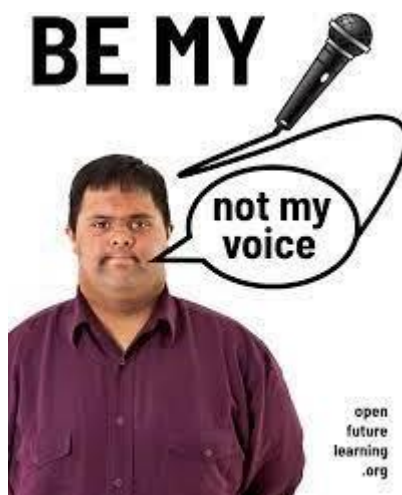


## Inclusive Communication Policy



‘Be my Microphone not my Voice’

\*\*\*\*\*

### Kare Policy Document.

**Policy Owner:** Speech and Language Therapy Department.

Rev. No.	Approved by the Policy Management Committee.	Approved by Kare Board/Sub Committee.	Launched at Heads of Units	Operational Period
Rev 3.1	24 <sup>th</sup> January 2023	n/a	February 2023	Feb 2023 – Nov 2024
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**\*Revision history available at the end of the document.**

How to quickly access sections of the Policy:


Hold the  over the section of the policy you want to open.

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## **Introduction to Policy – by Tamara [Click here to access Tamara's video](#)**

### **Section 1: Policy**

#### **1.1 Background to this Policy**

- 1.1.1** Communication is at the heart of who we are as human beings. We connect and interact and exchange information and ideas. All of this is made possible through communication. Kare provides services and supports to people with a range of communication needs and abilities.
- 1.1.2** People need an opportunity to communicate, a way to communicate and a reason to communicate.
- 1.1.3** Kare have written this policy because communication is a basic human right for everyone. Communication is important for everybody's well-being and quality of life. It affects how people feel about themselves, the choices they make and their relationships. Kare have a responsibility to make sure that all information is provided in a way that everybody can understand.
- 1.1.4** Having communication support needs can isolate a person and make it hard for them to access services, education, get a job, make friends, stay safe, live independently and have good mental health. Communication barriers created by others and poor communication environment are common problems for people with communication support needs. Staff are communication partners and have a major role in giving and receiving information
- 1.1.5** We know that many people can find it hard to communicate using speech, so Kare want to make sure that we respect and value all forms of communication.
- 1.1.6 This policy is underpinned by the following regulations and guidelines:**
- Communication Bill of Rights written by the National Joint Committee for the Communication Needs of Persons with Severe Disabilities 2016.
  - UN Convention on the rights of people with disabilities
  - Health Act 2007

- HIQA National Standards for Residential Services for Children and Adults with Disabilities, 2013
- Communications with residents Guiding principles – HSE
- Disability Act 2005 - Section 28
- National Disability Strategy 2017 – universal design in communication (dept of Justice)
- Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act 2015
- HSE National Consent Policy 2022
- Making Communication Accessible for All A Guide for Health & Social Care (HSC) Staff
- RCSLT Communication Standards (Appendix 8)

**1.1.7 This policy is supported by the following Kare Policies and Guidelines:**

- Individualised Planning
- Food safety guidelines
- Management of Nutrition
- Personal/Intimate care policy
- Safe Administration of Medication
- Managing Transport
- Managing Service Users Money/Property
- Managing Complaints
- Supporting people who present with behaviours that challenge
- Supporting people to work /have a career
- Dementia Policy
- Dysphagia Policy

**1.1.8 Glossary of Terms**

- Definition of Communication - Communication is the exchange of facts, ideas, opinions or emotions by two or more people. It is the process of passing information and

understanding from one person to another.

