

AGE UK EXETER

Controlled Document

Document Name: Accessible Information Policy

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Agreed by Risk and Quality Committee: 11.07.23

Approved by Board of Trustees on: 15.08.23

Review Schedule: Every three years

Next review due: August 2026

Owner (Responsibility) CEO

Amendments to: Governance Officer

Revision History: See end of document.

Document location: www.ageuk.org.uk/exeter/about-us/policiesandguidelines

Document Description

This policy sets out how Age UK Exeter (AUKE) aims to meet clients, volunteers, staffs, and partners accessible information requirements.

Implementation and Quality Assurance

Implementation is immediate and this policy shall stay in force until any alterations are formally agreed.

The policy will be reviewed every three years by the Board of Trustees, sooner if legislation, best practice, or other circumstances indicate this is necessary.

All aspects of this policy shall be open to review at any time. If you have any comments or suggestions on the content of this policy, please contact the CEO on info@ageukexeter.org.uk or at Age UK Exeter, The Sycamores, Mount Pleasant Road, Exeter, EX4 7AE, 01392 202092.

Accessible Information Policy

1. Introduction

The Accessible Information Standard (AIS) applies to all publicly funded adult social care service providers as well as health services. It was introduced on the 31 July 2016. Even if AUKE does not have a legal obligation to follow the standard, best practice and a duty of care to our clients, staff and volunteers denotes that adherence to accessible information principles is what we should do where possible. By implementing these principles, we can evidence that we are meeting the needs of the people we support to deliver the best possible, personalised service.

Other significant pieces of legislation also support the Accessible Information Standard including, the Human Rights Act (1998), the Mental Capacity Act (2005), the Equality Act (2010), and the Care Act (2014). The Equality Act (2010) states that you need to make 'reasonable adjustments' where required and the Mental Capacity Act (2005) states that 'a person is not to be treated as unable to make a decision unless all practical steps to help them to do so have been taken without success'.

This policy covers all staff, volunteers, clients, and partners.

2. Definition

Individuals' information and communication support needs may remain the same or vary and fluctuate in response to illness, crisis, or personal circumstances. AUKE may need to think about:

- Written communication
- Verbal communication
- In person communications

*But this is not an exhaustive list.

It is essential that AUKE records and acts upon individual's communication preferences so that it can best keep in touch with them and support their needs.

AUKE should:

- Identify the needs.
- Record the needs.
- Alert staff and volunteers to the communication needs of individuals we support.
- Share communication needs if appropriate.
- Meet the needs of individuals.

3. Identify

AUKE will identify client's information and communication support needs either through our General Data Consent Form or through their initial assessment visit. The General Data Consent Form asks three questions:

1. What is the best way to contact you?
2. What format do you need information in?
3. Are there any other ways we can support your communication needs?

Managers and coordinators will also elicit communication support needs within the initial assessment visit and record client preferences for contact.

4. Record

Clients' information and communication preferences will be recorded on Charitylog under the 'General Details' section, under communication format. There is an option to record standard print required, large print required, email only, assistance to read/understand, contact relative/carer, and give paperwork via home support worker. There is also an option to detail further information in a free text box.

5. Alert

Consistent recording on Charitylog should enable all staff and volunteers with a need to know to be aware of individuals communication needs. AUKE also has a close-knit, dedicated staff team who know their clients well. This aids personalised care and support. Good internal communications also enable all staff members to understand clients and volunteers' communication preferences.

6. Share

Individuals' information and communication preferences and needs will only be shared with other agencies if consent is given to do so. If consent is given, information and communication needs may be shared within a referral. When different services are accessed within AUKE, an individual's communication needs should be clearly visible on Charitylog (secure electronic database).

7. Meet the needs

AUKE will meet individuals' information and communication needs where possible, but where it is not within our capabilities, we understand that we may need to signpost to other helpful agencies or order resources from Age UK National. AUKE will always seek to offer personalised care and listen to and empower individuals. We will use all skills within our staff and volunteer team and resource alternative formats of information leaflets and forms where possible. This may mean supplying large print, easy read, offering communication aids or email format.

It must be noted that for many people with a disability, impairment or sensory loss, email is a highly effective, quick, and economical information format or contact method, allowing the recipient to use their own assistive technology to aid communication.

At AUKE, it is also essential that we remain aware of the communication needs and preferences of older people generally, whilst remembering that each person is an individual.

8. Complaints and Suggestions

AUKE have a complaints, concerns and suggestions form that is accessibly displayed in our reception area and available online. This form could be given in large print or email format and staff members are always available to offer assistance where required.

Consideration should be given to recording a formal incident if an individual's communication support needs are not met. This will inform assessment of unmet needs and help AUKE make adjustments for the future.

9. Further Information

Other helpful agencies that may be able to assist with accessible information and communication support needs are:

- SignHealth (The Deaf Health Charity)
- Change People (Human Rights Organisation led by people with disabilities)
- Living Options Devon
- Action for Blind People
- Devon in Sight
- Devon Sensory Team (Devon County Council).

Revision History

Revision date	Summary of Changes	Other Comments
2023	New policy based on the Accessible Information Standard	