

Making reasonable adjustments to aid communication with patients

Hints and tips for staff when completing the Communication/Information form in RiO

This leaflet is to help you complete the Communication / Information Need (Accessible Information Standard - NHS England) form in RiO by including the reasonable adjustments that are required to ensure communication is as effective as possible.

Examples of reasonable adjustments needed to support communication.

Please note, these are only examples and the adjustments needed will be dependent on the person's individual needs and preferences.

Written information (e.g. service leaflets, appointment letters, care plans, medication information etc)

Ensure you consider adjustments such as:

- changing font type and size
- reducing the amount of text per page
- using the colour of paper and/or text the person can see best
- using easy read
- using photos or pictures
- providing information in other formats such as audio or video.

Venue (i.e. where you meet the client)

Ensure you consider adjustments such as:

- meeting where the person is least anxious/
most confident

- ensuring the person can find (signage) and access the building/room
- ensuring there is adequate room for wheelchairs and for seating for others who may need to be there
- reducing background noise (both noise outside the room but also small noises inside the room such as ticking clocks)
- ensure loop systems are working if needed
- sitting so that your face is well lit (avoid sitting in front of windows)
- reducing visual distractions such as unnecessary posters on the wall etc.

If you are offering a video appointment, ensure your face is in the centre of their screen and well lit. Avoid distracting backgrounds.

The appointment

Ensure you consider adjustments such as:

- the timing of the appointment (some people are more able to concentrate/communicate at certain times of day and/or before/after medication etc).
- the duration of the appointment (some people will fatigue quickly or struggle to sustain concentration).
- Some may need double appointments.

Your own communication style

Having found out about the person's communication needs, ensure you consider adjusting your own communication:

- ensure you address the person directly rather than only speaking to their family member/carer etc
- avoid speaking too quickly or saying too much
- ensure you are speaking loudly enough for the person to hear but do not shout as this distorts speech sounds
- consider the words/terminology that you are using, avoid jargon or acronyms and check the person has understood you. Be prepared to re-word if necessary.
- allow the person extra time to process what you've said and formulate a response
- be prepared to write things down, use pictures or symbols to support the person's understanding
- be willing to allow extra time for the person to use writing, pictures or their communication aid to take their turn in the conversation
- do not try to finish their sentences for them
- be honest if you haven't understood what they have said and try again.

If you need to book an interpreter, translate information into another language or Braille contact THG Fluently found in Oxleas favourites/Interpreting Services.