

# Pre Hospital Communication Guide

Helping you communicate with people  
with a range of different needs



# About this guide

**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.

# Contents

This book has 10 colour coded sections.

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- 7. languages
- 8. who to contact
- 9. your allergies

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- 23-24. pain
- 25. pain scale
- 26-27. full bodies

## 2 - About the incident

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- 12. fall
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- 30. social history
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# Personal details

Can you tell us your:

Name



Date of birth



Address



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

# Personal details

**Do you have an impairment?**



Physical



Hearing



Visual

**Do you use:**



Makaton



British Sign Language



Lip Reading

# Personal details



**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?

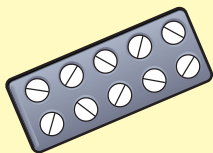


# Allergies

Do you have any allergies? **X**



Food allergies  
like peanuts



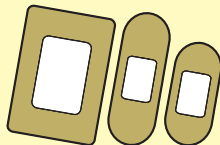
Medicine



Other  
allergy



Latex / rubber



Plasters

# What happened?



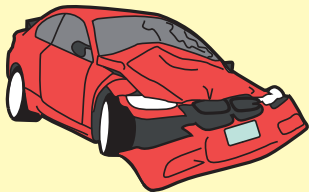
Fall



Sports injury



Medical  
problem



Vehicle accident



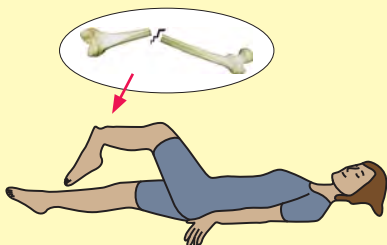
Assault

# Injuries

Are you injured?



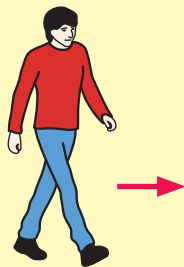
Does your neck hurt?



Did you hear a break?



Did you get up?



Can you walk?

# How did you fall?



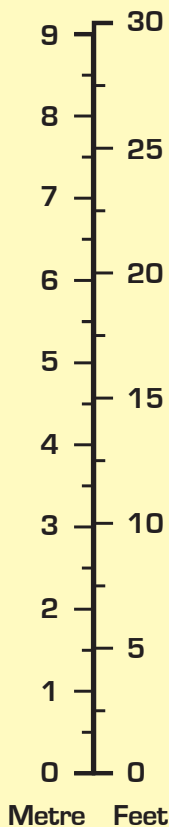
Fell off something



Collapsed



Tripped over



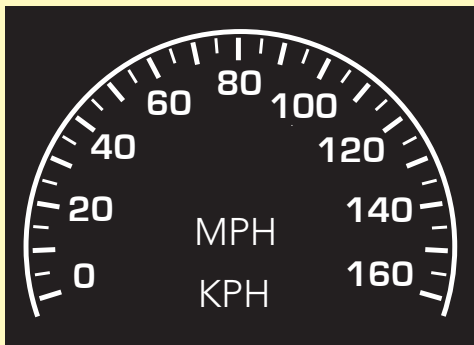
# Vehicle accident



Does your  
neck hurt?



Were you wearing  
a seatbelt?

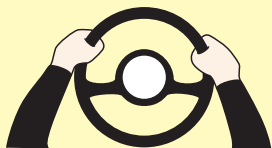


How fast were you going?

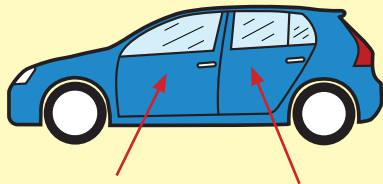
# Vehicle accident



Were you a pedestrian  
hit by a vehicle?



Were you the driver?



front

back

Where were  
you sitting?

# Vehicle accident

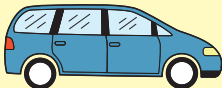
What vehicles were involved?



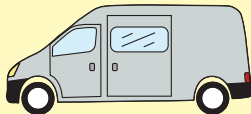
Bicycle



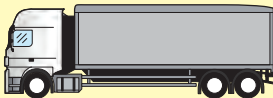
Motorbike



Car



Van



Lorry



Bus

# Assault

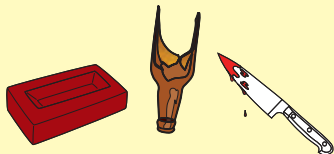
What kind of assault?



