Pre Hospital Communication Guide

Helping you communicate with people with a range of different needs
This guide can support communication in many different ways.

The pictures and words can help:

• explain what you need to do for someone

• the patient to give you important information about themselves and their problem

• you check the patient has understood you

• the patient to make choices and give consent

• to clarify the needs of people with a range of different disabilities.

The guide may be useful to use with people with a learning disability, people with a hearing impairment, people for whom English is not their first language and people who have acquired communication difficulty through injury.
This book has 10 colour coded sections.

1 - About you
5. personal details
6. your impairments
7. languages
8. who to contact
9. your allergies

2 - About the incident
10. what is the problem?
11. are you injured?
12. fall
13-15. vehicle accident
16. assault
17-18. medical problems

3 - Signs and symptoms
19-22. symptoms
23-24. pain
25. pain scale
26-27. full bodies

4 - Your history
28. medical history
29. medication
30. social history
31. food and drink
32. alcohol
33. drugs
Can you tell us your:

Name

Date of birth

Address

Can you tell us the name and address of your doctor?

My Address
2 High Street
Newton
NW1 1PG
Do you have an impairment?

Physical  Hearing  Visual

Do you use:

Makaton

British Sign Language  Lip Reading
Do you have a care passport?

Do you need language translation?

When a person’s first language is not English, you may need to use the Language Identification Card to identify the language they speak.

If a person has low literacy levels and cannot use the Language Identification Card, the selection of flags in this book could help you identify the language they speak.

Remember that a person with an acquired injury or condition may revert to using their first language.

See pages 48 and 49 for images of flags.
Personal details

Who should we contact in case of emergency?

Do you live alone?

Do you have help at home?

Do you have an assistance dog?
Do you have any allergies?

Food allergies like peanuts

Medicine

Other allergy

Latex / rubber

Plasters
What happened?

- Fall
- Sports injury
- Medical problem
- Vehicle accident
- Assault
Injuries

Are you injured?

- Does your neck hurt?
- Did you hear a break?
- Did you get up?
- Can you walk?
How did you fall?

- Fell off something
- Collapsed
- Tripped over
Vehicle accident

Does your neck hurt?

Were you wearing a seatbelt?

How fast were you going?
Vehicle accident

Were you a pedestrian hit by a vehicle?

Were you the driver?

Where were you sitting?

front  back
Vehicle accident

What vehicles were involved?

- Bicycle
- Motorbike
- Car
- Van
- Lorry
- Bus
Assault

What kind of assault?

Punched

Kicked

Weapon

Abuse
Medical problems

- Stroke
- Breathing
- Mental health
- Heart
- Diabetes
- Epilepsy
**Overdose**

**Have you taken an overdose?**

- What sort of tablets or medicine did you take?

If you took tablets, how many?

1  5  10  20  20 +

What time did you take them?

Did you take alcohol as well?

Have you taken an overdose before?
Symptoms

Cold

Hot

Unconscious

Sick

Painful cough

Colour of productive sputum
Symptoms

- Palpitations
- Faint
- Dizzy
- Breathing difficulties
- Tired / lethargic
Symptoms

When did you last wee?

When did you last poo?

Diarrhoea

Constipation
Could you be pregnant?

When was your last period?
Pain

Headache

Neck pain

Chest pains

Tummy ache
Pain

Back pain

Sore throat

Leg pains

Arm pains
How bad is the pain?

0  No pain
2  A little pain
4  More pain
6  Even more pain
8  Bad pain
10 Very bad pain
Female body
Male body
Have you had a serious medical problem in the past?

How long have you had the problem?

Heart attack

Stroke

Breathing problem
What medication do you take?

- Tablets
- Medicine
- Inhaler
- Insulin pen (diabetes)
- Adrenaline pen (allergic reaction)
Social history

Do you:

- Drink alcohol
- Smoke
- Take drugs
Food and drink

When did you last eat?
When did you last drink?

Morning
Afternoon
Night
Alcohol

Have you drunk alcohol today?

pint

wine

alcopop

spirits

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 more
Drugs

Have you taken drugs?

Cannabis  Heroin  Ecstacy

Solvents  Cocaine / Speed  Other

How much?  When?  How often?

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  more
Maternity

How many weeks pregnant are you?

