



Written Communication with People who use Services and their Carers

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If developed in partnership with another agency, ratification details of the relevant agency	N/A
Policy in-line with national guidelines:	

Signed on behalf of the Trust:
Anna Hills, Chief Executive Officer

Version Control Page

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1 Introduction

1.1 Information is an important part of the journey of a person using our services and central to the overall quality of each individual's experience of the NHS. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust (hereafter referred to in this policy as 'the Trust' or 'CPFT') is therefore committed to providing people who use services and their carers with up-to-date, accurate and high quality information:

- to ensure that they have all relevant information about the services they are using, their condition, the environment (in the case of inpatients) and the treatment options
- to allow people to make informed decisions and choices about their care and treatment
- to improve understanding about the services available
- to support the process of gaining informed consent
- to ensure all people who need to use the Trust's services have equal access to information

1.2 Having access to such information in writing also serves as a reminder of facts and other relevant information that, if due to stress or unfamiliar language, may have been forgotten. Moreover, it gives them time to go away, read the information and think about the issues involved. Ultimately, the aim is to give them support and confidence so their overall experience as a person who uses services is improved.

1.3 In addition, the Trust is also committed to providing high quality information about CPFT to the public, its members and other stakeholders.

1.4 This policy sets out the Trust standards for information provided to people who use services, carers and other representatives to aid understanding about services and the choices available. It also sets out how to identify and develop information for people who use services and carers.

1.5 This policy aims to ensure that all people who need to use CPFT services have equal access to information and that the information and presentation is to a high standard, in plain English and in alternative, accessible formats (see paragraph 4.1 below).

1.6 Branded templates for the production of corporate literature are available on the CPFT intranet.

2 Scope

2.1 This policy applies to information produced in any format – printed, digital, video or audio.

2.2 Information for people who use services and their carers includes:

- Displays on noticeboards in clinical, waiting and public areas
- Written and pictorial signs

- Posters
- Fact sheets
- Leaflets on specific conditions, procedures, medicines or services
- Leaflets on patient rights
- Information on the Trust website, including video

3 Purpose of this policy

3.1 The purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide a clearly understood process for the identification and development of information for people who use services
- Encourage staff and teams to think about what information should be available to people who use services and carers
- Support a consistent approach to the development of that information
- Raise the standard of information available to people who use services and carers
- Support equal access to information

4 Principles for producing information for people who use services and their carers

4.1 When producing information:

- a) It's important to involve people who use services and carers in producing such information and ask them which format is appropriate.
- b) Information must be accurate and timely and must be conveyed in a way that will be clearly interpreted by the reader.
- c) Information should be in a language, style and format making it easily accessible to the intended audience. A glossary should be included where clinical terms are used. The audience may include people with specific needs; for example, people who do not speak English as a first language, people with literacy problems and people with disabilities.
- d) Follow the Accessible Information Standard, which is available here: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/accessibleinfo/>
- e) Materials can be made available in different formats (such as pdf, large print, easy read, audio, video, or in other languages). These different formats will be available on request.
- f) Information should be sensitive to religious and cultural needs of the intended audience.
- g) Teams must make sure that information about their services is readily available and offered to both people who are new to services and existing users, plus their carers.
- h) All services with direct contact with people who use services must produce information to explain the service, the location and other relevant details.
- i) The trust will be rolling out an online system 'Leaflet Factory Version 2.0' in summer 2019. This will be available via the intranet. Information must be produced on 'Leaflet Factory' or using corporate templates available on the CPFT intranet here:

<http://nww.intranet.cpft.nhs.uk/Corporate/CorporateComms/Pages/Corporate%20templates.aspx>

- j) A number of external organisations produce excellent information leaflets. Wherever it is appropriate these can be used, subject to the appropriate approval process being carried out within the relevant team/service.

4.2 In addition, information produced by the Trust should:

- a) comply with CPFT branding. The Communications Team is always happy to advise on style, branding and the use of plain English;
- b) help people to understand what to expect from the service they are using;
- c) help people make choices by giving facts about benefits, risks and side effects of therapies, medication or treatments and any alternatives available;
- d) be appropriate for the intended audience;
- e) involve people who use services and carers in the development of materials;
- f) contain information on how to get to the service, address and phone numbers, links to relevant web pages and CPFT headquarters (HQ) information;
- g) advise that the information is available in other formats on request;
- h) contain links to other sources of information and other organisations that can support and advise.

