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CORPORATE REPORT

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Lead Person: Executive Director Engagement & Participation	Approved by: OMG

The aim of this policy

The Mental Health (Care & Treatment) Act 2003 and the Adults with Incapacity Act 2000 are underpinned by sets of principles that guide the work of any agency or individual delivering services to individuals with a mental illness, learning disability or other mental disorder. The principles of both Acts make clear the importance of information and participation of the individual in decisions which affect them. Achieving this depends on the provision of information in ways that are meaningful and that enable individuals to access their rights.

This policy provides an overall framework to assist the Commission and its staff to help deliver information that is accessible to all and which helps individuals to access their rights.

This policy covers

- Printed information
- Electronic information
- Face-to-face contact
- Telephone contact

The policy addresses all areas of access to information including:

- Alternative formats
- Translators
- Interpreters
- Support at meetings and events.

Information is a right

As well as helping individuals to access their rights under mental health and incapacity law every member of the public has a right to access our service.

The Equality Act 2010 places specific duties on public organisations to promote equalities

in relation to people with 'protected characteristics'. We also have obligations under the Public Sector Equalities Duty. The Commission has a Single Equalities Scheme and has produced a set of organisational objectives and priorities to promote equality. We recognise however that the perceived accessibility of our organisation to others is linked to the language and imagery used in our communication.

Although we are not directly covered by the Patient Rights (Scotland) Act 2011, we aim to work in line with its principles.

In addition, the Freedom of Information Act 2005 gives every member of the public a right to request information on any aspect of our work. Together these pieces of legislation mean that people have a right to information about our work and services in a language or format that suits them.

The Commission is covered by the Scottish Government British Sign Language (BSL) National Plan 2017-2023, published under the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015. This describes ten long-term goals for BSL in Scotland, including mental health and wellbeing; and 70 actions Scottish Ministers will take by 2020 to make progress towards these, including improving access to health care and mental health services in BSL.

We are committed to making our information and services available:

- To individuals
- On request
- Within a useful timeframe
- Via translators or interpreters
- In alternative formats/media.

This applies to all information that is included within our publication scheme or that we agree to provide under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.

Other relevant Commission policies and documents include:

- Recruitment policy
- Provision of telephone advice
- Equality outcomes and how we plan to achieve them.

Providing information in community languages and alternative formats

Accessible publications

All of our printed publications aimed at the public will be produced in 12 point Arial or a similarly accessible font. Where we believe information needs to be accessible in written format to people with learning disability we will use an easy read format and 14 point Arial.

We will provide some information using video or other formats, to make it more accessible to people who have difficulty reading. This may be in addition to or instead of easy read documents.

We may be able to provide some information in some alternative formats, such as large

print. We may decide, following discussion and agreement with the individual (or their proxy), that the most appropriate way to provide useful information is through an interpreter or supported meeting rather than a publication.

Accessible web-based information

All our web-based information complies with the AA standard of W3C web content accessibility guidelines. Content on the website is available in a scale of text sizes. All images on the website include alternative text options.

The website contains a range of formats for information including:

- Easy-read content PDFs
- Audio and video content.

We do not provide 'read-aloud' facilities for website security reasons and because most web users requiring this now have access to screen reader facilities which allow them to access the web.

Information about the work of the Commission is available from our website in easy read.

Videos including subtitles and BSL interpretation will be available from 2018-19, covering who we are and what we do, understanding our visiting work, and data protection.

We do not routinely translate all our materials into other languages for resource reasons, and because the majority of them are aimed at staff rather than individuals. However, in line with NHS Health Scotland's policy, we encourage the use of Google translate, and we will include the following statement on our website from April 2018.

Translate information on this website

You can translate many pages of this website using Google Translate. This applies particularly to materials for people using services and their carers.

How to do this:

1. Copy the page's web address or the text you want to translate
2. Go to Google Translate <http://translate.google.com/>
3. [Select which language you would like to translate to](#)
4. Paste the web address or the text you want to translate into the box on that page.

If you have a problem translating a document, please contact us.

Google Translate uses computer programmes to translate, which means that the quality of the translation may not be perfect. You will need Javascript enabled for translation to work.

Accessible correspondence

Our letters and emails will be produced in Arial 12 point. Easy-read versions of our template letters for service users will be used where appropriate.

We will seek feedback from and consult with our stakeholders to support continuous

improvement in the accessibility of our information resources.

Interpreting and translation

Interpreters are needed when a person finds that communicating in English is a barrier to getting the information, advice or service they need. We are aware that working with people with a mental illness, learning disability or other mental disorder and specific communication needs can raise particular issues and challenges in relation to the use of interpreters. We have produced a toolkit for staff which provides advice and protocols on working with interpreters. This is available from our website:

http://www.mwcscot.org.uk/media/127976/interpreter_toolkit_for_practitioners_and_interpreters_march_2013.pdf. This is being updated, with a revised edition available in 2018/19.

Interpreting or communication support may be required for the provision of telephone advice, for visits or for the purposes of investigations.

Support for visits

When we arrange local visits we specifically ask services to identify any person for whom English is not their first language and, if the person is willing to see us, for services to arrange an interpreter.

Support for telephone and advice services

We offer BSL users access to our telephone advice via the Contact Scotland BSL interpretation service, and advertise this on our website and materials.

Support for inquiries and investigations

Where individuals involved in interviews as part of an investigation are no longer supported by services and require interpreting or communication support, this will be arranged by the investigating team.

Support for meetings and events

All venues that are chosen for large public events will be accessibility checked. Booking forms for public events will offer BSL interpreting support, and will invite attendees to tell us about any other access requirements. Where there are papers, we will circulate documents in advance, in people's preferred format.

Appendix - Guidance on producing Easy Read documents

<http://www.changepeople.org/Change/media/Change-Media-Library/Free%20Resources/How-to-make-info-accessible-guide-2016-Final.pdf>





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