The new group will be an online space where users can connect with each other and:
  - Keep up to date with NHS England guidance, support and events
  - Share accessible information resources and guidance
  - Take part in discussions and access best practice support on accessible information
  - Share their questions, challenges and successes

You can join the PIF accessible information group [here](http://www.pifonline.org.uk/accessible-information-register) (at <http://www.pifonline.org.uk/accessible-information-register>).

**Post-implementation review – have your say:** There are three surveys (one for patients, one for providers, one for supporting organisations)  
<https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/accessibleinfo/>

### **Lots of useful factsheets/ resources:**

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/accessibleinfo/resources/> Perhaps you could select ones to share and tag in relevant organisations

### **Information for patients:**

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/accessibleinfo/patient/> or scroll down on this page for posters etc <https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/accessibleinfo/resources/>  
[the care forum](#)



The Care Forum is a registered charity No.1053817 and a company limited by guarantee in England No. 3170666



**Action on Hearing Loss:** <https://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/get-involved/campaign/access-to-healthcare/on-the-record/nhs-englands-accessible-information-standard.aspx>

**Learning Disabilities:** <https://www.mencap.org.uk/learning-disability-explained/resources-healthcare-professionals>

**Easy read AIS information:** <http://www.changepeople.org/Change/media/Change-Media-Library/Blog%20Media/AIS-Wordbank.pdf>

**RNIB:** <http://www.rnib.org.uk/accessible-information-campaign>

**For more information, contact Healthwatch Bristol.**

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