SHROPSHIRE HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD
Report

Meeting Date	15th June 2023				
Title of report	*"Your Care Your Way"* **Healthwatch Report**				
This report is for (You will have been advised which applies)	Discussion and agreement of recommendations	x	Approval of recommendations (With discussion by exception)		Information only (No recommendations)
Reporting Officer & email	Lynn Cawley lynn.cawley@healthwatchshropshire.co.uk				
Which Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy priorities does this report address? Please tick all that apply	Children & Young People		Joined up working		X
	Mental Health	X	Improving Population Health		X
	Healthy Weight & Physical Activity		Working with and building strong and vibrant communities		X
	Workforce	X	Reduce inequalities (see below)		X
What inequalities does this report address?	Access to clear and understandable information to empower people with a communication need to be central to decision making regarding their own care and treatment (including carers).				

Report content - Please expand content under these headings or attach your report ensuring the three headings are included.

1. Executive Summary

Under the NHS Accessible Information Standard Health and Social Care services should
1. Ask if you have any communication needs and how they can meet them.
2. Record your needs and highlight them in your file or notes, so staff are aware and know how to meet them.
3. Share information about your communication needs with other care services when you give your permission.
4. Deliver information in a way you can access and understand, with the option for communication support if you need it

The Standard relates to people using services and their carers.

We:

- spoke to eight groups face to face and two online, to tell them about the NHS Accessible Information Standard.
- carried out one structured focus group with people with an acquired brain injury involving four people.
- ran three discussion groups: one with carers for adults with learning disability involving five people, a carers group of six people, and a hard of hearing group with 13 people.
- spoke to a community group for older people with learning disability.
- ran a survey which was completed by 18 people

To understand their experience to date of having their communication needs met under the Standard and identify where things were working well and areas for improvement.

We are in the process of completing an Easy Read version of this report with the help of Taking Part.

2. Recommendations:

The people we heard from made the following suggestions:

- Consider print size on letters
- Display patients' names on a screen when they are called up for an appointment
- Offer the choice to have information provided via face-to-face appointment
- Offer slightly longer appointment times for those with communication needs
- Ensure staff know who in the room to provide information to (the individual and/or their carer), and what level of detail is appropriate to give

Healthwatch Shropshire recommend:

All providers:

- Review their approach to meeting the Accessible Information Standard and check that they are meeting the implementation criteria, including having an Accessible Information Policy (supporting information is available on the NHS England website) and gaining the necessary consent from service users/patients to share their personal information with other providers
- Ensure all staff are familiar with the term 'Accessible Information' and the five steps to meeting the Accessible Information Standard.
- Ensure that all staff complete Accessible Information Standard training and this is regularly reviewed.
- Develop a systematic approach to identifying if existing service users and carers have a communication need and asking them how they prefer to be communicated with.
- Find a way to ask service users and carers if they have a communication need that does not rely on them being able to read a poster or access the 'Accessible Information' page on a website.
- Consider appointing a member of staff as Accessible Information Champion, so that someone in the organisation is responsible for ensuring written information is accessible and the communication needs of all people are met
- Consider making the environment more learning disability / Dementia friendly
- Consider involving service users/carers in ensuring information is accessible for everyone, e.g., letters, emails, leaflets and posters are easy to read and understand

Some broader recommendations for the Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Integrated Care System:

- Work to raise awareness of the NHS Accessible Information Standard to help ensure both service users, carers and staff are aware of their rights
- Ensure it is standard practice to ask people about their communication needs
- Ensure that carers are asked about their communication needs and are fully supported in their caring role
- Direct people to clear information about the NHS Accessible Information Standard that is all in one place including links to relevant support services/groups (e.g., webpage)
- Consider the impact on the mental health and wellbeing of people and their carers when they are unable to understand information from health and social care services
- Recognise that access to information digitally (e.g., websites, social media, email, text messages) is not an appropriate option or available for everyone

3. Report (See full report attached)

Risk assessment and opportunities appraisal (NB This will include the following: Risk Management, Human Rights, Equalities, Community, Environmental	

consequences and other Consultation)		
Financial implications (Any financial implications of note)	None	
Climate Change Appraisal as applicable		
Where else has the paper been presented?	System Partnership Boards	ShIPP 18/05/23
	Voluntary Sector	
	Other	

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder) Portfolio holders can be found here **or your organisational lead e.g., Exec lead or Non-Exec/Clinical Lead - N/A**

Appendices
(Please include as appropriate)

   A. "Your Care, Your Way" Healthwatch Report