- Inclusive Communication approach - Inclusive Communication is a communication philosophy. It is not a communication method and not a teaching method. Inclusive Communication is an approach used to create good and equal communication between human beings with different language abilities. An Inclusive Communication
- approach acknowledges that communication is not simply about talking and emphasises the importance of body language, gesture, photos, symbols, signs, objects and more creative mediums such as music.
- AAC - Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) is a general term used to refer to approaches, strategies, and tools, that enable children and adults with communication difficulties different communication preferences to communicate their wants, needs, thoughts, and emotions.
- Inclusive communication - Inclusive communication is sharing information in a way that everybody can understand, enabling people to express themselves in any way they find easiest.
- Accessible information – Making information accessible means giving people information in a way they can understand. Accessible information can look very different for different people.
- Communication Partner - Communication partners are the people around the service user, who will interact with them. Anyone can be a communication partner. And this is an important job. What we do counts; what we think is important; how we respond matters. Communication partners wait, listen and respond.
- Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a movement but also a set of principles that give all individuals equal opportunities to learn. It introduces more flexible methods of teaching, assessment and service provision to cater for different styles of learners. This approach is underpinned by research in the field of neuroscience and is designed to improve the learning experience and outcomes for all students. (AHEAD, 2017).
- Kare is passionate about and committed to working with public and commercial services in local communities to ensure that inclusive communication strategies are encouraged and used. Individuals who use Kare services will be facilitated and encouraged to promote and upskill members of their communities in accessibility and inclusive communication for all.

## **1.2 Aim of this Policy**

**1.2.1** Kare believes in Inclusive Communication. The aim of this policy is to make sure that Kare supports people to use their own way of communicating. We will learn, teach and support the use of these methods so that everyone can feel included, respected, valued and able to participate fully in their communities. Kare promotes a culture of Inclusive Communication. Our aim is to fully adopt the philosophy of Inclusive Communication.

1.1.2 This policy will facilitate staff to be supportive communication partners for the people who use the service.

## **1.3 Scope of this Policy**

**1.3.1** This policy is for the people who use the service. It is also for everyone working on behalf of Kare including staff (frontline, managers, administrative), people taking part in CE and on LTI courses, students on placement and volunteers.

## **1.4 Policy Statements**

### **1.4.1 General Statements**

1.4.1.1 Kare recognises that everyone has the right to communicate as stated in the Communication Bill of Rights (Table 1 [Appendix 1](#))

1.4.1.2 Kare understands that all people communicate for many reasons (Table 2 [Appendix 2](#)).

1.4.1.3 Kare respect and value all of the different ways that people communicate. (Table 3 [Appendix 3](#) )

1.4.1.4 Kare will ensure that each individual is supported to communicate in their way. Staff, as communication partners, will use each individual's preferred method of communication [Click Here for Communication Partners PowerPoint](#).

- 1.4.1.5 Kare will ensure that individuals have a choice about how their communication supports are provided and by whom.
- 1.4.1.6 Each individual will be supported to use their communication skills in everything they do.
- 1.4.1.7 Staff will be supported to know all the ways that each individual that they support communicates.
- 1.4.1.8 Staff will work together with service users and regularly review and update information about how each individual communicates.
- 1.4.1.9 Staff will share this up-to-date information about how to communicate with each person. This information will be shared according to the person's wishes.
- 1.4.1.10 Kare staff have a duty to maximise capacity for decision making. Efforts must be made to support the individual in making decisions for themselves, giving the time and support to make sure a person can make their own decisions.

Each person must be given all information in a manner they can understand to help them to make informed decisions. [Assisted Decision-making | Inclusion Ireland](#)

Using Inclusive Communication will support decision making. [Click Here for Decision Making PowerPoint Presentation](#)

- 1.4.4.11 Staff will use Inclusive Communication to meaningfully support people to give or refuse consent. [Consent for CST Referral](#)
- 1.4.4.12 Kare will support staff to make written information easy to understand ("Information for All European Standards for making information Easy to Read and understand". [Appendix 4](#)).
- 1.4.1.13 Kare will ensure that each individual is given information which is accessible to them and helps them to make choices about their service. [Inclusive Communication: Accessible Information](#)
- 1.4.1.14 Staff will be supported to attend internally developed training in Inclusive Communication.



- 1.4.1.15 Individuals are supported by Kare to access, understand and engage with information.
- 1.4.1.16 Staff, as communication partners, will create opportunities for communication by creating environments that support Inclusive Communication for each service user (see section 3.2).
- 1.4.1.17 Staff will support each person to understand and express their needs about health and wellbeing ([Appendix 5](#)).
- 1.4.1.18 Communication passports are a useful way of supporting individuals who cannot **easily** speak for themselves. A Communication Passport gives a person a way to share key information about themselves, to help people to get to know them. A Communication Passport is owned and shared by the person. Passports present information in an easy to follow format that makes it possible for individuals to get their thoughts across. Passports should be accessible, informative, useful and fun. A Communication Passport is a way to quickly and effectively communicate “need to know” information such as basic biographical, medical and personal information about an individual. Communication passports are visually interesting (colours, images, borders that stand out), simply designed, and readable (large fonts). ([Appendix 4](#))
- 1.4.1.19 Kare will ensure that organisational information is communicated in a way that everyone can understand. Inclusive communication strategies will be used to ensure this.
- 1.4.1.20 In recognising the different ways people communicate, everyone should also be helped to engage with information and communicate their learning in their preferred communication method. This should happen in all types of learning experiences for example, in/outside of the classroom, a learning support system and incidental learning. [Guidelines - The Principles in Practice - AHEAD](#)

