

Accessible Information Standard Policy and Procedures.

College Way Surgery

Introduction

1.0 The purpose of this policy is to make sure there is a consistent, accurate and clear approach to the provision of accessible information to patients, and members of the public. The policy is aimed at all practice staff involved in, or who have responsibility for the provision of information, including letters.

Scope

2.1 The policy relates to the NHS England Accessible Information Standard which the practice must implement by 31st July 2016 to be in line with the Equality Act 2010. The Standard:

- Describes 'accessible information' and why it is important
- Defines the roles and responsibilities of practice members responsible for developing and implementing this policy and procedures
- Signposts available guidance for the provision, review and monitoring of accessible information
- Raises awareness of the importance of developing and providing accessible information.

2.2 Who is the policy designed to support?

This policy extends to individuals (patients, and where appropriate, the parents and carers of patients) who have information and / or communication support needs which are related to or caused by a disability, impairment or sensory loss. This includes needs for: information in 'non-standard', alternative or specific formats; use of specific or alternative contact methods; arrangements to obtain support from a communication professional (for example a deafblind manual interpreter or British Sign Language interpreter); and support to communicate in a different or particular way or to use communication aids (for example to lip read or use a hearing aid).

The policy is of particular relevance to individuals who have sensory loss and a learning disability. However, it will also support people who have other 'communication disabilities' such as aphasia, dysphasia, autism or a mental health condition which affects their ability to communicate.

Why is accessible information important?

3.1 Effective information and communication are vital for the provision of high-quality healthcare. Many patients have difficulty understanding the information provided in our usual ways because they are visually impaired, hearing impaired or have a learning difficulty. It may be because they need support in terms of reading (literacy problems) or they have a condition which limits their ability to communicate (e.g. following a brain injury or stroke).

3.2 The aim of the policy is to ensure that information is presented in an accessible way, in a range of formats that are easily used and understood by individuals. This means taking

Accessible Information Standard Policy and Procedures.

College Way Surgery

information in a form that is not accessible to an individual, and changing, translating or interpreting it into a format the individual can access.

3.3 We believe that providing accessible information will benefit our patients and their families and carers. Accessible information will help patients access our services, will enable people to make more informed choices about their care and will promote social inclusion. For staff, the provision of accessible information will improve communication with patients and support patient-centred care.

What is accessible information?

4.1 Information that is accessible may be provided in printed and electronic formats, and through face-to-face and telephone communication. It covers all areas of access to information including:

- alternative formats
- translations
- interpreters
- support for people at meetings, for example, note-takers.

4.2 Information should be provided at a level that meets individual communication needs first and foremost. This includes:

- letters
- e-mails
- patient information provided in leaflet, booklet or poster style, or in audio-visual or electronic form
- appointment cards and letters
- information provided on the College Way Surgery website

4.3 Who funds it?

The cost of providing accessible information lies with College Way Surgery and will not be passed on to patients or their families or carers. The practice will budget for the costs of arranging accessible formats into the standard costs for producing information, whether this is produced internally or is procured externally.

Accessible Information Standard Policy and Procedures.

College Way Surgery

4.4 Which formats?

For all written material the following statement should be included at the beginning of the document:

If you require this information in an accessible format, such as large print, Easy Read or Braille, please contact College Way Surgery by telephone on 01823 259333, by email at Somccg.office-collegewaysurgery@nhs.uk, or ask a receptionist.

4.5 Minimum requirements for accessible information

- Minimum requirements for accessible information are as follows:
All requests from patients or carers to meet their need for information in an accessible language or format must be met within 14 days
- All other requests to meet a patients need relating to accessible information will be met within 3 weeks
- All information should be presented in plain English where possible
- All electronic documents must be created in an accessible format (accessible Word documents, PDFs etc.)
- When requested, information must be provided in suitable formats to meet individual patient's needs
- All information, such as letters and leaflets, must include a variety of ways of making contact with College Way Surgery
- All information should be checked and assessed regularly to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of those patients with additional communication needs
- All patients should have their communication support needs recorded in the GP clinical system
- All patients with additional communication needs should have their explicit informed consent to share data recorded in the GP clinical system, where such consent has been given. Refused consent must also be recorded.
- Fixed or portable loop systems for hearing aid users must be made available when required
- Sign language interpreters and other one-to-one communication support, such as lip speakers and note takers, must be available and used when required
- The complaints system communications must be available in accessible formats, and assistance to complete forms and fill in other paperwork must be available.

Accessible Information Standard Policy and Procedures.

College Way Surgery

4.8 College Way Surgery will:

- Provide advice, support, training and guidance for staff on how to make information accessible, how to book interpreters or other forms of communication support, and assess a patient's communication or language support needs.
- Have in place contracts with providers of communication and language support
- Have a complaints system that is accessible to all

Roles and responsibilities

5.1 It is the responsibility of all staff to put the patient's communication needs at the centre of the services they deliver. Any member of staff may receive a request for information to be made available in another format, and therefore will need to understand the process.

5.2 The Practice Manager will ensure that:

- There are clear structures and processes for developing, implementing and reviewing the policy and procedures
- The patient participation group are appropriately engaged in the implementation, development and review of the policy
- The policy is monitored and reviewed annually
- There is sufficient funding budgeted for providing accessible information
- Staff have access to the policy and procedures and that these are followed appropriately
- Appropriate staff training is given
- An electronic library of standard information and patient forms in accessible formats is kept updated
- A system for reviewing standard practice accessible information (within 2 years of production/review date) is implemented.

Review

6.1 This policy will be reviewed every 2 years, or before if there are significant changes to Standards, laws or practice.