Punched



Kicked



Weapon



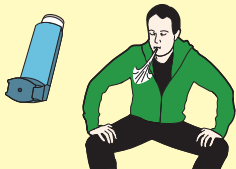
Abuse



# Medical problems



Stroke



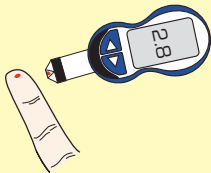
Breathing



Mental health



Heart



Diabetes



Epilepsy

# Overdose

## Have you taken an overdose?

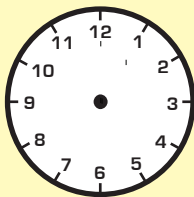


What sort of tablets or medicine did you take?

If you took tablets, how many?

1      5      10      20      20 +

What time did you take them?

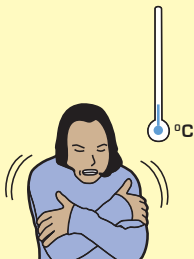


Did you take alcohol as well?

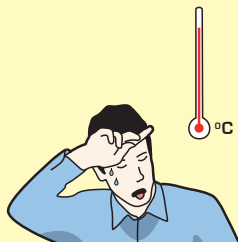


Have you taken an overdose before?

# Symptoms



Cold



Hot



Unconscious



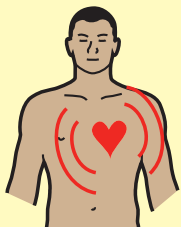
Sick



Painful cough

Colour of productive sputum

# Symptoms



Palpitations



Faint



Dizzy

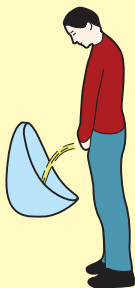


Breathing difficulties

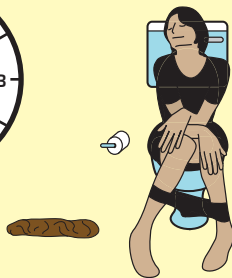
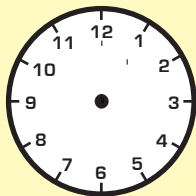


Tired /  
lethargic

# Symptoms



When did you  
last wee?



When did you  
last poo?

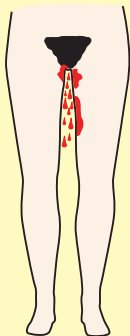


Diarrhoea

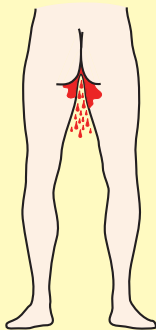


Constipation

# Symptoms



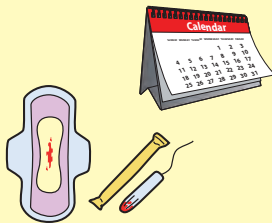
Vaginal Bleeding



Rectal Bleeding



Could you  
be pregnant?



When was your  
last period?

# Pain



Headache



Neck pain



Chest pains



Tummy ache

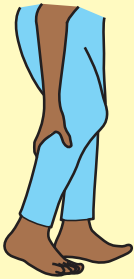
# Pain



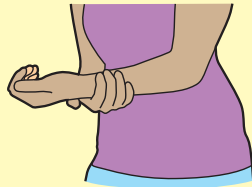
Back pain



Sore throat



Leg pains



Arm pains



# Pain scale

How bad is the pain?



