

## **Communications - Good Practice Guidelines**

### **Accessible Formats**

To ensure we provide services which are accessible to disabled people we must provide information in accessible formats. The following is a general guide to help us provide clear and accessible information.

### **Our Responsibilities**

We all have a responsibility to avoid creating barriers for disabled people whatever our role, either as managers or colleagues. To create good communication we must ensure that we do not use any language, or take any actions that will discriminate, either directly or indirectly, against patients, carers, members of staff, visitors or others who are disabled.

### **The Law - What we must do**

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 and its amendments gives protection to disabled people and intends to end the discrimination that disabled people meet in:

- employment
- education
- access to goods, facilities and services

### **United Nations Convention**

The British Government signed up to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in June 2009. Article 21, Freedom of expression and opinion and access to information, states that we must provide information to the general public in accessible formats and technologies that are appropriate to different kinds of disabilities, in a timely manner and without additional cost.

## **Information**

All information should be clear and easy to read. The Plain English Campaign guidelines are:

- an average sentence length of 15-20 words
- use of active verbs instead of passive ones
- use of everyday English
- use “we” instead of “the CCG” and “you” rather than “the department”
- be concise

## **Translations**

Translations may be needed for specific audiences or individuals. Key issues are to:

- Ask people what they need
- Consider translating materials into different formats e.g. Braille, different Fonts, video or aural tape
- Provide a sign language interpreter
- Offer different formats and who to contact for these

## **Printed material**

The CCG recommends that “Arial” is used with a minimum size of point 12. The following guidelines for materials for people with sight impairments are recommended.

### **Do use:**

- Text with a minimum size of 12 point (14 point would reach more people with sight problems)
- For large print documents use sizes 16 to 22 point
- Plain, legible typefaces like arial
- Black text on white background. This produces the best contrast.
- Blue paper for dyslexic people.
- Uncoated print paper weighing over 90 gsm
- High-contrast images with clean backgrounds. These are easier to view
- Align text to the left side only
- Bold to highlight text

## **Do Not:**

- Superimpose type on images like watermarks, or pictures
- Put text around images, which produce a ragged left-hand edge
- Align text to the right or centre
- Use italics and underlining
- Use combinations that people who are colour-blind cannot distinguish, such as green and red and high-gloss paper

## **Translating and Interpreting**

The aim is for all service users to have equal access to information about hospital services, their treatment and care. Each Trust in Somerset has details on their website

The CCG policy is to provide appropriate access to information about commissioning to patients and the public, whose preferred method of communication is not English. A range of approaches may be required which may involve the use of technology. Face to face interpreting may be used in specific cases. We only employ trained interpreters and used approved suppliers to ensure:

- Patients whose preferred method of communication is not English are involved in their care.
- Confidentiality is maintained
- No conflict of interest

## **Jargon**

There is a wide range of commonly used terms and acronyms (jargon) associated with the NHS which may be confusing. Good practice is to consult with relevant people to find out what they prefer, for example, disabled or impaired mobility etc. It is also important to explain all terms used.

The CCG has produced a Jargon Directory. This is available on the website.

<https://somersetccg.nhs.uk/get-involved/join-a-group/>

To meet different needs ask about individual preferences whenever possible. This applies to individual communication and terminology used when speaking to a large audience, or writing for wide dissemination.

Consider the words you use, consult before publication. When there are conflicting preferences, the terms used in law are acceptable.