



THE ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION STANDARD: A QUICK GUIDE

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A practical guide for understanding your communication rights in NHS and social care settings in England

What is the Accessible Information Standard?

The Accessible Information Standard (AIS) is a legal requirement for NHS and publicly funded adult social care services in England.

It requires services to identify, record, and meet the communication needs of people with a disability or sensory loss.

The Five Steps of the AIS

Healthcare providers must:

1. Ask how you prefer to receive information
2. Record your communication needs clearly
3. Flag those needs in your records
4. Share information in accessible formats
5. Act on your needs consistently

These steps apply every time you use the service.

What It Means in Practice

What adjustments might be provided?

Depending on individual preference, this may include:

- Written summaries of appointments
- Remote captions for video consultations
- Lipspeaking or BSL interpreting support
- Large print materials
- Easy-read information
- Alternative communication formats

The key principle is that support should match the person's needs.

Why the AIS matters

When communication needs are not met, people may misunderstand diagnoses, treatment options, or follow-up instructions. Clear communication supports safer healthcare and informed decision-making.

Accessible communication is not optional. It is central to safe and effective care.

Common misunderstandings

- The AIS is not optional. It is a legal requirement.
- It applies to NHS and publicly funded adult social care in England.
- It covers communication support, not just written information.
- Recording needs is not enough; services must act on them.

What you can do

- ▶ Tell the provider how you prefer to receive information
- ▶ Ask for your needs to be recorded under the Accessible Information Standard
- ▶ Check that adjustments are provided consistently
- ▶ Raise concerns if your communication needs are not met

Lipspeaker UK works with organisations to support clear communication and inclusive practice in line with the Accessible Information Standard.

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