

14 February 2009



National programmes linked to information prescriptions

3. Standards for Better Health – 2008-2009 & The NHS Constitution - 2009

The [Standards for Better Health](#) were published by the Department of Health formally in July 2004 and have been developed, revised and continually improved since then. The standards provide a common set of requirements applying across all health care organisations to ensure that health services are provided that are both safe and of an acceptable quality. The HealthCare Commission uses the standards as a key part of the assessments they make of every NHS organisation. Four standards in particular relate to having accessible information about NHS and other support and advice services readily available to patients, carers and the wider community.

[Standard C16](#) - Health care organisations should make information available to patients and the public on their services, provide patients with suitable and accessible information on the care and treatment they receive and where appropriate, inform patients on what to expect during treatment, care and after-care.

[Standard C18](#) - Health care organisations should enable all members of the population to access services equally and offer choice in access to services and treatment equitably.

[Standard D9](#) - Patients, service users and, where appropriate, carers receive timely and suitable information, when they need and want it, on treatment, care, services, prevention and health promotion and are encouraged to express their preferences and supported to make choices and shared decisions about their own health care.

[Standard D10](#) - Patients and service users, particularly those with long-term conditions, are helped to contribute to planning of their care and are provided with opportunities and resources to develop competence in self-care.

[The NHS Constitution](#) was published by the DH in January 2009. As well as capturing the purpose, principles and values of the NHS, the Constitution brings together a number of rights, pledges and responsibilities for staff and patients alike. These rights and responsibilities are the result of extensive discussions and consultations with staff, patients and public and it reflects what matters to them. A legal duty will be placed on providers and commissioners of NHS services to have regard to the new NHS Constitution. This legal duty is contained within the Health Bill, which was introduced into Parliament on 15 January 2009.

Everyone will have the right to be given information about their proposed treatment in advance, including any significant risks and any alternative treatments that may be available, and the risks involved in doing nothing.

Everyone will have the right to make choices about their NHS care and to information to support these choices.