Broad Lane Surgery
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GCP16 - Patients with Communication Difficulties Policy and Procedure

Category: Clinical Governance   **Sub-category:** Practice Management

📑 Policy Review Sheet

Review Date: 12/07/16 **Policy Last Amended:** 13/07/16

Next planned review in 12 months, or sooner as required.

Note: The full policy change history is available in your online management system.

Business Impact:	Low	Medium	High	Critical
			X	
These changes require action as soon as possible. Changes include fixed implementation dates which are detailed within the policy.				

👤??	**Reason for this review:**	New Policy
📑✅	**Were changes made?**	Yes
❓	**Summary:**	New policy on communication difficulties, reflects the new 'Accessible Information Standard', and the requirement to have systems implemented by 31st July 2016.
⚖️	**Relevant Legislation:**	⌐ Health and Social Care Act 2012, Section 250 ⌐ Equality Act 2010 ⌐ The Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014
🛡️	**Underpinning Knowledge - What have we used to ensure that the policy is current:**	⌐ NHS Choices, (2015), *Caring and communication difficulties*. [Online] Available from: http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/Pages/communication-problems-carers.aspx [Accessed: 08/04/2016] ⌐ Great Britain Office of the Public Guardian, (2007), *Mental Capacity Act Code of Practice*. London TSO ⌐ Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland, (2007), *Working with the Adults with Incapacity Act 2007*. [Online] Available from: http://www.mwcscot.org.uk/media/51918/Working%20with%20the%20Adults%20with%20Incapacity%20Act.pdf [Accessed: 16/05/2016] ⌐ NHS England, Patients and Information, (2015), *SCCI1605 Accessible Information Specification*. [Online] Available from: http://www.england.nhs.uk/accessibleinfo [Accessed: 27/04/2016] ⌐ NHS England, Patients and Information, (2015), *SCCI1605 Accessible Information Implementation Guidance*. [Online] Available from: http://www.england.nhs.uk/accessibleinfo [Accessed: 27/04/2016]
👆	**Suggested action:**	⌐ Notify relevant staff of changes to policy ⌐ Notify all staff of changes to policy ⌐ Share 'key facts' with professionals involved in the service ⌐ Discuss in team meetings ⌐ Discuss in supervision sessions

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? 1. Purpose

1.1 To effectively manage the health and care of all Patients, by ensuring that communication difficulties and information needs are addressed and barriers to involvement are minimised.

1.2 To ensure that Broad Lane Surgery reflects and has relevant policies, procedures and works in a way that supports the meeting of the Accessible Information Standard.

1.3 That the practice provides care and support to meet the Accessible Information Standard by the final implementation date of 31st July 2016.

1.4 To support Broad Lane Surgery in meeting the following Key Lines of Enquiry:

Key Question	Key Line of Enquiry (KLOE)
CARING	C2: Are people who use services and those close to them involved as partners in their care?
RESPONSIVE	R2: Do services take account of the needs of different people, including those in vulnerable circumstances?

1.5 To meet the legal requirements of the regulated activities that Broad Lane Surgery is registered to provide:

- Health and Social Care Act 2012, Section 250
- Equality Act 2010
- The Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014

2. Scope

2.1 The following roles may be affected by this policy:

- Staff providing a service to people with communication difficulties
- Management of Broad Lane Surgery

2.2 The following Patients may be affected by this policy:

- All Patients with identified communication difficulties

2.3 The following stakeholders may be affected by this policy:

- Family, advocates, friends or relatives of the Patient
- Local Authority or commissioners of the service

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3. Objectives

3.1 To ensure that the five identified outcomes of the Accessible Information Standard are consistently met. This requires that all communication needs of Patients are identified, recorded, flagged, shared and met.

3.2 To follow the Mental Capacity Act Code of Practice so that people are helped to make a decision for themselves using all possible and appropriate means of communication.

3.3 To identify and where possible overcome barriers to communication so that the person is involved as much as possible in the planning and delivery of their treatment.

3.4 To reduce the effects of communication difficulties to ensure that the person's independence is promoted in all aspects of their life.

4. Policy

4.1 The Patient will be individually assessed as to their needs, ensuring that suitable equipment and help is in place.

4.2 A consistent approach to the identification of Patients information and communication needs is developed.

4.3 There is a consistent and routine recording of Patients information and communication needs where they relate to a disability, impairment or sensory loss. The information is recorded in a standardised way that reflects current, recognised terminology.

4.4 When there are recognised information and communication needs, these are systematically alerted by the practice to ensure that appropriate action and resources are provided.

4.5 Where communication and information needs have been identified they are shared with other relevant stakeholders and are built in to a standardised referral and handover processes.

4.6 All communication and information needs are met, and there is a systematic way of ensuring that resources are sourced to meet the needs in as creative and detailed way as required.

4.7 Staff are trained to effectively care for Patients with communication difficulties and understand the importance of effective communication in delivering good health and social care.

4.8 The impact of the effectiveness of the interventions will be regularly assessed and reviewed and the practice will always seek to develop new methods to increase the Patients communication.

