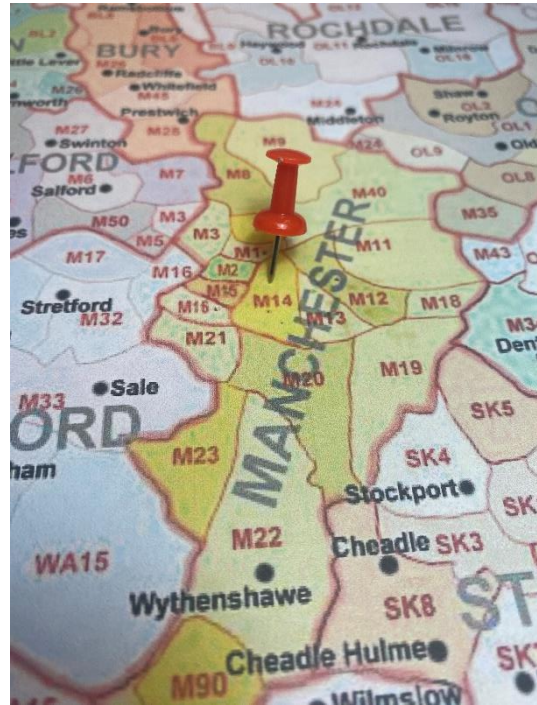


What's the SCRIPT?

M14



A report looking into the accessibility
of pharmacies in the M14 postcode

February 2023

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Foreword

Awaiting foreword from M14's councillor

Executive Summary

1. Since August 2016, any organisation which provides NHS and/or publicly-funded adult social care services is required to follow the Accessible Information Standard (AIS). This Standard explains how people who have a disability must be able to access information in a format they can use and understand and they should also expect communication support from health and care services.
2. At the Healthwatch Manchester (HWM) board meeting in March 2018, an action plan was agreed which authorised the AIS pharmacy reviews.
3. Work commenced on this piece of work in May 2022 and was conducted by HWM staff and volunteers. In total eleven pharmacies were visited in the M14 area and a review was completed after each individual visit.
4. These pharmacies were located in Rusholme, Fallowfield, Moss Side, Ladybarn, and Victoria Park. Out of these eleven pharmacies, ten allowed us to assess their knowledge of the AIS.
5. Most of the pharmacies we visited were not aware of the AIS or what it meant for the pharmacy, with only two out of the eleven pharmacies having at least vague knowledge of what the AIS is.
6. This report recommends that further training is required for both staff and pharmacists in the pharmacies in the M14 area due to their lack of knowledge about the AIS.
7. It was apparent the pharmacies in this area generally provided neither a hearing loop or alternative formats such as braille and easy read materials. Therefore, we recommend that these resources be purchased and kept on site at all times for disabled members of the public.
8. The recommendations in this report will be used to achieve compliance with the AIS by local pharmacies in the M14 area.

Recommendations

Staff and pharmacists alike all need further training on what the AIS is and what the requirements are for this.

More of the pharmacies in the M14 area need to purchase a hearing loop for hearing impaired patients as only one of the pharmacies we visited informed us that they had one.

Easy read materials should be kept readily available on site across all pharmacies in the M14 area for patients with visual impairments.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Healthwatch Manchester are the independent champion for people who use health and social care services. We're here to make sure that those running services put people at the heart of care.
- 1.2 Emerging from the Health and Social Care Act 2012, a Healthwatch was set up in every local authority area to help put residents and the public at the heart of service delivery and improvement across the NHS and care services.

2. Background & Rationale

2.1 At the Healthwatch Manchester board meeting in March 2018 an action plan was agreed which authorised the AIS pharmacy reviews. Prior to this we had planned AIS reviews of GP practices following a piece of work showcased by Healthwatch Camden at the 2017 Healthwatch Conference. However, we decided to shift our focus to pharmacies following discussions with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), who were conducting their own AIS reviews.