5 Key roles in information provision

5.1 All staff

It is the responsibility of every member of staff to be alert and aware of the signs, posters and leaflets on display where they work. They must act when they feel that information is not correct or could be improved, either by going to their team leader or direct to the Communications Team. In addition, they are responsible for:

- Assessing the information needs of people under their care, and their carers where appropriate.
- Where a need is identified, working with the Communications Team either by requesting, or taking responsibility for, the development/production of the information in another format.

5.2 Team leaders

- Are responsible for identifying the core set of information necessary for their service area. This should be produced in collaboration with people who use services and carers.
- Agreeing the most appropriate format for the service and client group.
- Should identify if the required information is available through established external sources or if other similar services within CPFT have already produced relevant material.
- Should work with the Communications Team for advice and support on plain English writing and production.

- Should ensure information remains fresh, up to date and accurate, reviewing at least annually
- Are responsible for ensuring that their information is put on the CPFT website.
- Should use CPFT branded templates or Leaflet Factory Version 2.0, when developing information leaflets.
- Should be aware of the needs of individuals, in particular any need for information in other languages and formats

5.3.0 Communications team

The communications team will:

- ensure this policy is available on the CPFT intranet and website;
- act as ‘custodians’ of the brand and ensure its correct application;
- post all information/leaflets, etc, on the CPFT website on request, or train a relevant team member in website content management.
- maintain a central library online of information leaflets and other documents that provide information about Trust services, where these have been produced by the Communications Team.
- provide guidance notes on the process to be followed in producing information for people who use services and carers.
- support services to ensure information is provided in a format, language and style suitable for the intended audience.
- respond to requests to produce information in other formats, for example large print, picture formats, translations, etc, where appropriate.
- support and advise teams on appropriate presentation of information, and production.

5.4 Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS supports people who use services by directing them to sources of information about their care and treatment. PALS staff should alert teams and non-clinical services to any gaps in information provision and advise them in developing appropriate information. PALS will also create their own set of information through leaflets and digital channels.

6 Process for developing information for people who use services

This section sets out the process and stages of developing information for people who use services in the Trust. Please refer to (Please see Appendix 1 &2) for further guidance.

6.1 Planning stage

- Identify the need for specific information from people who use services, carers, clinicians, other key stakeholders or other sources of need – e.g. national guidance, etc.
- Consider whether information should be given in stages or as part of a series.
- Check what other relevant information already exists in the Trust, or from other outside sources such as NICE (National Institute for Quality and Clinical Excellence), or charitable organisations.
- Contact the Communications Team for guidance or advice.
- Engage with patients/ service users and carers at the start.

6.2 Writing stage

- If a written format is preferred, produce a first draft using the relevant template and check it against this guidance.
- Consult clinicians, experts, service managers, support groups, people who use services, their families and carers and anyone else who is interested as part of the editorial process. Always give a deadline for comments to be returned.
- Check that information does not conflict with other existing information; for example, appointment letters and other information leaflets or procedural documents in the Trust.
- Check any contact phone numbers by phoning them. Try to use a central number rather than a list of different numbers.
- Use general names for local contacts, for example, 'Infection Control Nurse'. If you use a named person, the leaflet will need to be updated if they move on.

6.3 The consultation stage

- Ask people who use services to assess the information. You can do this through the patient groups or use the Participation and Partnership forum, CPFT service user / patient and carer group. and it is a vital part of the editorial process.
- Give a final draft to everyone who is interested and set a short deadline for them to respond.
- Send a pdf copy to the Communications Team.
- If this has been co-produced with service users, carers and families consider applying for the co production tick. Details about this can be found at <https://www.intranet.cpft.nhs.uk/patient-and-carer-involvement>

6.4 The printing and distribution stage

- When it comes to the final editing, date the leaflet, and only print if absolutely necessary. Use digital versions in preference.
- If you need to print, think carefully about many leaflets or booklets you need to produce. Ordering a large amount may be cheaper but it is sometimes more wasteful as it can go out of date quickly.
- Review and update the information regularly, at least annually.
- Make sure people receive information at an appropriate time, not half an hour before a procedure or when they are confused or upset. Give the

individual, or carer, (or both) time to think about what is going to happen, or make plans.

7 Review and archiving arrangements

- 7.1** All information documents will be reviewed at least annually or sooner if required due to organisational changes. This will be done by the team or individual that produced it originally.
- 7.2** Out-of-date information leaflets will be taken out of circulation and a copy electronically for any future reference.

