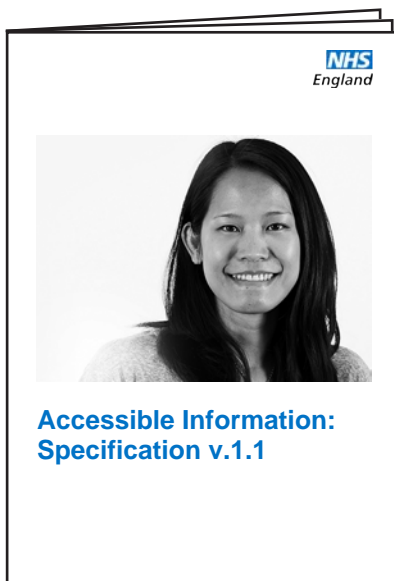
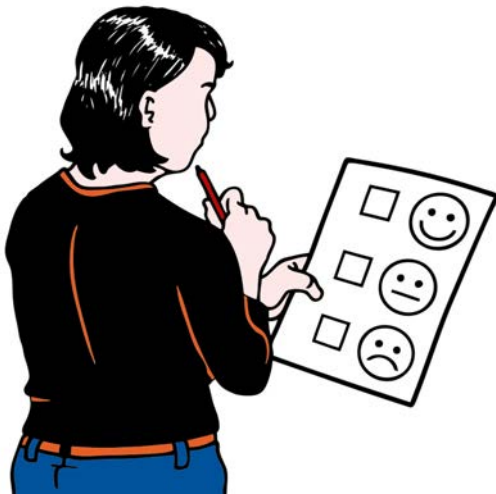


Review of the NHS Accessible Information Standard



Summary

In 2021 a group of charities did a survey.

This means they asked a lot of people a lot of questions.

They asked questions about the NHS Accessible Information Standard (AIS). The AIS is like a guide. It helps the NHS communicate with people in the format they want.



For example, some people like emails, some people like printed letters.

Some people read braille, some people use sign language.



The survey asked people who work in the NHS and in social care.



The survey asked disabled people about their communication needs.

900+



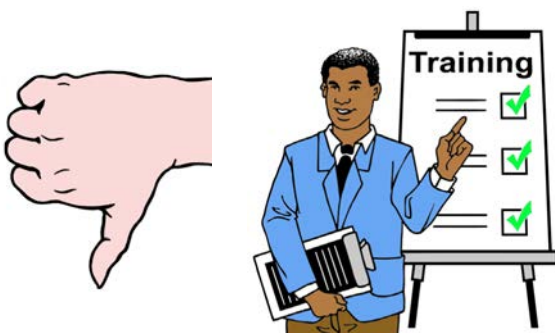
More than **900** people answered the questions.

This is what we found out:

- The AIS started 5 years ago to help people with communication needs. Only **1 in 10** of these people have full access to the NHS.
- Just over **3 out of 10** of people said they had regular training about the AIS.
- Nearly **4 out of 10** health workers said they never had training about the AIS.



NHS





- Nearly **7 out of 10** deaf people have no accessible way to contact their GP.



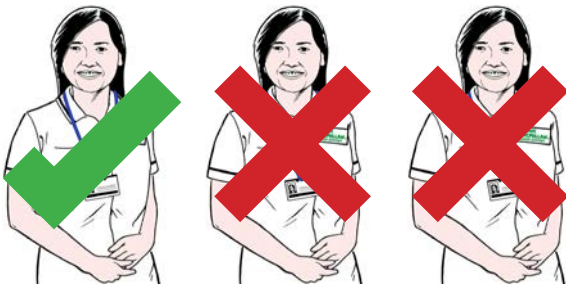
- **8 out of 10** patients had an appointment that did not meet their communication needs.



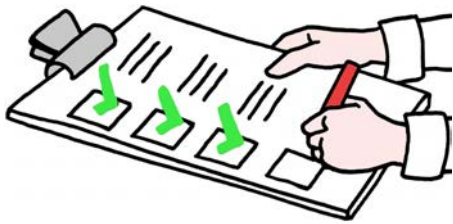
- Nearly **8 out of 10** people do not get information in a way they can use.



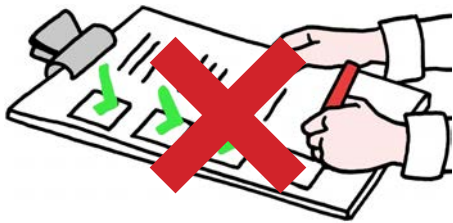
- Only **4 out of 10** complaints processes were accessible.



- **1 in 3** service providers did not know the AIS existed.



