Accessible Information Policy

1. Summary

This policy creates a framework to enable Purple Patch Arts to provide accessible information in accordance with the NHS England Accessible Information Standards (AIS). See Appendix A for a summary of the AIS, and Appendix B for Purple Patch Arts' responsibilities and commitments. Successful implementation of this policy aims to lead to improved outcomes and experiences, and the provision of safer and more personalised care and services to those who fall within the scope of the Accessible Information Standard.

The implementation of this policy will demonstrate that Purple Patch Arts is meeting its legal duties to reduce inequalities.

It is important that all documents and information shared by Purple Patch are accessible and inclusive; this ensures that information can be read or received and understood by as many people as possible.

In implementing the standard, Purple Patch Arts is required to complete five distinct stages leading to the achievement of five clear outcomes: the identification, recording, flagging, sharing and meeting of needs.

Communication and/or information needs MUST be identified upon first contact with Purple Patch Arts or as soon as practicable thereafter. Office staff managing the contact should ask any participants, their family/carers, staff, volunteers, trustees, consultants, or candidates about their information or communication support needs relating to a disability, impairment or sensory loss.

Where applicable, staff should take care to record people's communication needs specifically and separately from any recording of disability or other protected character status. This is both respectful and also ensures that information recorded supports other staff in meeting the individual's needs.

Any recorded information or communication needs will be made 'highly visible' on records to ensure they are seen and acted upon by all members of staff.

The sharing of data, in any circumstance, must meet the Purple Patch Privacy Policy, Information and Communications Systems Policy, Confidentiality Policy, Data Protection Policy, and all other relevant policies.

The adjustments made must be reasonable; this does not mean that the patient must always receive information in their preferred format. What is important is that they can access and understand the information.

2. Introduction

Implementation of this policy will help to improve access to Purple Patch Arts, promote social inclusion and enable people to make informed choices.

NHS England state 'communication and/or information needs MUST be identified at registration/upon first contact with the service or as soon as is practicable thereafter'.
For staff, the provision of accessible information will aid communication with participants and their family/carers, support effective engagement activity, and support choice, personalisation and empowerment. It will also promote the effective and efficient use of resources.

3. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Purple Patch Arts has a clear, consistent, transparent and fair approach to the provision of accessible, inclusive information and communication support to participants, family/carers, staff, volunteers, consultants, trustees, job candidates, and other stakeholders.

Successful implementation of the policy aims to lead to improved outcomes and experiences, and the provision of safer and more personalised services to those individuals who fall within the scope of the Standard and beyond. It should lead to improvements in participant satisfaction, experience, and safety.

The policy is aimed at Purple Patch Arts staff involved in, or have responsibility for authoring, producing and/or providing information. This includes staff who have direct contact / communication with participants, family/carers, staff, volunteers, consultants, trustees, job candidates, and other stakeholders, by any means.

The scope of the Standard includes, but is not limited to:

- People who are blind or have some visual loss
- People who are d/Deaf or have some hearing loss
- People who are deafblind
- People with a learning disability
- Where appropriate the parents and carers of participants
- It will also include people who have other 'communication disabilities' such as aphasia, autism or a mental health condition which affects their ability to communicate.

- Individuals with any form or type of disability (or impairment) which affects their ability to read or receive information, to understand information, and/or to communicate, are within the scope of this Standard.

The scope of the Standard does not include, for reasons other than disability, impairment or sensory loss, the following people. However, we are choosing to include them in our approach to enacting the Standard at our discretion, where this is practical:

- The needs or preferences of staff, employees or contractors
- Individual preferences for being communicated with in a particular way
- Individuals who have difficulty in reading (such as dyslexia)

The scope of the Standard does not include, for reasons other than disability, impairment or sensory loss:

- Recording of demographic or statistical analysis data
- Corporate communications published by organisations
- Foreign language needs
- Matters of consent and capacity
- Standards for and design of signage

4. Process

In implementing the Standard, Purple Patch Arts is required to complete five distinct stages leading to the achievement of five clear outcomes:

- Identification of needs
- Recording of needs
- Flagging of needs
- Sharing of needs
- Meeting of needs

Making documents accessible

It is important that documents and information relating to participants are accessible and inclusive. This includes documents and information authored and produced in-house and commissioned from external agencies. This ensures that information can be read or received by as many people as possible.

Deciding on alternative formats

Proactive publication of alternative formats of documents, information and materials alongside standard documents should be considered.

5. Training Expectations for Staff

All Purple Patch Arts staff who are involved in, or have responsibility for authoring, producing and / or providing information will be briefed on the Standard, as appropriate, and will be required to take the 'Accessible Information Standard' online training via Grey Matter Learning which details:

- What is the Accessible Information Standard (AIS)?
- Why do we need to know about the AIS?
- Who does the AIS apply to?
- Five steps of AIS
- Providing accessible information
- Relevant legislation
- Impact on people who use social care services

In-house guidance for office staff on producing easy read documents using our own images is also available on Dropbox. Programmes staff are not expected to produce such documents and should approach office staff should they wish to communicate in such a way with participants and their families/carers.

6. Implementation Plan

To ensure effective implementation of this policy the latest approved version:

- Will be posted on the Staff Area of the Purple Patch Arts website.
- Will be included in office inductions.
- Awareness of communication needs will be communicated to all Programmes Staff at induction.

