

Making NHS information accessible

The Scottish Accessible Information Forum can help you to:

- deliver better services by improving the information you provide
- meet your legal duties to disabled people
- improve the quality and accessibility of patient and public involvement
- make better use of your resources

Why is providing accessible information important?

The NHS produces huge amounts of information. Ensuring that this information is accessible empowers staff, patients and the general public. It enables them to

- participate;
- claim their rights and entitlements as users of your services; and
- take responsibility for the quality of their own lives.

There are now greater responsibilities upon public bodies, like the NHS, to recognise and provide for the diversity of the communities they serve. Legislative duties in relation to disability, race, and gender should ensure that policies and procedures and the delivery of services promote equality and eliminate discrimination.

The benefits

By providing accessible information, you can remove the barriers experienced by many people in accessing health information and services. Patients and the public can:

- obtain and understand the information they need;
- be involved in decisions about their own care;
- take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing; and
- get involved in decisions about how services are designed, delivered and monitored.

NHS staff can also benefit from clear, accessible information.

- staff often find accessible information produced for patients meets their own needs better than more formal documents;
- both those involved in producing information and front-line staff can be more confident that the information they give to patients will meet their needs; and
- managers can be confident that they are meeting the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.

SAIF – who are we?

The Scottish Accessible Information Forum (SAIF) has been around for 12 years and acts as an advisory body to the Scottish Government on issues relating to disabled people and their carers and their right to access information. The advisory body is made up of 21 people drawn from disability-led organisations and information providers.

We have developed a wealth of knowledge and experience in making information accessible to meet legislative and good practice requirements. We offer information, advice and training, and work locally and nationally on a range of initiatives to promote accessible information strategies, policies and services. This includes publishing a range of guidance material and standards to assist public organisations in making their information (including e-communication) accessible.

How can we help?

There are a number of ways we can help you to make sure that the information you produce is accessible to everyone.

Training and seminars – We can provide a range of training days and seminars which can be tailored to meet your needs. Some of the topics we cover include:

- raising awareness
- barriers disabled people face in accessing information
- disability legislative requirements
- including accessible information in broader strategies, action plans and policies
- producing information in a variety of formats, design and delivery
- accessible e-communication (websites, PDFs, Word documents and email)

Presentations – We are happy to come to one or more of your meetings to make a formal presentation or have an informal discussion about accessible information.

Workshops – Having an event? Launching a strategy or new initiative? We can run FREE interactive workshops.

Consultation – Developing your strategy or producing a leaflet? We are happy to get involved in consultation or provide you with information and advice.

Our publications

We have published a number of good practice guides and a set of Standards which are used throughout Scotland. These are available in hard copy, in a variety of different formats or can be downloaded from our website at www.saifscotland.org.uk.

- SAIF Standards for Disability Information and Advice Provision in Scotland.
- Barrier Free Information
- Making Ecommunication Accessible
- Guide To User-Led Reviews
- Information and advice services – What disabled people should expect and receive
- Checklist Posters – Making Information Accessible, Making Websites Accessible, Making Word Documents Accessible, Making Email Accessible
- Scottish Formats Resource (CD-Rom with information about translation, transcription, interpreting and publishing services)

Staying in touch

SAIF produces a regular e-newsletter which keeps our contacts up-to-date about new training events, publications and consultations. Please let us know if you would like to add your details to our database.

For information and advice about how we can help you to make the information you provide more accessible please contact us:

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