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Speaker Key:

RL Richard Lohan

OT Onscreen Text

UM Unidentified Male Speaker

RL Hi. My name is Richard Lohan.

OT Richard Lohan

Accessible Information Officer Camden Learning Disabilities Service

London Borough of Camden

00:00:02

RL Hi my name is Richard Lohan and I’m the Accessible Information Officer at Camden Council. I work for the Adult Learning Disability Service and my job is to make things easier to understand for people. Today, I was talking about the NHS Accessible Information Standard and how we can find local solutions to this. The Accessible Information Standard comes from the Equality Act which, in turn, pulls together all the different Acts around disability discrimination. So for me, I think about the Equality Act, not the NHS Information Standard.

The key part of this is that we should make reasonable adjustments for people with disabilities. My specialist area is making those reasonable adjustments for people with learning disabilities. Broadly speaking, we can split up this work into two areas. There’s communication and there’s information.

So very briefly, in regard to communication, it’s all about no jargon, no difficult words, speaking slowly, getting patients to reflect back what they’ve understood so you can check that they’ve understood and, crucially, just giving them one idea at a time, bite-size chunks, as we call it. So that’s the communication. GPs generally are very good at communicating and will attend to their body language and their eye contact so I won’t go on about those things.

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The second aspect is around information. We call the format easy read information. Easy read information has pictures down the left-hand side, big enough to recognise what they are; it uses a bigger font, usually font size 16 minimum; and by having the pictures in next to one idea at a time, you create all this white space, and that helps the person who struggles to read or struggles to understand, helps them navigate through, bit by bit, so they can get the message.

The examples of easy read information that I showed at the meeting today are the templates that I’ve created with Dr Meena Anand and with Martin Emery from the CCG. And they are things such as the patient registration form, the easy appointment letter, easy appointment card, the invitation to the annual health check, the annual health check outcomes, the detailed letter about the annual health check where it talks about how you need to get your blood tests and everything.

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And also, around communication, we’ve done an accessible version – in other words, an easy read version – of the communications support form, which I believe sits on EMIS but which is in a non-accessible format. So I’ve created an accessible format with pictures where you can print it off for the patient and they can do it themselves – they can tick the boxes that they need to tick.

The admin staff would then transfer that information back onto EMIS, onto the non- easy read form, and it’s a bit of a workaround but it does provide a solution for those patients who want to do these things for themselves. They don’t want everything done for them.

And that’s the reasonable adjustment, that we print off this accessible form and give it to them. We send them this accessible appointment letter so they understand that they’ve got an appointment and they don’t miss it. And by doing these reasonable adjustments, we actually will save lots of money because I believe a lot of money is wasted on appointments that people don’t come to. In my world, that would be because they didn’t understand the letter they got.

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And the third aspect in relation to GP surgeries is around the environment. So in terms of the actual waiting area, you know, what’s it like? Is the signage good? Is it easy to know where everything is? What are the noise levels like? They often have screens.

And there’s two types of screens. There’s usually a big TV screen which will have who knows what – all the latest public health messages. Are those easy to understand? Because actually, if they are easy to understand, everyone will get them. I’ll get them, I won’t feel patronised by them – they’re just easy to understand.

If they’re not, and they’re very fast and there’s lots of information in small print with lots of jargon, there’s a lot of people that just won’t get it. And it’s not just people with learning disabilities. It’s people with English as a second language, older people, people with dementia – all sorts of people.

The other type of screen that you often get in a GP surgery, certainly in my GP surgery in Ealing, is the screen that flashes up when it’s time for you to go and see the GP. Richard, it’s your appointment time. There’s no audio attached to this, at least in my surgery – it just comes up on the screen. So if you can’t read, it’s going to be hard. And if you don’t know to look, then it’s going to be hard as well.

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What would be the reasonable adjustment there? Well, it would be for the receptionist to know their patients so well that they know that Richard, who’s sitting down there, will need a little prompt. Oh, Richard, your appointment has come up – you can go and see the doctor now. Simple adjustment.

In terms of what we’re doing to provide resources for GPs in Camden and hopefully further afield as well, is I’ve created lots of templates. They’re usually either in Word form or in PDF form, if there would never be a reason to edit them. And we’re uploading all of those to the CCG website.

I’m not sure exactly where, but I suggest if you go to the CCG website once they’re uploaded, and just do a search for easy read templates, you will find a template for an appointment letter, an appointment card, an annual health check letter, a detailed annual health check letter, loads of stuff. And I hope to add to that stuff over time.

And that will be the reasonable adjustment that we will make within Camden to support those patients who have learning disabilities or who have possibly other communication needs and would benefit from having their information in an easier, jargon free, symbolised format.

UM Where can GPs find out more?

RL Apart from the CCG website, people can go to a website called…

OT easyhealth.org.uk

RL which has loads of leaflets and videos and audio resources that will help people understand medical information. Apart from this, people are very welcome to contact me at Camden Council.

RL My email is richard.lohan@camden.gov.uk and I’m happy to offer my advice and support in as far as I’m able to.

OT NHS Camden Clinical Commissioning Group

Thanks for watching Accessible Information Standard: Local Solutions (short summary)

Learning Disability Education Event 17th May 2017

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