

# Accessible Information Standard

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## 1 Purpose and anticipated outcomes

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- 1.1 This Accessible Information Standard is a way that LiveWest can define and deliver a consistent approach to identifying, recording, and meeting the information and communication needs of our customers and potential customers who have information or communication needs relating to a disability, impairment, or sensory loss. It will ensure that we meet our legal requirements under the Equality Act 2010.
- 1.2 We are expected to pay due attention to equality legislation in developing our products, communications and how people access our services, rather than responding to any requests for reasonable adjustments at a later date.
- 1.3 Accessible communications will enable customers to make decisions about their housing, accounts, and repairs because they are receiving things in their preferred format and therefore can access and understand information from us.
- 1.4 An accessible information standard will also enable people to access our services appropriately and independently, potentially relieving pressure on customer service teams within the organisation, increasing satisfaction and reducing complaints
- 1.5 Providing accessible communications will also ensure that we meet our responsibilities under the Equality Act so that customers with disabilities are not put at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with people who don't have disabilities when accessing our services.

## 2 Scope and definitions

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- 2.1 This standard applies to all employees within LiveWest and relates to all communications issued by us, whether physical or digital.
- 2.2 This standard deliberately does not include reference to translation relating to different languages and looks only at reasonable adjustments relating to the protected characteristic of disability.
- 2.3 Disability - The Equality Act 2010 describes disability as follows, "A person (P) has a disability if:
  - a) P has a physical or mental impairment, and
  - b) the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on P's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities."

### 3 Scope

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- 3.1 People with disabilities - Article 1 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has the following description; *“Persons with disabilities include those who have long- term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.”*

### 4 Standard Statement

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- 4.1 We will incorporate accessibility features into all our external communications, whether in printed or digital format so that they can be readily accessed by those with a disability affecting the way that they access communications upon publication.
- 4.2 We will undertake to record specific communication requirements of our customers as a part of the existing process when people become our customers whilst also seeking to record specific requirements for existing customers as an ongoing project
- 4.3 Our external customer communication, whether in printed or digital format will pay close attention to the provision of:
- Voiceover and/or close captions on videos or audio material;
  - alternative text (alt.text) on all images and graphics for the purposes of those using screen reader technologies
  - alternative formats for printed documents – including large print, Braille
  - audio and/or sending things electronically
  - clear print guidelines for printed documents in order to cater for those with dyslexia – for example, left-alignment of text, single spaces after sentence breaks
  - tagged PDFs where necessary to allow access by screen readers and assistive technology; and
  - a reasonable adjustment for D/deaf or hard of hearing customers when it comes to telephoning us and/or for at appointments
- 4.4 We will have a requirement that accessibility features and reasonable adjustments are considered at the planning stage of any campaign or project

### 5 Service Standards, monitoring and review

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- 5.1 Our Equality Diversity and Inclusion group will undertake a review every quarter to ensure that the standard is embedded.

### 6. Legal considerations

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- 6.1 This standard has been developed in relation to responsibilities set out in the Equality Act 2010 and the public sector anticipatory duty under that legislation.
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- 6.2 Customers and employees would have a claim under the Equality Act if we failed to adequately plan for and put in place reasonable adjustments for those with a communication need due to their disability
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The Accessible Information Standard will also apply to all internal our policies and procedures.

Effective date: February 2021

Review date: February 2022