## **Section 2: Procedures**

### **2.1 Using Communication Supports**

- 2.1.1** Kare will work together with our service users using an Inclusive Communication approach. This will inform any decisions/interventions for the person; “Nothing about us without us”
- 2.1.2** Kare will work with service users to ensure plans are co-created and accessible for each individual ([appendix 5](#))
- 2.1.3** Staff, with the service user, will make a referral for Clinical Supports and/or Life Long Learning when there is a change identified in a person’s communication support needs ([appendix 6](#)).
- 2.1.4** Kare will make the spoken and written information we use easier to understand and read.
- In accordance with their wishes, people using services should be involved in making ‘easy read’ information and documents.
  - Written communication will be in an ‘easy to read’ format. All staff can refer to ‘Information for All European Standards for making information Easy to Read and understand’ (see [appendix 4](#)) when preparing information to read.
  - Initial advice and support in formulating documentation (policy, procedure guidelines etc.) with service users, in an easy read format should be sourced from the Quality, Speech and Language Therapy and Life Long Learning Departments.
  - Refer to Inclusion Ireland making info accessible ([Accessible Information Inclusion Ireland](#)) to support making information accessible to everyone.
- 2.1.5** Inclusive communication supports will be used to facilitate people to make their own decisions. [Decision Making PowerPoint Presentation](#)

## **2.2 Creating Inclusive Communication Environments**

**2.2.1** Kare staff will implement standards for creating an Inclusive Communication Environment, click here; [Inclusive Communication Environment](#). An Inclusive Communication Environment is a place or situation where communication of all types is encouraged and valued. Such an environment provides support to individuals to communicate in a way that is appropriate to them.

**2.2.2** Staff are communication partners and will use Inclusive communication strategies while being a supportive communication partner ([Inclusive Total Communication Resources](#)):

- the individual's communication partners will spend time with the person listening and getting to know their preferred method of communication;
- communication partners will provide people with opportunities to engage in meaningful conversation and to make decisions.

**2.2.3** Kare will ensure there is a suitable physical environment for inclusive communication; for example, room layout; correct lighting and reduced background noise. Service users should be asked what makes an environment accessible for them.

**2.2.4** Staff are clear about their role in using Inclusive Communication: All Frontline Staff together with service users

- To be aware of their role as Inclusive Communication partners with the people they support.
- To collaborate with service users to identify their preferred communication method and communication supports they want/need.
- To liaise with Clinical Supports and LifeLong Learning departments regarding support needs of the individual in terms of communication guidelines, plans and strategies (section 2.4).
- To implement all recommended individual communication guidelines, plans and strategies.
- To integrate communication information, guidelines, plans and strategies into the individual's ISP.
- To ensure that all plans are created in a way that is individualised and accessible to each service user (see section 2.3).

- To ensure that environments are set up in such a way that all forms of communication are supported and respected.
- Where recommended to attend necessary training.

#### **2.2.5 Managers (Area, Day, Residential and Respite) together with service users**

- To understand what is meant by Inclusive Communication and how this should be implemented with regard to their own service; and to attend necessary training in this regard.
- To support the development and maintenance of an Inclusive Communication environment.
- To ascertain the support and training needs of staff / individual communication partners and make appropriate referral for training to the Training Department.
- To make appropriate referrals for Speech and Language Therapy input with regard to individual service user communication needs, by using appropriate referral procedures.
- To ensure implementation of recommended communication guidelines; plans; strategies

#### **2.2.6 Speech and Language Therapists as part of Multidisciplinary Team together with service users**

- Assessment, diagnosis and intervention / advice / consultation with regard to individual's communication.
- Design, provision and review of individual communication plans / programmes.
- Appropriate onward referral, with individual's consent, to other team members or agencies.
- Apply current best practice which is evidence based and supports positive communication outcomes for the individual.
- Provide training in Inclusive Communication

#### **2.2.7 The Lifelong Learning Department supports communication together with service users in the following ways:**

- The facilitation of education and training delivery in QQI levels 1 to 3 and in house training.
- Provision of courses and learning support that are relative to the goal, need and areas

Kare Policy: Inclusive Communication Policy.  
of interest of the person.