- 0 - 8 weeks
- 9 - 16 weeks
- 17 - 24 weeks
- 25 - 40 weeks

Can we see your maternity records / notes?

Which baby is this?

- 1st
- 2nd
- 3rd
- 4th
- 5+
Maternity

How often are your contractions?

Which maternity department are you booked into?
Maternity

Have your waters broken?

Have you had a show?

Do you have a headache?

Do you have flashing lights or visual disturbance?
Tests and treatment

Blood test

Oxygen level

Blood pressure

Eye check
Tests and treatment

- Injection
- Drip
- Arm splint
- Dressing
- Leg splint
- Neck brace
Tests and treatment

Check your heart

Check your temperature

You need painkillers

You need oxygen
Going to hospital

Local hospital

Travelling to a specialist hospital
You are staying at home.

If you are worried or your condition gets worse phone:

your doctor’s surgery

999

an ambulance
Things to bring

- Phone
- Keys
- Glasses
- Footwear
- Coat
- Money
- Aids
- Medication
- Teeth / brush
Times of the day

Morning
Afternoon
Night
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alphabet</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A B C D E F</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G H I J K L</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M N O P Q R</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S T U V W X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y Z</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
British Sign Language Alphabet

A
B
C
D
E
F
G
H
I
J
K
L
M
N
O
P
Q
R
S
T
U
V
W
X
Y
Z
Makaton

The Makaton Charity exists to ensure that everyone living with learning and/or communication disabilities has the tools and resources they need to communicate.

• Makaton uses signs, symbols and speech.
• Makaton is a visual way to develop communication skills.

If you would like more information about or to learn to use Makaton, contact The Makaton Charity at www.makaton.org, email: info@makaton.org or telephone: 01276 606760.

These are some simple Makaton signs to help you with basic communication.

Hello  Name  OK
To help  Pain  Calm down

Makaton signs used with permission from The Makaton Charity (www.makaton.org)
When a person’s first language is not English and they have low literacy levels, these flags may help you identify the language they speak.

The flags are only for guidance and it’s important to remember that a range of different languages are spoken in some countries.
Flags

Kurdistan, Lithuania, Nigeria, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, PRO China, Romania, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Wales.
The words you use

Discrimination can start with the words we use.

If you use out of date terms, people may feel you do not understand their needs.

If in doubt, ask the person which term they prefer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do Say</th>
<th>Don’t Say</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Disabled people</td>
<td>• The disabled, the deaf, or the blind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Physical impairment</td>
<td>• Cripple, handicapped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mr Jones has epilepsy</td>
<td>• Mr Jones is an epileptic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Person with a learning difficulty</td>
<td>• Mentally handicapped or mentally retarded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Deaf, profoundly deaf, deaf without speech</td>
<td>• Deaf and dumb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Wheelchair user</td>
<td>• Wheelchair bound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mental health problem</td>
<td>• Mental condition or mental disorder</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Supporting communication

Some people use other communication methods instead of or to support speech.

These include using Makaton, British Sign Language, photos, symbols and electronic communicators.

Things to think about

- Use normal volume, intonation, grammar and gesture. Don’t shout.
- Keep eye contact and give time to communicate. Don’t interrupt or finish sentences for people.
- Try saying things a different way if you are not understood. Do not give up.
- Use closed questions so people can give yes and no answers. Use the yes / no page in this book.
- Listen and look out for voice tone, gestures, facial expressions, body language and pointing.
- Don’t pretend you understand if you don’t.
People with learning difficulties

Some people with learning difficulties find it hard to communicate verbally. Their health problems can go unnoticed.

Some people with learning difficulties are very independent, others need a lot of day to day support.

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Things to remember

- Talk directly to the person rather than their supporter.
- The supporter will often help the person understand.
- Explain what’s going to happen in simple sentences.
- Help the person stay calm by reassuring them.
- Check that you have understood what the person is saying to you and that they understand you.
- Give the person time to understand what you are saying and to ask questions. Avoid jargon.
- Use the pictures in this book.
Most people with autism or Asperger syndrome have some difficulties with social communication and interaction. People may behave in an unusual way.

A person may carry an autism alert card to let you know about their needs.

