



Woodstock Bower Surgery

Accessible Information Standard Policy

Woodstock Bower Surgery supports equality of access for all and is committed to complying with the Accessible Information Standard.

The Standard applies to service providers across the NHS and adult social care system. As organisations that provide NHS services, GP practices are required by law to follow the Standard as set out in section 250 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

This policy describes the actions that Woodstock Bower, its employees and those acting on behalf of the Practice are expected to take in order to ensure that the Practice complies with the Standard.

The Standard requires Woodstock Bower to identify, record, flag and share and meet the information and communication needs of people with a disability, impairment or sensory loss. All staff at Woodstock Bower will routinely follow the following 'five steps' of the Standard:

- Ask: identify 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.
- Flag: ensure that recorded needs are "highly visible" whenever the individual's record is accessed and prompt for action.

Share: Include information about individuals' information and communication needs as part of existing data sharing processes, in line with current information governance frameworks and the requirements of the **UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)** and the **Data Protection Act 2018**.

- Act: take steps to ensure that individuals receive information which they can access and understand and receive communication support if they need it. In line with the Standard, these actions will ensure that our patients (and their parents and carers as appropriate) will:
 - Be able to make contact with and be contacted by, in accessible ways.
 - Receive correspondence and information in accessible formats, including alternatives to 'standard' printed formats.
 - Be supported by a communication professional at their appointments if this is needed to enable effective, accurate two-way discussion.
 - Receive support from staff to communicate effectively.

How We Will Meet the Standard:

- Ask: We will ask patients and their carers to tell us if they have any communication or information needs relating to a disability, impairment or sensory loss, and if so, what they are.

New patients will be asked at the point of registration if they have any communication or information needs relating to a disability, impairment or sensory loss. This information is requested in the New Patient Questionnaire.

Existing patients will be asked opportunistically, for example, when making an appointment, with repeat prescriptions, newsletters, posters, email, text message, letters and our Practice website.

Conversations with individuals about their information/communication needs may take place privately, including making available a private room for face-to-face conversations as appropriate

- Record: Once a patient has informed the practice that they have communication needs relating to a disability, impairment or sensory loss, the information will be added to the patient's medical record using the approved template to provide information to all users that access the record.
- Flag: In order to inform all users and provide the opportunity to keep information up to date a warning message will launch each time a patient's record is entered informing the user of the patients access needs and giving the opportunity for these to be updated if required.
- Share: As the information is being recorded in a standardised way via Read Code and users are being informed of any needs every time they enter the record the information recorded will be shared subject to patient's choice regarding the sharing of information.
- Act: The practice provides one or more contact methods which are accessible to the patients e.g. email, text message, telephone, text, hearing loop system. Where information/communication needs are identified, information (e.g. correspondence) will be provided in one or more accessible formats (e.g. non standard print). Alternate formats can be provided if available either through auto generated systems, or through prompting staff to make alternative arrangements.

The adjustment made should be reasonable but this does not mean that the patient will always receive information in their preferred format. What is important is that they can access and understand the information.

When needed, appropriate professional communication support is arranged by the practice to enable patients and carers to effectively receive NHS care i.e. Text Talk, Interpreters. A patient's family member, friend or carer may also provide necessary support in certain circumstances and where this is the patient's explicit preference (which should be recorded).

Patients or carers themselves must not be asked to meet the costs of any information or communication needs.

A longer appointment time is made available for individuals with information and/or communication needs, as needed.

The Practice Manager is responsible for ensuring Woodstock Bower overall compliance with the Accessible Information Standard, and therefore with this policy.

The Practice Manager will maintain, review and update this policy annually. Hard copies are available on request from Reception.

This policy has been disseminated to staff and is available on Woodstock Bower's shared drive.

For new staff, the availability and importance of this policy will be highlighted during their induction.

Advice and Training All partners and staff at Woodstock Bower are encouraged to complete the two NHS England e-learning modules supporting compliance with the Standard: The Accessible Information Standard: Introduction and The Accessible Information Standard: Towards Excellence.

April 2025
Revision: April 2026
Reviewed by Dr Shahbaz Ali