2.2 Since August 2016, any organisation which provides NHS and/or publicly-funded adult social care services is required to follow the AIS. The Standard aims to make sure that people who have a disability, impairment or sensory loss get information that they can access and understand and that they get any communication support they need from health and care services.

2.3 Organisations are required to provide alternative formats where required, such as braille, large print, and easy read. They must also support people to communicate, for example by arranging a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter, deafblind manual interpreter or an advocate.

2.4 The Equality Act 2010 was passed in order to provide further protections on top of the existing equalities legislation, such as the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.¹ The Act places a duty on all service providers to make 'reasonable adjustments' to ensure that a disabled person is not put at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to a non-disabled person.² The Act also outlines nine protected characteristics which help to protect people from discrimination and these are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnerships
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

¹ NHS England, <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/accessilbe-info-specification-v1-1.pdf>

² The Equality Act 2010, <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/20>

2.5 As part of the Equality Act 2010 the existing individual equality duties (race, disability and gender) were combined to create one overall equality duty. Those who are subject to the duty are required, in the exercise of their functions, to consider the following:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.³

2.6 The interpretation of the equality duty by the NHS is the AIS. NHS England states that,

*'The Standard sets out a specific, consistent approach to identifying, recording, flagging, sharing and meeting the information and communication support needs of patients, service users, carers and parents with a disability, impairment or sensory loss.'*⁴

³ Equality and Human Rights Commission, <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/public-sector-equality-duty>

⁴ NHS England, <https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/accessibleinfo/>

3. Methodology

3.1 Work commenced on this piece of work in May 2022 and was conducted by HWM staff and volunteers. In total, eleven pharmacies were visited and a review was completed after each individual visit, this totals all the pharmacies in the area.

3.2 Healthwatch Manchester representatives interviewed the pharmacy manager and the following Healthwatch Manchester AIS Checklist was worked through:

- Explain the basics of the AIS and ‘the need to do something if not everything’
- Discuss offering alternative formats to all patients and provide a suggested sentence if necessary
- Resolve where to keep large print forms available
- Discuss reasonable adjustments
- Show where to find Easy Read materials
- Explain the rules of Large Print (Large print is defined by the RNIB as being 16pt Arial or bigger)
- Discuss options for deaf patients: give information on BSL relay services
- Signpost to deaf awareness training and e-learning options
- Test the hearing loop. Provide information on options for buying counter loops etc.

4. Key Findings

4.1 Out of the eleven pharmacies we visited in the M14 postcode area, ten allowed us access to talk to them about the AIS. This means that ninety-one percent of all pharmacies in the M14 area allowed us access into their workplace to enquire about their knowledge of AIS. A&A Pharmacy in Rusholme refused to speak to us on two separate occasions about their knowledge of the AIS.

4.2 Out of the ten pharmacies who allowed us access, only one had a hearing loop available for people to use. This means that nine percent of all the pharmacies in the M14 area told us they had a hearing loop available for the public to use.

4.3 Out of the ten pharmacies who allowed us access, only two had at least a vague knowledge of what the AIS is. This means that twenty percent of all the pharmacies in the M14 area who allowed us access told HWM staff that they had knowledge of what the AIS is.

4.4 Out of the ten pharmacies allowed us access, four provided alternate formats to the public such as braille and Large Print materials. This means that forty percent of all the pharmacies in the M14 area who allowed us to review their compliance access provided alternate formats for the public.

4.5 Numerous times on our visits to these eleven pharmacies the staff members told us they didn't know what the AIS was and therefore were unaware of their obligation to provide options for deaf people for instance.

Appendices

1. [NHS England – Accessible Information Specification](#)
2. [NHS England – Accessible Information Standard explanation video](#)
3. [UK Government Equalities Office – Fact sheet: The Equality Act 2010](#)

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the ten pharmacies who allowed us to discuss their knowledge of the Accessible Information Standard.

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