- Some examples of curriculum which support communication are effective communication, communications QQI levels 1 to 3 and creative communications.
- Support is provided to adults to identify and reflect on their learning style and the way they receive and express information.
- Training programmes and learning support offers different ways to support learners to contribute to and demonstrate their learning in the way that they communicate.
- The facilitation of teaching, learning and assessment in line with universal design for learning principles. ( <https://ahead.ie/udl>)
- Working in collaboration with SLT when exploring modes of communication and inclusive teaching, learning and assessment.



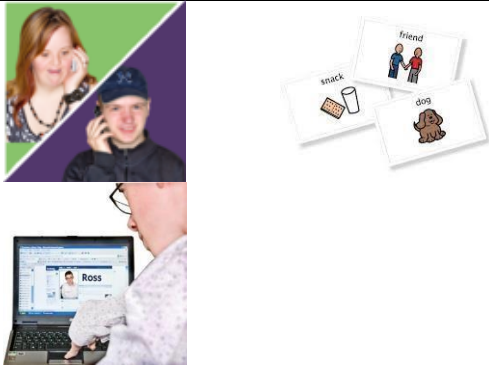



**2.2.8** Service Users together with the Quality Department support communication in the following ways:





- Agreed Easy read policy checklist
- Agreed Easy Read approvals process
- Develop Easy Read documents
- Review, agreed and create Easy Read policies and supporting materials e.g. video with voiceover
- Launch Easy Read Policies to the voice for Kare representatives group
- Develop Easy Read Inspection reports
- Develop Easy Read Statement of Purpose
- Adverse event review where applicable
- Complete Quality of life interviews in consultation with service users
- Conduct annual satisfaction survey and action appropriately
- Work with service users in relation to strategic goals and other organisational initiatives

## Section 3: Appendices

### Appendix 1: Table 1: Communication Bill of Rights: I have the right:

1.		To be able to ask for things events and people
2.		To be offered choices
3.		To say no
4.		To communicate and be with other people
5.		To have information about things you want to know about

6.		To have help with communication
7.		To be listened to
8.		To have access to what you need to communicate whenever you like (people might use pictures, tablets and mobile phones)
9.		To have people talk to you and explain things to you To do this in private place if that is what you want
10.		To be told about things that are happening around you
11.		To be included when people talk about you

12.	 A man with glasses and a dark blue sweater is pointing his right index finger towards the text "my way" which is written in a stylized, blue, bubbly font.	To communicate in your own way - the way that is right for you
13.	 Two women are standing together. The woman on the left is wearing a white long-sleeved shirt with red sleeves and black pants. The woman on the right is wearing a white short-sleeved shirt and a long blue skirt.	To be social and to build relationships
14.	 A man with glasses, wearing a light-colored polo shirt and dark pants, is sitting in a black chair and waving his right hand.	To say how I feel To talk about my opinions and what I think
15.	 Two men are standing and talking. The man on the left is wearing a grey jacket and blue pants. The man on the right is wearing a dark sweater and dark pants, with his hand near his face.	To dignity and respect



## Appendix 2: Table 2: Why people communicate



Make choices



To express emotions



Ask questions



Say yes or no



Share personal experiences



Give information



To ask for help



To be understood



Express wants and needs



Share ideas


















Have relationships



Speak up for themselves and do things themselves

### Appendix 3: Table 3: How people communicate

Eye Pointing		Objects of Reference	
Lamh		Picture Exchange Communication Systems (PECS)	
Switches (Low Tech Devices)		Talking Mats	
Pictures		Communication Books	
Photographs		Social Stories	
Body Language		Eye Contact	
Touch Cues		Speech	
Writing		Typing	
Smells		Sensory Stories	
Visual Schedules		Assistive Technology (AT)	
Music		Memory Books	
Communication Passports		Facial Expression	
Intensive Interaction		Vocalisations	
Gestures		Pointing	