**0**

No  
pain



**2**

A little  
pain



**4**

More  
pain



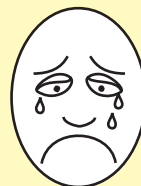
**6**

Even more  
pain



**8**

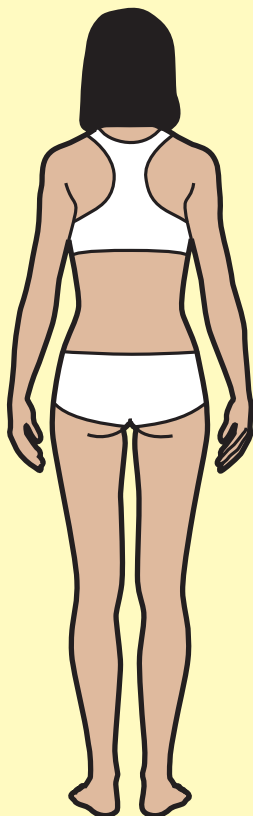
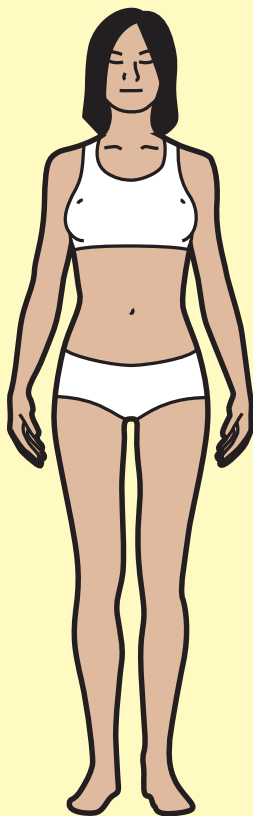
Bad  
pain



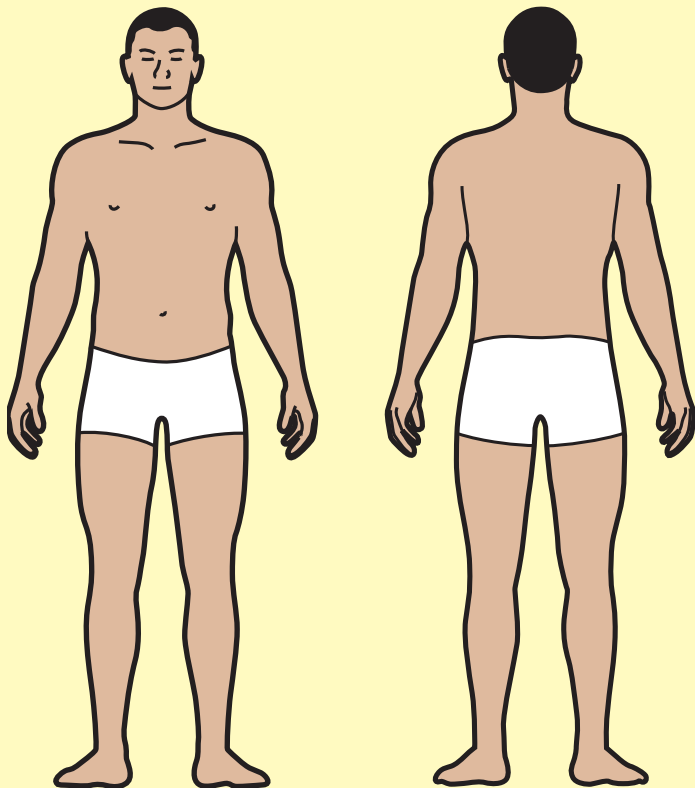
**10**

Very bad  
pain

# Female body



# Male body



# Medical history

**Have you had a serious medical problem in the past?**



How long have you had the problem?



Heart attack



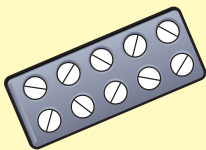
Stroke



Breathing problem

# Medication

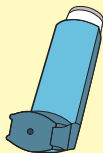
What medication do you take?



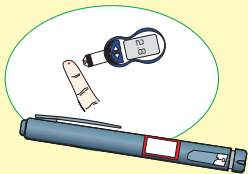
Tablets



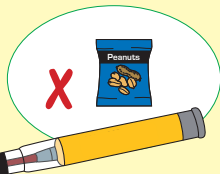
Medicine



Inhaler



Insulin pen  
(diabetes)



Adrenaline pen  
(allergic reaction)

# Social history

Do you:



Drink alcohol

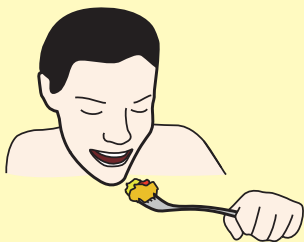


Smoke



Take drugs

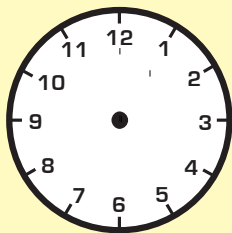
# Food and drink



When did you  
last eat?



