

TITLE	Accessible Information Policy		
Policy ref:	C031P	Approval date	September 2026
Owner	Customer Operations Director	Planned review date	September 2029
Approved by	Executive Leadership Team (ELT)		

1. Background	This policy sets out the Abbeyfield Living Society (ALS) approach to ensuring residents' information and communication needs are met appropriately. For our care services, this policy also outlines how ALS complies with the Accessible Information Standard (AIS). While compliance with the AIS has been a legal duty for registered care services since 2016, the best practice principles outlined within the Standard have been adopted across all ALS services. In line with the Accessible Information Standard, ALS is committed to ensuring that residents who have a disability, impairment or sensory loss get information that they can access and understand, for example in large print, braille or via email, and / or professional communication support, for example from a British Sign Language interpreter. ALS will ensure that all residents can access and understand the information they are given, which includes making sure that information is provided in accessible formats and that working practices support effective communication. Information and communication needs will be reviewed periodically and when circumstances change.
2. Objectives	The objectives of this policy are: • To ensure ALS provides information in a range of formats so that residents with communication needs receive information that they can access and understand. • To provide professional communication support for residents if they need it. • To ensure residents have access to digital information, including emails, documents and website communications. To ensure ALS complies with legislation and best practice.
3. Scope	

	All staff and volunteers working for and with ALS sheltered housing, independent living and registered care services. The principles of this policy also apply, where relevant, to residents' representatives, carers and family members involved in care or support who have identified information or communication needs.
4. Policy	ALS recognises the importance of communicating effectively in a way that takes account of residents' diverse communication needs. We will ensure residents can access the information they need in a format they can understand and will provide whatever communication support they need to enable them to make informed decisions about their health and wellbeing, and about their care and treatment. 4.1 Who might have information and/or communication support needs? An individual with information or communication support needs relating to any kind of disability, impairment or sensory loss, including (but not limited to) the following groups: • People who are blind or have some visual loss • People who are deaf (have a severe hearing problem) or Deaf (have been deaf all their life) or have some hearing loss • People who are deafblind • People who have a learning disability • People with aphasia (difficulty with language or speech) • People with a mental health condition which affects their ability to communicate, for example people living with dementia • Neurodivergent people This policy relates to information and communication needs arising from disability, impairment or sensory loss. Language interpretation requirements for individuals whose first language is not English are managed through separate arrangements, although reasonable adjustments will continue to be considered on an individual basis. 4.2 Identifying and meeting residents' information and communication needs To meet residents' information and communication needs in line with the Accessible Information Standard, ALS will: 1. Ask prospective residents if they have any information and communication needs and find out how to meet their needs as part of the needs assessment process prior to admission to the service. 2. Record the individual's information and communication needs, and how to meet them, not their disability. This will include one or more of the following:

	a. Their preferred contact method b. Their preferred information format c. Specific communication professional required. d. Specific communication support required 3. Highlight or flag the resident's care or support plan so they have information and communication needs and how to meet those needs. 4. Share information about a resident's information and communication needs with other health and social care providers, with the individual's consent. 5. Take action to ensure that residents receive information which they can access and understand and receive communication support if they need it. 6. Review residents' information and communication needs regularly and whenever there is a significant change in circumstances to ensure recorded needs remain accurate and continue to be met. ALS will ensure that residents with a disability, impairment or sensory loss: 1. Can contact, and be contacted by, ALS services in accessible ways, for example via email or text message. 2. Receive information and correspondence in formats they can read and understand, for example in audio, braille, easy read, or large print. Where information in alternative formats is required, the Service Manager should contact the Business Administration team to source and arrange this with any associated costs funded from the house or home budget. 3. Are supported by a communication professional if this is needed to support conversation, for example a British Sign Language interpreter. 4. Get support from health and social care staff and organisations to communicate, for example to lip-read or use a hearing aid. Digital communications, websites, online forms and electronic documents will be designed and provided in accessible formats wherever reasonably practicable and in line with recognised accessibility standards. Residents will be able to access complaints, compliments and feedback processes in formats that meet their communication needs. Service Managers are responsible for ensuring residents' communication needs are identified, recorded, reviewed and acted upon. Compliance may be monitored through audits, complaints review, quality assurance processes and resident feedback. 4.3 Information Sharing - Mental Capacity and Consent The consent of the resident concerned is fundamental to the information that is held about them and to the sharing of that information. Most residents will be happy for their information to be shared for the purposes of their care or support.
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	When sharing information relating to a resident's communication needs, we will comply with relevant existing legal duties, including those set out in the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 and Mental Capacity Act 2005 around the handling and processing of data. Wherever it is possible to do so, consent to the sharing of information relating to a resident's information and communication needs will be obtained and clearly recorded, including any limitations on that consent. We will explain what information will be shared, with whom, in what circumstances and for what purpose. If consent to share information related to a resident's information and communication needs cannot be obtained, because the resident lacks the capacity to make the decision, and because nobody has been formally appointed to make it for them, a decision to share information will be made in their best interests in accordance with the Mental Capacity Act 2005. Whilst it is important to ensure that confidential and sensitive information is kept safe, this should not be a barrier to sharing information. There are some circumstances where the sharing of information overrides the right to confidentiality, for example where a person is at risk of serious harm.
5. Finance, Value for Money & Social Value	There is a cost for producing literature in alternative formats when needed but this is nominal and will be monitored. Each service will be responsible for covering the cost of producing information in alternative formats for people who use the service when it is needed.
6. Linked policies	Data Protection Policy (LG013P) Consent to Treatment and Personal Care Policy (C008P) Mental Capacity Act Policy (R020P) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (LG016P) Person Centered Care and Support Policy (C007P) Complaints, Concerns and Compliments Policy (LG006P)
7. Relevant Legislation / Regulation	Health and Social Care Act 2012, Section 250 Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014 The Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 UK GDPR Data Protection Act 2018 Equality Act 2010 Mental Capacity Act 2005 Care Act 2014 (best practice reference for adult social care)

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	Human Rights Act 1998
8. Guidance	Abbeyfield Living Society Accessible Information Guidance.
9. Review	Every 3 years, subject to any regulatory or legislative updates.
10. Procedure(s)	N/A
11. Process Map(s)	N/A

Version	Purpose/change	Resident Panel Involvement	Author	Date
1.0	New policy		Lesley Garrett	Sept 2019
2.0	Policy reviewed and amended to cover both Care and Housing services. Policy title changed from Accessible Information standard.		J. Conway / L. Garrett	Dec 2022
3.0	Scheduled review. The Accessible Information Policy remains current, legally compliant, and fit for purpose across both care and housing services. Minor refinements included to reflect updates to the Accessible Information Standard and to strengthen future-proofing.		H. Gilbert / M. Boothman	Sep 2026