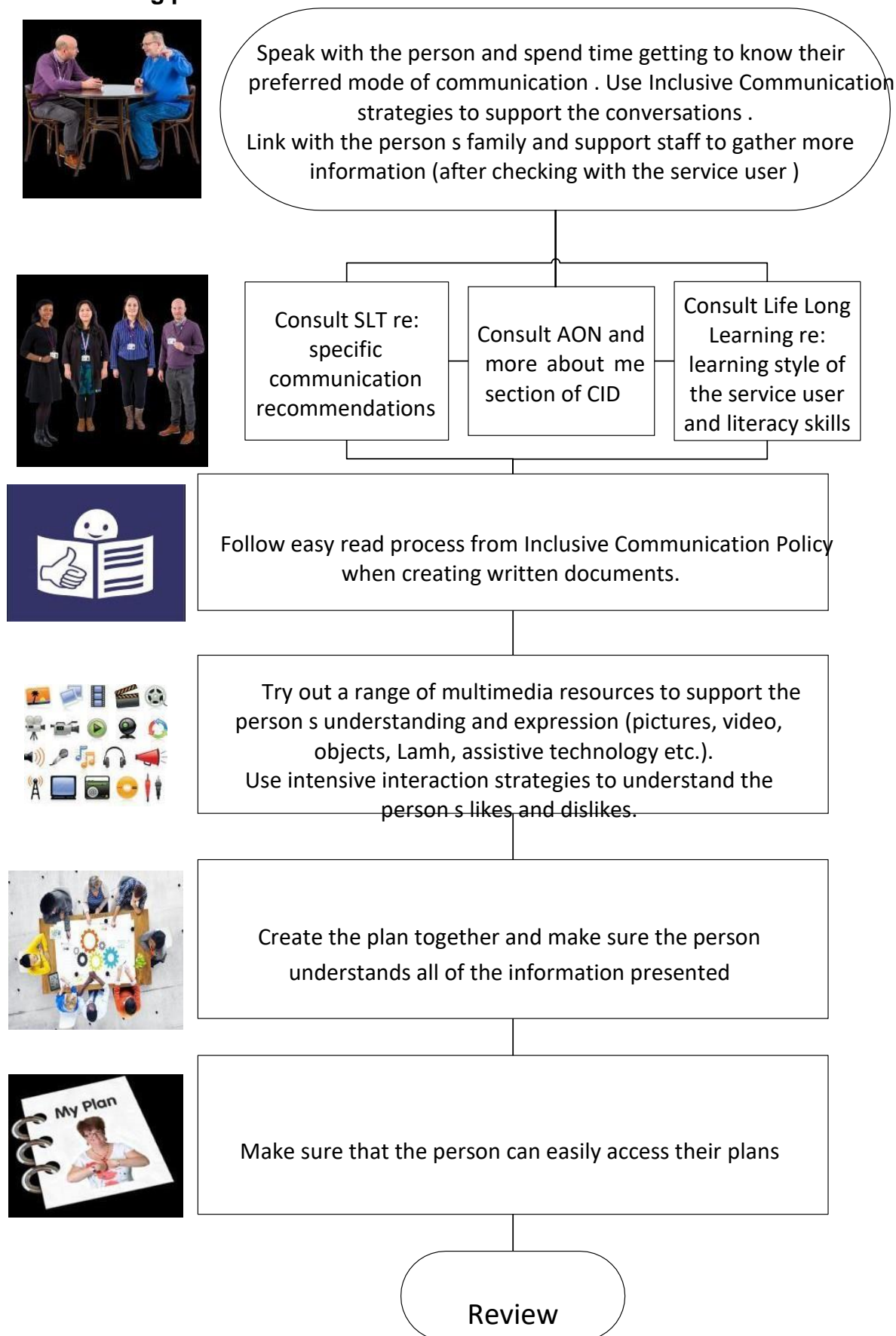
## Appendix 4: Links to additional information and resources