When did you  
last drink?



# Alcohol

Have you drunk alcohol today?



pint



wine



alcopop



spirits

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 more



# Drugs

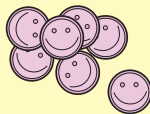
**Have you taken drugs?**



Cannabis



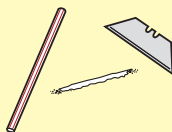
Heroin



Ecstasy



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

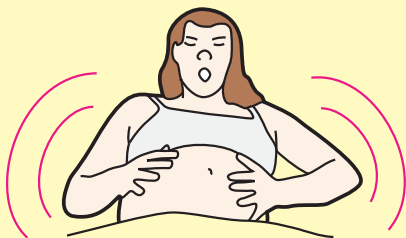
2nd

3rd

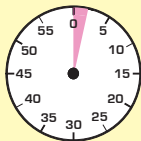
4th

5+

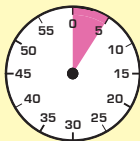
# Maternity



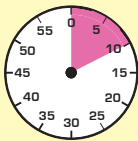
How often are your contractions?



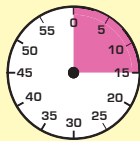
**2 Minutes**



**5 Minutes**



**10 Minutes**



**15 Minutes**

Which maternity department are you booked into?



# Maternity



Have your  
waters broken?



Have you  
had a show?

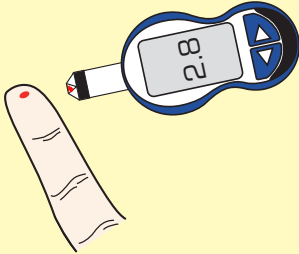


Do you have  
a headache?

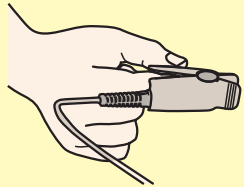


Do you have flashing  
lights or visual  
disturbance?

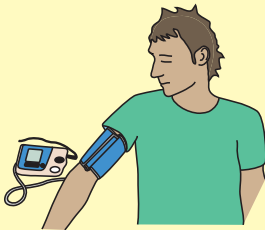
# Tests and treatment



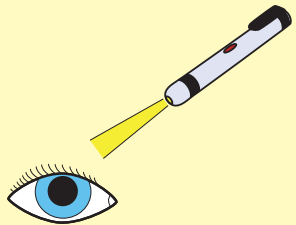
Blood test



Oxygen level



Blood pressure

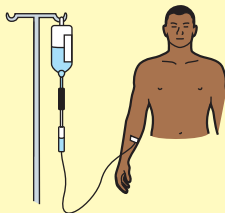


Eye check

# Tests and treatment



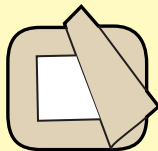
Injection



Drip



Arm splint



Dressing

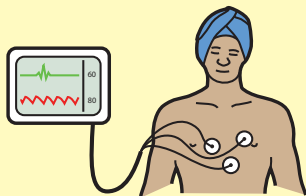


Leg splint

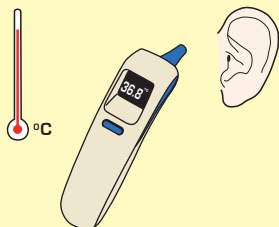


Neck brace

# Tests and treatment



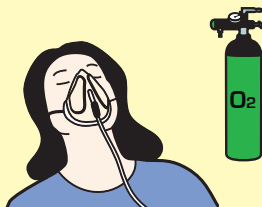
Check your  
heart



Check your  
temperature



You need  
painkillers

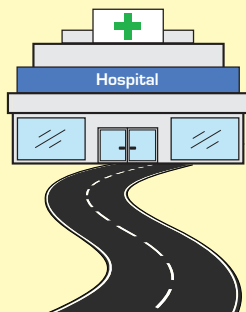


You need  
oxygen

# Going to hospital



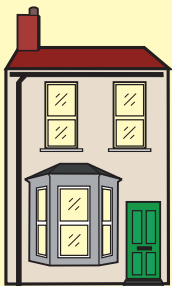
Local hospital



Travelling to a specialist hospital



# Staying at home



**You are staying at home.**

If you are worried or your condition gets worse phone:



