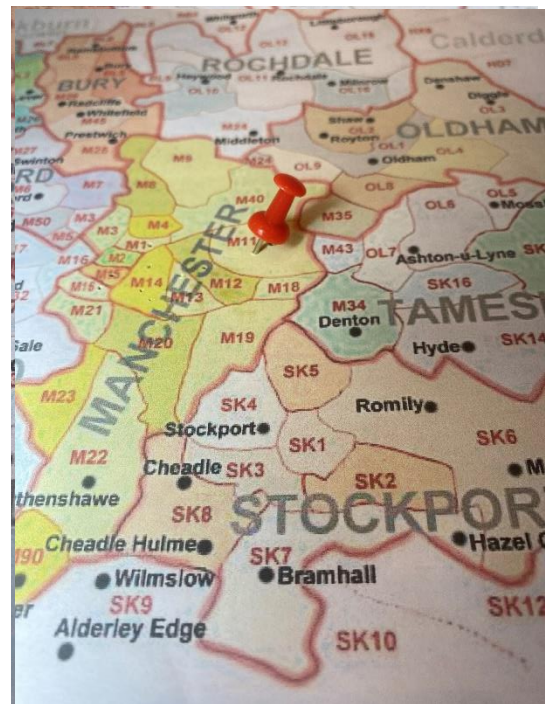


What's the SCRIPT?

M11



A report looking into the accessibility
of pharmacies in the M11 postcode

March 2023

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Foreword

Awaiting foreword from M11 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 February 2023 and was conducted by HWM staff. In total five pharmacies were visited in the M11 postcode areas and a review was completed after visiting each individual pharmacy.
4. These pharmacies were located in Clayton, Openshaw and Beswick. All five allowed us to assess their knowledge and implementation 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 five 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 M11 area due to their lack of knowledge about the AIS.
7. It was apparent the pharmacies in this area generally didn't provide support for hearing disabled patients such as a Hearing Loop with only one pharmacy having a hearing loop. Therefore, we recommend that these resources be purchased and kept on site at all times for disabled service users to use.
8. The recommendations in this report will be used to achieve compliance with the AIS by local pharmacies in the M11 area.

Recommendations

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

Pharmacies in the M11 area need to recognise the importance of having a hearing loop available for their patients. Only one pharmacy had this service however even that pharmacy was unsure about how to use it. Therefore, more pharmacies in the area need to purchase a hearing loop and be trained on how to use it.

All of the pharmacies in the M11 area need to provide access to a BSL (British Sign Language) relay tool such as the SignVideo service. Healthwatch Manchester have signposted each pharmacy to this service.

More pharmacies in the M11 area need to provide alternative formats such as large print text, yellow labels on packaging and easy read materials for their visually impaired and learning disabled patients.

1. Introduction

1.1 Healthwatch Manchester are the independent champion for people who use health and social care services. We are 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 February 2023 and was conducted by HWM staff and volunteers. In total, five pharmacies were visited and a review was completed after each individual visit. This report covers all the pharmacies in the M11 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

Only two of the five pharmacies had at least vague knowledge of what the Accessible Information Standard (AIS) was. Therefore, 60% of the pharmacies in the M11 postcode area did not know what the AIS was.

None of the five pharmacies provided access to any BSL relay tool such as the SignVideo service. HWM signposted each pharmacy to this service for their future use.

Only one pharmacy had a hearing loop available for people to use on site. Therefore, 80% of pharmacies in the M11 postcode area didn't provide the correct provisions for hearing impaired customers.

Two out of the five pharmacies weren't able to provide alternative formats such as easy read materials or large print text on site. This means 40% of the pharmacies in the M11 postcode were able to support the needs of their blind/limited vision patients.

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

Healthwatch Manchester thanks the five pharmacies who allowed us to discuss their knowledge of the Accessible Information Standard.

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