



**healthwatch**  
Cambridgeshire

**healthwatch**  
Peterborough



**Having information about  
health and care in the way  
you need it**



EasyRead version





**healthwatch**  
Cambridgeshire

**healthwatch**  
Peterborough

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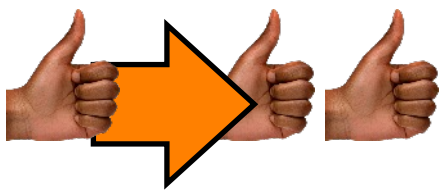
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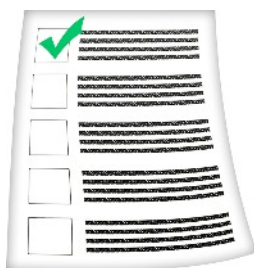
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## Who are we

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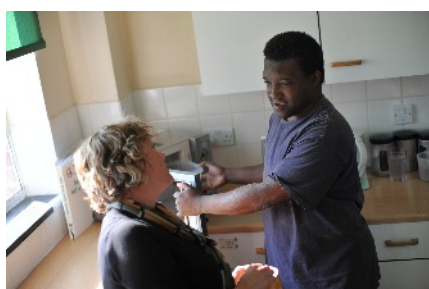
We are Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.



Healthwatch is the organisation that helps people speak up about health and social care.



We are **independent**, this means we are not part of health or **social care** services.



**Social care** is support to live at home and things like getting dressed, going to work or college and being part of the community.



We find out what people think about services and how to make them better.



## Your rights to have information in the way you need it



People need to have information they can understand so they can make proper decisions. This is important for deciding about your health and social care.



The law says you should get information in the way you need it.

This includes:

- easyread
- braille
- large print
- a sign language interpreter
- and others.





This is called **Accessible Information** and services should follow the rules in the **Accessible Information Standard**.





Are people getting the information they need?



People have told us they do not always get the information they need. We decided to look at how bad this really was.



We spoke to 180 people with disabilities and asked them if they got the health or care information they needed.



## What we found out



- Not many people had heard of the Accessible Information Standard.



- People really liked getting accessible information.



- Most people were getting some accessible information.



- People often needed someone to speak up for them, like an advocate.



- Staff were keen to give people the information they need but they need training to do it.



- Calling people or sending a text to remind them about an appointment was good. But you couldn't text back and check any questions you had.



- Services need to talk to each other better about how people need their information.



- GP surgeries did not always tell people things in a way they could understand.



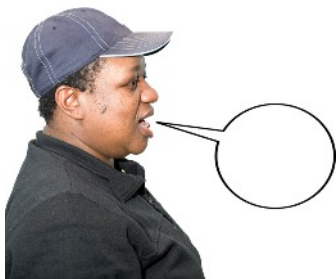
- Very few people were getting all the information they need.



- We think some people did not understand the treatment they are getting.



This is important and very worrying. It means, even if someone has said yes to having the treatment, they might not have said yes in law. It is called **treatment without consent**.

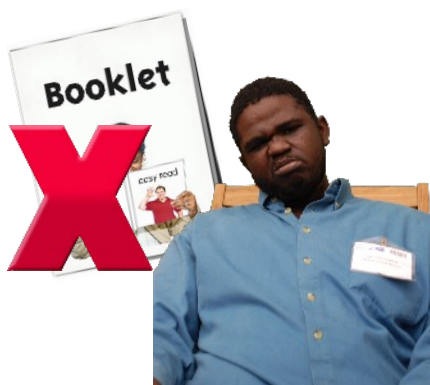


## The things people said



### From people who need EasyRead

‘I don’t like it if I can’t read things for myself. My dentist and optician phone me when I have an appointment.’



‘I get cross when I don’t get the information I need. Easy read and an advocate would help.’

### From people who need a professional advocate or someone to speak up for them



‘I have a learning disability and need text messages, easy read and an advocate. I find an advocate is very useful, I can’t always understand things.’





‘I get phone calls from the hospital when I need an appointment.’



‘My son is my advocate and reads my letters for me.’



**From people who need large print**

‘It is good to be able to read things for myself instead of my daughter having to read information for me.’