7. Responsibility

The CEO and Board of Trustees have ultimate responsibility for the Accessible Information Policy. It is their responsibility to implement, monitor and evaluate the policy and its delivery.

8. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually.

APPENDIX A

Accessible Information Standard Overview

Summary

The Accessible Information Standard aims to make sure that people who have a disability, impairment or sensory loss are given information in a way they can access and understand, and that they receive any communication support that they need from health and care services. This should lead to improved outcomes and experiences, and safer, better services.

The Standard tells organisations how they should make sure that patients and service users, and their carers and parents, can access and understand the information they are given. This includes making sure that people get information in accessible formats.

The Standard also tells organisations how they should make sure that people get support from a communication professional if they need it, and about changing working practices to support effective communication.

By law (section 250 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012), all organisations that provide NHS care or adult social care must follow the Standard in full from 1st August 2016 onwards.

The Standard is there to help adult health and social care services to improve, so they can better meet the communication and support needs of disabled people.

What does the Standard tell organisations to do?

As part of the Accessible Information Standard, organisations that provide NHS care or adult social care must do five things. They must:

1. Ask people if they have any information or communication needs, and find out how to meet their needs.
2. Record those needs clearly and consistently and in a set way.
3. Highlight or flag the person's file or notes so it is clear that they have information or communication needs and how to meet those needs. Flagging these needs ensures that when any staff open participant's records it is really clear what the person's communication or information needs are.
4. Share information about people's information and communication needs with other providers of NHS and adult social care, when they have consent or permission to do so.
5. Take steps to ensure that people receive information which they can access and understand, and receive communication support if they need it. For example, offering easy read

information or making sure there is someone there to support participants with communication.

What does the Standard include?

The Standard says that patients, service users, carers and parents with a disability, impairment or sensory loss should:

- Be able to contact, and be contacted by, services in accessible ways, for example via email or text message.
- Receive information and correspondence in formats they can read and understand, for example in audio, braille, easy read or large print.
- Be supported by a communication professional at appointments if this is needed to support conversation, for example a British Sign Language interpreter.
- Get support from health and care staff and organisations to communicate, for example to lip-read or use a hearing aid.

More information about the Accessible Information Standard can be read at:
https://www.england.nhs.uk/about/equality/equality-hub/patient-equalities-programme/equality-frameworks-and-information-standards/accessibleinfo/

Our responsibilities and commitments at Purple Patch in accordance with the NHS England Accessible Information Standards (AIS)

(i) To Participants:

Purple Patch Art's Access Needs forms are completed by participants and their support networks at referral, and mark the first point of contact before participants access our service. These forms include space for us to ask participants for details of any information or communication needs, and space to find out how to meet the specified needs. Access Needs forms are completed before participants attend our service for the first time, and are reviewed annually. Information collected on these forms is recorded and flagged on our Contact Database and communicated to relevant staff members as needed.

As standard, any documents that we create that will be seen by participants will be an accessible communication (produced using visuals), and provided either as a full document, or as an accessible summary.

We will also meet any other individual or specific requirements we are notified of.

Participants are able to contact office staff in a variety of ways including email, phone, text, Whatsapp, or our public social media accounts.

(ii) To family and carers:

The participant Access Needs form has space to ask family and carers to share their communication needs with us. This includes family and carers with a disability, impairment or sensory loss, but also we believe it is good practice to ask this of **all** family and carers to ensure that we meet all of our community's needs.

Information collected on these forms is recorded and flagged on our Contact database and communicated to relevant staff members as needed.

We will only communicate with family and carers in the ways that they have highlighted.

Family and carers are able to contact office staff in a variety of ways including email, phone, text, Whatsapp, or our public social media accounts.

(iii) To staff, volunteers, consultants, and trustees:

At induction, our Staff Details Form and Trustee Details Form has space for individuals to note their communication needs. This includes those with a disability, impairment or sensory loss as included within the Standard, but also we believe it is good practice to ask this of **all** staff, volunteers, consultants and trustees to ensure that we meet all of our community's needs.

Information collected on these forms is recorded and flagged on our Staff Details and Trustee Details databases and communicated to relevant staff members as needed.

We will only communicate with staff/volunteers/consultants/trustees in the ways that they have highlighted, and work with them, providing support to access other information (for example online training portals, or HR documents).

Information may be shared within staff teams, where consent has been given in order to provide as much awareness and support of needs as required.

Staff/volunteers/consultants/trustees are able to contact office staff in a variety of ways including email, phone, text, or Whatsapp.

(iv) To job candidates:

Candidates are asked upon applying and then again before interview to advise us on required alternative application forms and interview materials. Any such disclosure of communication needs will not prejudice any recruitment decisions made.

(v) To everybody else, including the public/venues/stakeholders or contractors:

All Purple Patch social media posts have alt text as standard.

The Purple Patch website has image descriptions as standard, and accessibility features including text size changes, grayscale option, contrast changes, background colour changes and font change.

Any disclosures of communication needs by our stakeholders will be shared with relevant staff and documented in our Key Supplier contacts database.

Members of the public are able to contact office staff in a variety of ways including email, phone, or via our public social media accounts.