your doctor's surgery



an ambulance

# Things to bring



Phone



Keys



Glasses



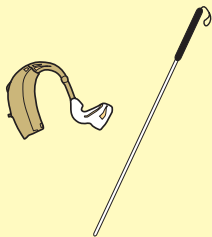
Footwear



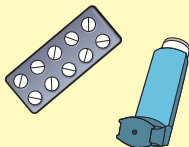
Coat



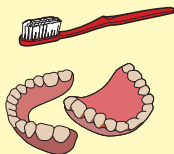
Money



Aids

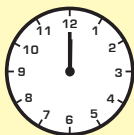


Medication



Teeth / brush

# Times of the day



**12:00**



**1:00**



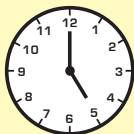
**2:00**



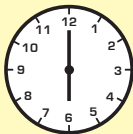
**3:00**



**4:00**



**5:00**



**6:00**



**7:00**



**8:00**



**9:00**



**10:00**



**11:00**



**Morning**



**Afternoon**



**Night**

# Days of the week

**Mon**

**Monday**

**Tue**

**Tuesday**

**Wed**

**Wednesday**

**Thu**

**Thursday**

**Fri**

**Friday**

**Sat**

**Saturday**

**Sun**

**Sunday**

# Alphabet

A B C D E F

G H I J K L

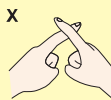
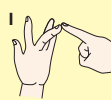
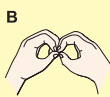
M N O P Q R

S T U V W X

Y Z

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

# British Sign Language Alphabet



# 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](http://www.makaton.org), email: [info@makaton.org](mailto:info@makaton.org) or telephone: 01276 606760.

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



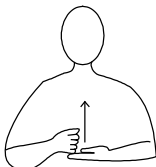
Hello



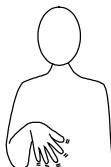
Name



OK



To help



Pain



Calm down

# Flags

**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.



Afghanistan



Bangladesh



Czech Republic



Eritrea



Hungary



India



Iran



Iraq



# 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.

---

### Do Say

- Disabled people
- Physical impairment
- Mr Jones has epilepsy
- Person with a learning difficulty
- Deaf, profoundly deaf, deaf without speech
- Wheelchair user
- Mental health problem

### Don't Say

- The disabled, the deaf, or the blind
- Cripple, handicapped
- Mr Jones is an epileptic
- Mentally handicapped or mentally retarded
- Deaf and dumb
- Wheelchair bound
- Mental condition or mental disorder

# 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.

---

## 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.



# Autistic Spectrum Conditions

**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.



# People with a visual impairment

**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.

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### 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.



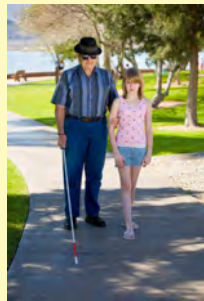
# Guiding people

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

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## 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

## **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](http://www.sense.org.uk)

**SeeAbility - specialists in multiple disabilities**

[www.seeability.org](http://www.seeability.org)

**Mencap Cymru**

[www.mencap.org.uk/wales](http://www.mencap.org.uk/wales)

**The National Autistic Society Cymru**

[www.autism.org.uk/wales](http://www.autism.org.uk/wales)

**Scope Cymru - cerebral palsy information**

[www.scope.org.uk/about-us/scope-wales](http://www.scope.org.uk/about-us/scope-wales)

**Action on Hearing Loss Cymru**

[www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/about-us/wales.aspx](http://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/about-us/wales.aspx)

**RNIB Cymru**

[www.rnib.org.uk/cymru](http://www.rnib.org.uk/cymru)

**The Clear Communication People Ltd**

[www.communicationpeople.co.uk](http://www.communicationpeople.co.uk)

**The Makaton Charity - training, support and advice.** [www.makaton.org](http://www.makaton.org)

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Ymddiriedolaeth GIG  
Gwasanaethau Ambiwylans Cymru  
Welsh Ambulance Services  
NHS Trust



GIG  
CYMRU  
NHS  
WALES

Iechyd Cyhoeddus  
Cymru  
Public Health  
Wales

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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.

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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.