**Things to remember**

- The person may find eye contact uncomfortable.
- The person may not like physical contact.
- The person may answer questions very literally. For example if asked ‘Can you turn over?’ the person may reply ‘yes’ rather than doing the action.
- The person may be very sensitive to, and sometimes distressed by noises, smells and lights.
- The person may be very anxious and need help to stay calm. Always tell the person what will happen next.
People with a hearing impairment

People experience varying levels of hearing loss.

Things to remember

• Face the person when speaking. Some people lip read. Don’t obscure your mouth.

• Use everyday words, avoid slang and jargon. Speak clearly and slowly, but do not shout.

• Use facial expressions and hand gestures as visual clues, but do not exaggerate.

• Check that you have been understood and repeat or rephrase if necessary.

• Sign the first letter of key words when speaking. See page 46 for these. This helps the person to distinguish between words when lip reading.

• Use the words and images in this book. Always check the person is happy to use images.
The degree of sight loss people experience will vary.

Things to remember

• Ask the person to tell you what they can or cannot see.

• Speak in your normal voice. Do not shout.

• Say your name and who you are when talking, even if you have only been away for a short time.

• Tell the person where they are and explain what is going to happen. Explain about any treatments, and if you need to leave them alone for a while.

• Be careful not to use visual references such as ‘we need to go in through the green door’.

• Be aware that the images in this book may not be useful to use.

• Tell people about things like trip hazards that they may not see clearly.
People who are deafblind

Deafblind people have combined sight and hearing loss.

The previous two pages on hearing and visual impairment will also be useful.

Things to remember

• Most deafblind people will have some hearing and/or some sight. They may be able to tell you about their needs.

• Ask the person how they wish you to communicate with them. If they have a support worker or advocate they will help the person communicate with you.

• Let the person know that you are communicating with them by gently touching their hand.

• Always give people clues that you are about to do something. For example, before putting an oxygen mask on them, allow the person to feel the mask.

• Give the person time to understand what is happening.
Guiding people

Don’t assume a person who is blind, partially sighted or deafblind wants to be guided.

Things to remember

• Offer support but let the person tell you what help they want.

• Offer your arm and guide their hand to your elbow.

• Say the direction you are going.

• The person may walk slightly behind you to help them judge obstacles.

• Tell the person about obstacles such as stairs, kerbs and other people.

• When you have reached where you are going describe the layout to the person and ask if they need any further help.
Assistance dogs will have formal ID. They have been trained and registered as a member of Assistance Dogs UK.

Things to remember

• You can usually recognise an assistance dog by their harness or identification coat.

• Don’t assume the first step is to find someone to look after the dog if the owner goes to hospital. The absence of their assistance dog will be like losing any other aid for someone with a disability.

• Dogs should not be patted or distracted when working or when wearing their harness.

• Hearing dogs may jump up onto their companion if telephones or alarms sound.

• If you need to take the dog whilst assisting the person, hold the dog’s lead and not the harness.
Useful websites

**Sense - for deafblind people**
www.sense.org.uk

**SeeAbility - specialists in multiple disabilities**
www.seeability.org

**Mencap Cymru**
www.mencap.org.uk/wales

**The National Autistic Society Cymru**
www.autism.org.uk/wales

**Scope Cymru - cerebral palsy information**
www.scope.org.uk/about-us/scope-wales

**Action on Hearing Loss Cymru**
www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/about-us/wales.aspx

**RNIB Cymru**
www.rnib.org.uk/cymru

**The Clear Communication People Ltd**
www.communicationpeople.co.uk

**The Makaton Charity - training, support and advice.**
www.makaton.org
We would like to thank everyone whose hard work, support and advice made this Communication Guide possible.

Most photos used are photosymbols. www.photosymbols.com
The line drawings are from the Easy Pics imagebank. © The Clear Communication People Ltd.

This bi-lingual version of the Pre Hospital Communication Guide was developed in partnership by The Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust, The London Ambulance Service NHS Trust and The Clear Communication People Ltd.

For more copies, email: ppi.team@wales.nhs.uk


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Using this yes / no page

The yes / no images on this page fold out and can be used with the images and words on the other pages.

How you use this page will depend on the needs of the person you communicate with.

For example:

• they can point to either ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to answer a question

• you can point to either ‘yes’ or ‘no’ and they use a gesture or a facial expression to indicate ‘yes’ or ‘no’.

It’s important to ask closed questions like ‘Are you in pain?’ when using the yes/no.

The yes / no can help you check the understanding of the person.