### Make it Easy Document –

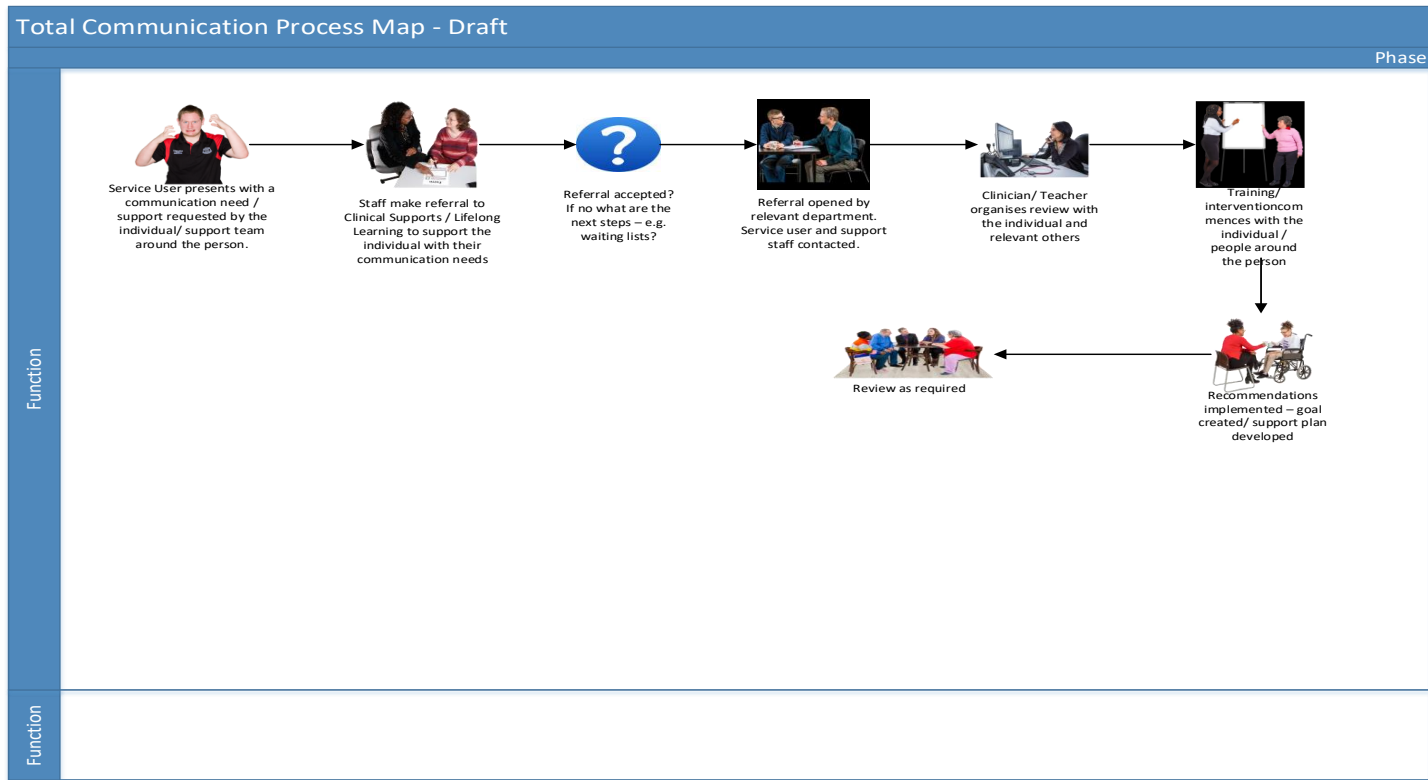
[Information for all: European standards for making information easy to read and understand \(inclusion-europe.eu\)](https://inclusion-europe.eu)

Communication Passport – [Inclusive Communication: Communication Passport Template](#)

## Appendix 5: Making plans accessible



Appendix 6: Making a referral for changing communication needs






**Appendix 7: Link to Environment standards**

[Inclusive Communication Environment PowerPoint Presentation](#)

Appendix 8: Communication Standards

The 5 Good Communication Standards (RCSLT)

1	There is a detailed description of how best to communicate with individuals.	
2	Services demonstrate how they support individuals with communication needs to be involved with decisions about their care and their services.	
3	Staff value and use competently the best approaches to communication with each individual they support.	



4	Services create opportunities, relationships and environments that make individuals want to communicate.	
5	Individuals are supported to understand and express their needs in relation to their health and well-being.	

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Rev. 1	June 2014	October 2014	November 2014	Nov 2014 – Feb 2018
Rev 2	January 2018	March 2018	March 2018	March 2018 -
Rev 3	February 2021	March 2021	April 2021	April 2021-
Rev 3.1				