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5. Procedure

5.1 There are five basic steps to ensure that communication and information needs are met, these are detailed within the Accessible Information Standard:

- **Ask**: identify / find out if an individual has any communication / information needs relating to a disability or sensory loss and if so what they are
- **Record**: record those needs in a clear, unambiguous and standardised way in electronic and / or paper based record / administrative systems / documents
- **Alert / flag / highlight**: ensure that recorded needs are 'highly visible' whenever the individual's record is accessed, and prompt for action
- **Share**: include information about individuals' information / communication needs as part of existing data sharing processes (and in line with existing information governance frameworks)
- **Act**: take steps to ensure that individuals receive information which they can access and understand, and receive communication support if they need it

5.2 All Patients are regularly reviewed to identify any ongoing or emerging communication difficulties.

5.3 All communication and information issues will be recorded on a standardised administrative process in a clear and uniform way to facilitate the management and oversight of individual communication and information issues.

5.4 Patients with communication difficulties are referred to appropriate community support specialists. Support specialists could include but are not necessarily limited to:

- Interpreters (including British Sign Language interpreters)
- Speech therapist
- Advocacy services
- Psychologists

5.5 Staff are trained to care effectively for Patients who have communication difficulties, and be aware of where specialist support might be available.

5.6 Staff are trained in the principles and practice involved in assessing mental capacity, and in particular that inability to communicate a decision (whether by talking, using sign language or any other means) can indicate a lack of capacity to make a particular decision under the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

5.7 The practice arranges appropriate equipment or communication aids to support Patients to communicate as effectively as possible.

5.8 The practice ensures that information about the person's treatement is provided in a format, and in a way that encourages the Patient to be as informed and involved as possible in decisions that affect their life.

5.9 Information and communication resources are developed internally or sourced externally to facilitate the effective communication and involvement of all people attending the practice in their own care as much as possible.

5.10 Resources could include, but should not be limited to, easy read documents, interpreters, braille, sign language. Consideration should also be given to the potential for the increased time required to share information, or receive information from Patients, and the length of appointments need to reflect this.

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6. Definitions

6.1 Communication Difficulties

- Communications difficulties include the inability to convey or understand meaning in messages whether they are verbal, written or by another medium. Those difficulties may be caused by language, deafness, cultural factors, mental impairment, including thought disorder, learning disability, autism, or a learning difficulty, or other personal, situational or environmental factors

6.2 Accessible Information Standard

- NHS England define the standard as follows: The aim of the Accessible Information Standard is to make sure that people who have a disability, impairment or sensory loss get information that they can access and understand, and any communication support that they need
- The Accessible Information Standard tells organisations how they should make sure that patients and Patients, and their carers and parents, can access and understand the information they are given. This includes making sure that people get information in different formats if they need it, for example in large print, braille, easy read or via email
- The Accessible Information Standard also tells organisations how they should make sure that people receive any support with communication that they need, for example support from a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter, deafblind manual interpreter or an advocate
- The Accessible Information Standard is in line with current health and social care strategy; supporting the reduction of inequalities; enhancing personalisation; greater empowerment of Patients as equal partners in their own care; improved transparency and access to information
- These are key themes in the NHS Five Year Forward View and the importance of access to advice and information is one of the fundamental components of the Care Act 2014. It is also in line with the CQC's commitment to ensuring high quality care for people who use health and social care services

6.3 More detail - The Accessible Information Standard, SCCI1605

- This information standard (SCCI1605) has been approved for publication by the Department of Health and NHS England under section 250 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012
- Assurance that this information standard meets the requirements of the Act and is appropriate for the use specified in the specification document has been provided by the Standardisation Committee for Care Information (SCCI), a sub-group of the National Information Board
- The Accessible Information Standard applies to – and therefore must be implemented and adhered to by all providers of NHS care or treatment; all providers of publicly-funded adult social care; adult social care or services bodies (in their role as service providers); independent contractors providing NHS services, including primary medical services (GP practices), dental services, optometric services and pharmacy services; NHS Foundation Trusts and NHS Trusts; providers of NHS and / or adult social care from the voluntary and community or private sectors and providers of public health services, including advice and information

Key Facts - Professionals

Professionals providing this service should be aware of the following:

- Effective communication is key to good person-centred assessment and planning of care
- Staff must be aware of the preferred communication methods of people using the service
- Additional support and resources should be made available to ensure people using the services are empowered to be fully involved in their lives as possible
- Staff should have an awareness and understanding of the Accessible Information Standard
- All issues surrounding a person's communication and information issues must be recorded and appropriately shared
- All information for people with communication difficulties must be in a format that encourages and promotes their understanding

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Key Facts - People affected by the service

People affected by this service should be aware of the following:

- Patients should be at the centre of Treatment Planning, and staff will communicate with Patients at all times to ensure this happens
- Individual methods of communication must be understood by staff and additional resources provided to ensure that communication is facilitated
- All information needed to understand, and be involved in, the treatment will be provided in appropriate formats
- Communication difficulties, and ways of addressing them, will be agreed, recorded, shared and reviewed

Further Reading

There is no further reading for this policy, but we recommend the 'underpinning knowledge' section of the review sheet to increase your knowledge and understanding.

Outstanding Practice

To be 'outstanding' in this policy area you could provide evidence that:

- There is a high level of awareness and knowledge amongst staff of the functional test for mental capacity
- Highly creative and innovate methods of communication developed in partnership with the Patient
- Staff from all areas of the practice are able to communicate with all Patients in their preferred manner
- Treatment Plans for Patients with severe communication difficulties confirm their involvement
- A wide range of specialist professionals and resources are provided to overcome communication barriers
- The practice is proactive in sourcing advanced technological solutions to minimise the impact of communication difficulties
- The practice provides information for people with communication difficulties in highly innovative formats

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