



Letters to the Editor:

An open letter from the Patient Information Forum and its Health and Digital Literacy Charter members.

All health organisations should be health and digital literacy friendly

The pandemic has revealed the extent of health inequality and digital poverty. COVID-19 has highlighted how health information often fails to reach those who need it most. These issues must be tackled as we begin to build back healthcare services.

The Patient Information Forum (PIF) and its members call on organisations across the health sector to become health and digital literacy friendly and ensure information and support services are accessible to all.

Health and digital literacy has a huge impact on how people use and understand health information, **6.5 million** people cannot measure or record height and weight on a chart, **1.7 million** people are unable to explain symptoms and feelings over the phone and **9 million** people are unable to use digital tools unaided.

It is up to health organisations to meet this challenge and address the health information needs of the population. This is the key to resolving the health and digital literacy challenge.

More than 70 organisations have signed the Patient Information Forum's Health and Digital Literacy Charter. By signing the charter, they are showing their commitment to:

- Use clear communication (verbal, written, digital)
- Create easy-to-use digital tools/websites, printed information and premises
- Involve users in the development of information as routine and invite feedback
- Train staff in health literacy
- Consider digital exclusion and the equalities impact when introducing new resources.

This open letter calls on leaders across the health sector to join us and ensure their organisations are health and digital literacy friendly. Only by doing this can we provide health information people can use and act upon for all in the community, particularly those most at risk of health inequality.

Yours sincerely

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Letter sent to The Guardian, the HSJ, the BBC and The BMJ.