The AIS sets out clear steps for how to meet communication needs.



The survey tells us the AIS is not being followed.



The reasons are:

- no training



- poor understanding of patient rights

- poor understanding that the AIS should be followed

Patients say it is hard to:

- make appointments



- talk to health workers



- find out test results



- get information about medicine



This means people with communication needs get poorer healthcare. They could be at risk.

Urgent Priorities

We are a group of disability charities and other organisations.

We want to support the AIS.

We want to improve access to information.



Full implementation

This means all parts of the AIS will be followed.

1. Training: Staff must be told about the AIS, and how to use it.



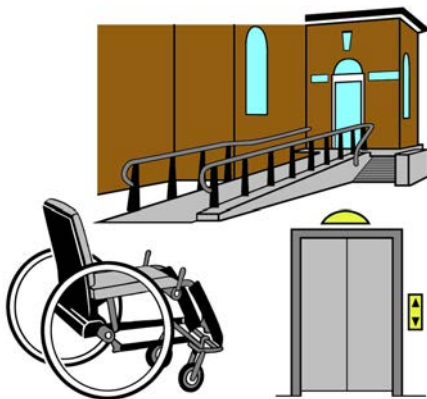
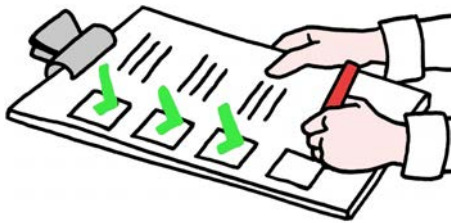
2. Patient record

systems: A flag should be inserted on the patient record. This will tell staff what to do, so they can communicate with the patient properly. For example, send an email or a large print letter.



3. Alternative contact

methods: Service providers must not rely on telephones. There must be other ways to communicate with patients.



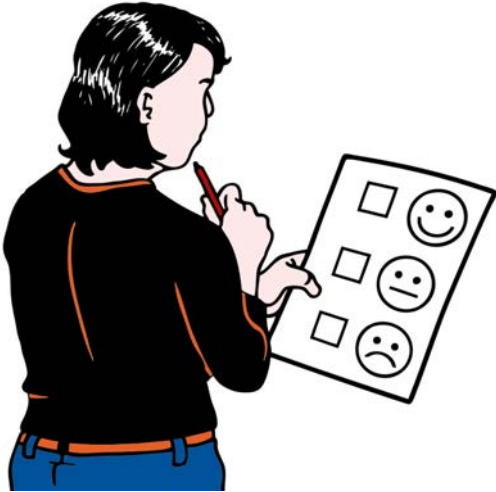
Accountability and Monitoring

1. Contracts: Access to information must be included in contracts.

These must be checked to make sure they are followed.

This means:

- Access costs must be part of every contract
- Accessibility must be part of every inspection



2. Dedicated lead:

There must be an AIS lead in each service. This person will make sure the AIS is followed. They will check it is working properly.



3. Development:

Providers should check their services with the people who use them. What works? What could be better?



4. Accessible complaints procedures:

This is information about how to make a complaint. The information should be easier to access.



It should be available in a range of formats.

For example, electronic file, large print, braille, and so on.

Recommendations

1. Email and text suggestion: Most patients said that email and text is the best way for their GP to contact them. Doing this would be a cheap and simple improvement.



2. Data oversight: Let patients see their own records and fill in their own communication needs. They could do this in person or via NHS Health Access/ Online portal.



3. Video Relay

Service: Sign language interpreters should be available on demand using VRS. This means they can give support to deaf people, live on video, even at short notice.

**THE DEAF HEALTH
CHARITY
SIGNHEALTH**

R N I B



See differently

 **sense**



Royal Association for Deaf people

Who took part?

SignHealth joined with:

- Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB)
- Sense
- Royal Association for Deaf People



- Learning Disability England



- Visionary



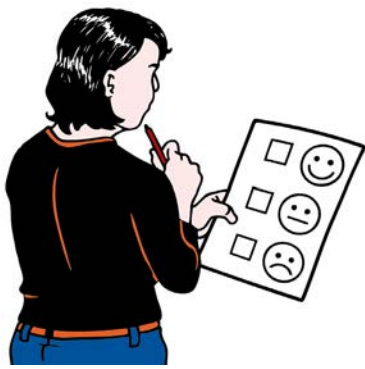
- Macular Society



- Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID)



- Healthwatch England



People who answered the survey questions:

- **714** people with communication needs
- **196** healthcare workers



The online survey was written in English and British Sign Language (BSL).



This Easy Read document was designed by Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB)

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