

Health literacy matters

We need health information for all

People need trustworthy information to make decisions about health but...



- 5 million adults cannot find relevant data in standard health information
- 1.7 million are unable to explain symptoms and feelings over the phone
- 1 million cannot follow a letter from a GP surgery or hospital department
- 6.5 million cannot measure or record height and weight on a chart1
- 9 million people are unable to use digital tools without help²



UK information skills

1 in 6
have very low
literacy skills^{3,4}

Older 'people

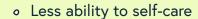
up to 1 million people cannot speak English well or at all

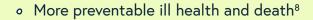
of the population are at or below primary school numeracy level⁶

are likely to have lower health literacy7

What does this mean for health?







- Less trust in healthcare professionals
- General negativity towards health and healthcare⁹

Let's tackle this inequality gap and create health literate information for all



- Involve users in the development
- · Make information easy to access, use and navigate
- Make it easy for users to give feedback
- Promote information so it reaches the people who need it most
- Aim for a reading age of 9-11 for health information^{3,4}

Health literate information is not 'dumbed down', it helps 'level up'.

1. Rowlands G, Protheroe J et al, 2015. BJGP, 65(635): e379-e386. bjgp.org/content/65/635/e379 2. Lloyds Bank, 2020. www.lloydsbank.com 3. Survey of Adult Skills 2015 oecd.org/skills/piaac 4. Skills for Life 2011 assets.publishing.service. gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/36000/12-p168-2011-skills-for-life-survey.pdf 5. www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/uk-population-by-ethnicity/demographics/english-language-skills/latest 6. www.nationalnumeracy.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Our_year_in_numbers/national_numeracy_day_2019.pdf 7. https://jech.bmj.com/content/61/12/1086.short 8. www.nationalvoices.org.uk 9. Gupta C et al, 2014. J HealthCommun, 19(0 2): 44-60. www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov Published by the Patient Information Forum Ltd. June 2023. Review: June 2026.