**From people using a hearing loop**

‘I do ask a lot questions and sometimes I get things wrong, but I am getting better.’



‘My husband can’t hear things very well even with his hearing aids he misses things, I always go with him.’

### From people who need a sign language interpreter



‘I have had to wait longer for appointments until an interpreter can come.’



‘...at A&E I have problems when I have to wait two or three hours for an interpreter. I have to try and write for the doctor. It makes it hard.’



‘I do not understand the doctor. It is really important to have interpreter and this makes me really angry.’



‘The letter says to phone them. But because we are deaf we cannot phone.’

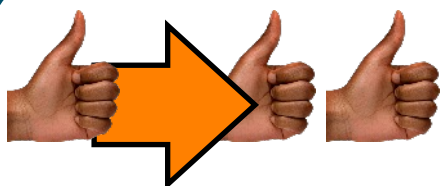


‘You get a text but you cannot text back if you have a question.’



‘Two months ago, I asked the dentists to book an interpreter but they said no because there was no money to pay for it.’





## What needs to change in health and care



### We think that:

1. Staff need to know about the Accessible Information Standard and what they can do about it.



2. Services need clear rules about booking interpreters or other support. They need to think about an on-call interpreter service.



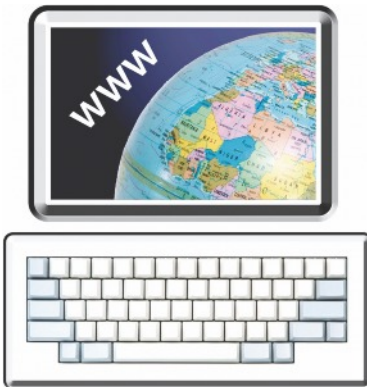
3. Services need to be able to show people have understood their treatment and said yes to it.



4. Services should make sure patients can talk with them properly, for example, being able to reply to texts to check that support has been booked.



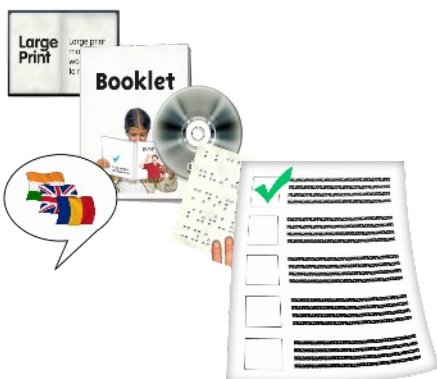
5. Services should make hearing loops work and staff know how to use them.



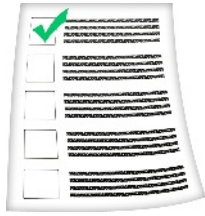
6. Websites have clear information about Accessible Information.



7. Services should be checked to see they are following the Accessible Information Standard. This should be in their contracts.



8. Services should have ways to check how well they are following the Accessible Information Standard.

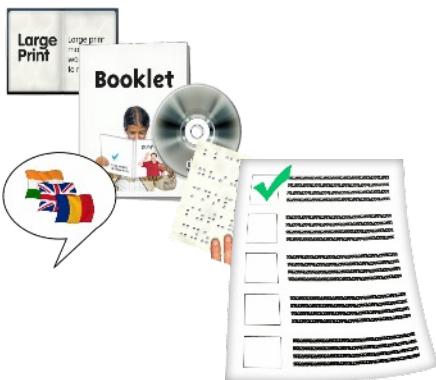


## What we will do next

We will:



- carry on asking people if they are getting the health and care information they need in the ways they need it



- help services to check they are following the Accessible Information Standard



- talk to GPs who don't have Information on their websites about the Standard



- ask the organisations that buy services how they check to see if services are following the standard



- follow the work done at Peterborough City Hospital on the Accessible Information Standard check, and tell people what happens



- look at how we can include the Accessible Information Standard in our work.



## Thank you

We want to thank everyone who talked to us and helped with this report.



## Other formats

If you would like this report in another way please do let us know.



## How to get in touch



To get in touch with Healthwatch  
Cambridgeshire



Call:  
**0330 355 1285**  
(local call rate number)



Email:  
**enquiries@healthwatchcambridgeshire.  
co.uk**



Website:  
**www.healthwatchcambridgeshire.co.uk**



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