8 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 8.1** An Equality Impact Assessment will need to be undertaken on information produced by the trust for people who use services, in accordance with national guidelines. Please contact the EDI lead guidance and advice (Sharon.gilfoyle@cpft.nhs.uk).

9 Monitoring

- 9.1** The Communications Team has the lead responsibility for monitoring compliance with the standards and procedures set out in this policy.

10 Links to other documents

- Policy on the Development of Policies
- Information Governance Policy

11 References and further information

The Information Standard

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/tis/about/the-info-standard/>

The Accessible Information Standard

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/accessibleinfo/>

Appendix 1

Guidelines | Service leaflets

These brief guidelines have been produced to help you create leaflets that are clear and straightforward and which give people who use services the information that they need to be informed about their treatment.

We have a legal duty to make information accessible to everyone who uses our services. Taking into account their needs when producing a publication is important.

Content

- Describe the service your team offers. Think about it from the point of view of someone who knows nothing about it.
- Start at the beginning, where the person who use services would start.
- How to access the service.
- Who is eligible to access it?
- Opening hours.
- Contact details.
- The Trust's website address.
- How to find the service.
- The PALS contact number and e-mail for queries: 0800 376 0775; pals@cpft.nhs.uk.
- A "large-print" statement in a prominent position on the leaflet in at least 14pt: 'This material can be provided in alternative formats such as large print, Braille, tape and on disk upon request to 0800 376 0775.'
- Date information last updated.

Layout and design

Avoid over-complicated designs: the aim is to get information across

Corporate templates, or 'Leaflet Factory', are good ways to achieve a professional look.

Style of writing

- Avoid stereotypes and jargon.
- Use everyday, informal language: use 'we' and 'you'.
- Ask someone who does not know the service to proof read it for you
- Use present and active tenses rather than passive: "You will see someone you can talk to" rather than "you will be seen by someone who will talk to you"
- A question and answer format can be helpful.

Please do:

- Use the Trust logo
- Use the typeface Arial or Frutiger and at least 12pt.
- Only reverse out text if the typeface is bold and large enough to be read easily and the background colour is dark.
- Justify left with even word spacing.
- Use columns rather than long lines of text if you are using an A4 page size
- Use clear headings.
- Use short paragraphs.
- Leave sufficient space between columns.
- Leave plenty of space on forms and make the connection clear between instruction text and user filled boxes.
- Use black print on white; yellow paper also provides a strong contrast to help users who are visually impaired. Always use dark print on a light background.
- Use matt paper. Gloss paper gives glare.
- Make sure the paper is thick enough to prevent 'show through'
- Use 1.2pt (spacing between the lines) for 12pt type size.
- Avoid hyphenation

Please don't

- Use any other typefaces: they can be very difficult to read.
- Use italics, capitals and light typefaces
- Use clipart
- Run text over or around pictures

Don't forget that one in 12 men and one in 200 women cannot distinguish between red and green.

If you have any queries or suggestions about these guidelines, please contact the Communications Team:

communications@cpft.nhs.uk

Appendix 2

Guidelines | writing information for different groups

Bearing in mind that everyone should have equal access to services, information may need to be presented differently or in alternative formats.

- **People who are elderly**
Use clear, large print, at least 14 point or bigger. Do not use patronising language.
- **People do not necessarily see themselves as 'ill'**
In place of terms such as 'service user' or 'patient', it's preferable to use the term 'people who use our services'.
- **Communicating with children and young people**
Address children as individuals, use plenty of illustrations, try to adjust your language to the relevant age group and do not talk down to them. Avoid clip art. Young people sometimes prefer to consume information online, especially as video, rather than in printed or narrative formats.
- **Individuals with learning difficulties**
The text needs to be simplified a little, using more symbols and pictures. Use audio and video. Consult support groups and individuals.
- **People with hearing difficulties**
Use written information. Involve carers, text phones or British Sign Language interpreters.
- **People with sight loss**
Use large bold print, at least 14 point 'sans serif' font (Arial or Frutiger), or larger. Use audio, digital versions or braille. Do not use a lot of reversed-out text and make sure the contrast between text colour and background colour is easy to read.
- **People whose first language is not English**
Use translated text from a guaranteed source where appropriate. Certain languages are often spoken and not read so it is important to check this. Where appropriate, use other media such as video or audio.
- **People who have reading problems**
Use audio and video.
- **Expert patients**
People who have long-term medical conditions, such as diabetes or eczema, will often have a very good understanding of their condition. The information for these patients may need to be specially researched by experts or they may need guidance on where to find the latest reliable information.