Create accurate and evidence based health information

- Use current, high quality research, guidelines and literature reviews.
- Where necessary, conduct a literature and evidence review, critically appraising any evidence you find.
- Keep a clear record of the evidence you have used during the entire production process to create your health information.
- Make sure your information includes all possible options, and covers all relevant risks, benefits and uncertainties.
- Communicate benefits, risks and uncertainties in a non-judgmental and unbiased way.
- Include clinical experts in the development of your health information.
- Have a system to enable people to feedback on potential inaccuracies in your content.

Be transparent about your evidence base

- Ensure your users can easily find the sources of evidence you have used.
- Clearly state who was involved in the production of your information, and include any conflicts of interest.
- Make a clear distinction between evidence-based information and other types of information, i.e. patient stories or care pathways.

Keep your health information up to date

- Stay up to date with developments in the evidence base.
- Review and update your health information regularly.
- Plan how the resource will be reviewed and have clear processes.
- Publish the date health information was created or last reviewed and when it is scheduled to be next reviewed.
- Link the updating of information to your dissemination activities.
- Withdraw or archive health information when it is out-of date, if you are not intending to update it.

Communicate risk clearly

- Be cautious about using verbal descriptors of risk (rare, common). If used, ensure they are accompanied by statistical information.
- Use absolute risk rather than relative risk.
- Use natural numbers rather than percentages.
- Consider using both positive and negative framing for risk.
- Communicate the uncertainty of data.
- Consider using a mix of numerical and pictorial formats to communicate risk.
- Make risks relevant to your audience.
Communicate information clearly

**Keep language clear and simple**
- Use plain language and everyday words.
- Express numbers clearly: from one to nine as words; from 10 onwards, as numbers.
- Do not use jargon; explain medical, clinical or health service terms or words.
- Use short sentences and paragraphs, cut out unnecessary words.
- Use an active tone and talk directly to your user.
- An imperative voice should be used for instructions.
- User test your health information to ensure the ‘language’ you have used is understood.

**Break complex information down**
- Present information in small chunks. Try to explore only one area in each ‘paragraph’ and stick to one idea in a sentence.
- Include a summary of the most important points, right at the start of the information.
- Use visual representations where they can explain better than words, or where they aid understanding.
- Signpost to more in-depth information.
- Keep numerical information as simple as possible.
- When describing risk to health, use a combination of words and numbers, and make risks relevant to your audience.

**Use layout and design to aid navigation**
- Ensure the design is clear and visually engaging.
- Use headings, bullet points and colour to help users navigate your information.
- Include a contents list where appropriate.
- For written information: avoid italics and capital letters; use bold text for emphasis; left justify; use a clear font and at least 12 point text size.
- Use appropriate images in a meaningful way.
- Ensure web-based or digital information is in an accessible format.
- Involve experts from specialist non-clinical areas to inform the design of your resources.

**Ensure you have met any communication needs your audience has**
- Identify the communication needs of your audience.
- Ensure your information meets any required accessibility standards and follows guidelines for specific audiences.
Create resources with a specific purpose or objective

- Plan well, with clear objectives - to create information that enables users to act.
- Ensure your health information adds value to what already exists.
- User test your health information to ensure it achieves its purpose and key messages are understood.
- Where appropriate, ensure your resource will be supported at the point of delivery to ensure key messages are understood.
- Measure and evaluate the impact of your health information.

Understand and meet the needs of your users

- Understand the key characteristics of your audience.
- Where appropriate, segment your audience into different target groups.
- Understand the journey of your users
- Tailor and/or personalise information to the specific needs and circumstances of the user.
- Provide health information in a choice of formats, informed by user involvement.
- Where appropriate, provide information at a range of detail and complexity levels.

Include non-clinical information and patient experiences

- Include issues that affect quality of life and day-to-day living, where appropriate.
- Include user generated content - quotes, tips and stories where appropriate.

Make information easy for users to find and access

- Map all potential dissemination routes at planning stage.
- Provide health information that can be accessed in a number of different ways, informed by user involvement.
- Dissemination plans should consider at what point in their journey patients may need your health information.
- Involve ‘gatekeepers’ - and any other stakeholders you will need to help disseminate - in the development of your health information.
- Link your health information with, and signpost to, other organisations and services that are connected with your target users.
- SEO (search engine optimisation) is important for online information: include common keywords; ensure web pages have metadata to allow search engines to find them.
Involve users in creating information

Involve users at every stage of your information project

- Plan how users will be involved throughout the creation of your health information.
- Involve users throughout the production process, using co-production approaches where appropriate.
- Test how well the messages in your information are understood by your target audience - ‘user testing’.
- Design your dissemination approach with users.
- Evaluate your resources with users.

Ensure clear communicate with the users you are involving

- Be clear with those you are involving on your requirements and expectations of their involvement.
- Enable participants to share their requirements and expectations of being involved.
- Where appropriate, keep the users you’ve worked with informed about the project as it develops.

Involve a range of representative users

- Engage meaningfully with ‘real’ users.
- Ensure involvement includes users from all relevant groups.
- Ensure your methods of engaging with users are appropriate for your target group.
- Include responses from an appropriate number of people.

The Patient Information Forum (PIF) is the UK membership organisation and network for people working in, and involved with, health and care information and support.

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<th>Quality</th>
<th>Integration</th>
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<td>We raise standards and best practice in the production and provision of health information and support</td>
<td>We campaign for high quality health information and support to be an integral part of the healthcare journey</td>
<td>We champion and enhance the expertise of people working in the field of health information and support</td>
<td>We evidence the importance and impact of high quality health information and support</td>
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