

# **Emergency Health and Communication Passports for Disasters and Emergencies**

## **Targeted Materials and Ideas and for Trainers**

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## Introduction: Health and Communication Passports

This module focuses on two kinds of passports that could prove especially helpful to children, adults and the elderly during disasters, emergencies and their aftermaths. Health and Communication Passports are tools for communication and information sharing.

Health and Communication passports also can have significant value in non-emergency situations: visits to a clinic or health practitioner, interactions with police officers, home visits from visiting nurses, interactions with elderly care personnel etc. etc.

Whether when a natural disaster strikes or on a visit to a hospital or doctor's office, communication can prove an important, and sometimes crucial, tool.

By planning ahead, depending on what your needs are, you will be ready! Preparing these two kinds of passports in advance can prevent communication breakdowns when clear and efficient communication can make a difference to safety, health and comfort, under trying circumstances. These passports share some similarities, but also reflect some important differences;

**(1) Health Passports**, which provide information about an individual's medical and health problems, needed medications and medical device support, disabilities, allergies, *etc.* to first responders, EMTs, shelter personnel, emergency rooms, clinics, *etc.*

**(2) Communications Passports**, which facilitate communication with first responders, medical personnel, *etc.* by people with communication disorders, people who don't speak the dominant language, children with disabilities, people with hearing impairments, *etc.*

Preparing these two kinds of passports in advance can prevent a lot of communication breakdowns at times when clear and efficient communication can make a difference to safety, health and comfort, under trying circumstances.

The passport module includes a number of variations of this useful tool, some from the United Kingdom, some from the United States, some for kids, some for grown-ups, some for people with first languages other than English, some specifically for people with disabilities. It is often helpful to get people learning to prepare for emergencies and disasters to begin filling out a section of a passport before taking it home to complete the task.

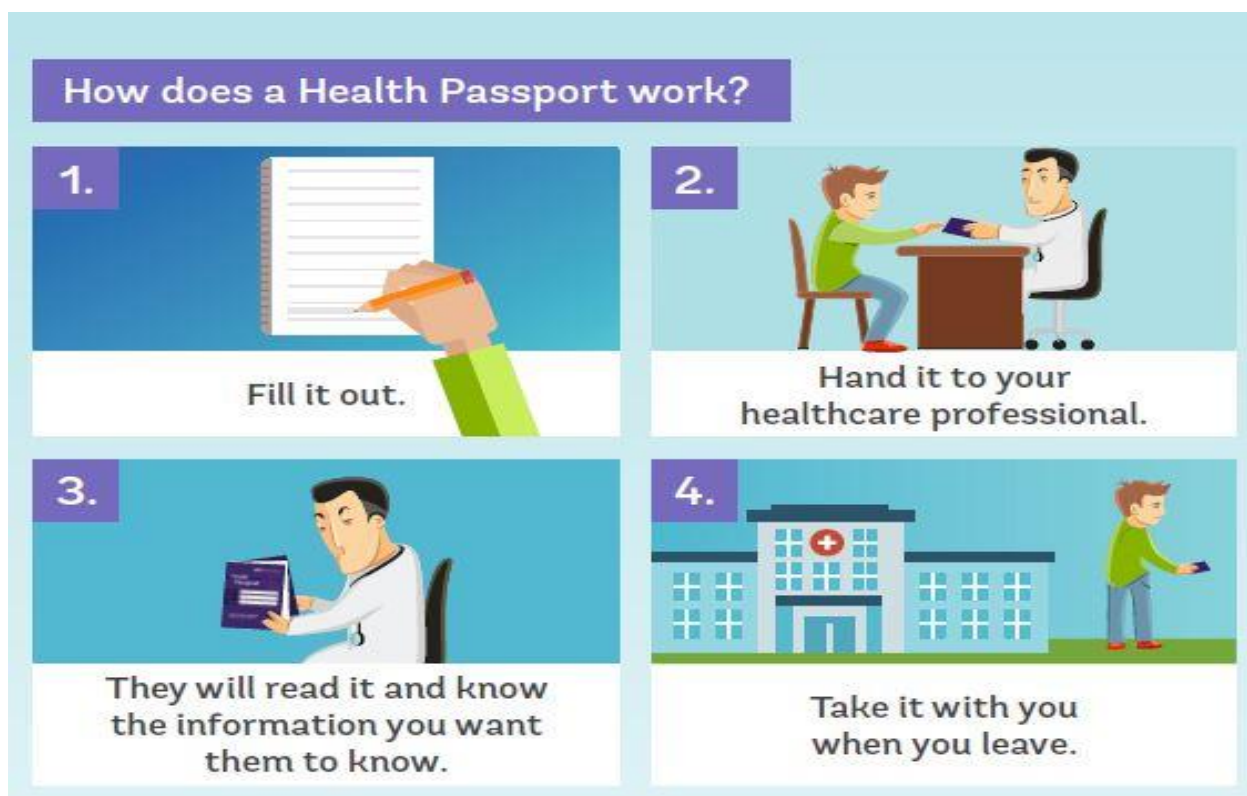
Health and communication passports also can have significant value in non-emergency situations: visits to a clinic or health practitioner, interactions with police officers, home visits from visiting nurses, interactions with elderly care personnel *etc. etc.* [Note: The contents herein are beta (draft) versions and have been developed exclusively for educational purposes.]

## What is a Health Passport?

A Health Passport is a nationwide communication tool that you can carry with you when attending hospitals or other providers of health and disability services. Health Passports, provide information about an individual's medical and health problems, needed medications and medical device support, disabilities, allergies, and more to first responders, EMTs, shelter personnel, emergency rooms, clinics, *etc.* They can be in paper form or your information can be entered into an application on your mobile device.

## Who are Health Passports for?

Anyone can benefit from having a Health Passport. However, they are essential for people with chronic health conditions, children and adults with disabilities, frail elderly, and others with access and functional needs. A Health Passport contains information about an individual's health so that health professionals know what they need to know about each person they treat. For example, it includes information about how someone communicates, what causes anxiety, what pre-existing conditions exist, what medications are taken and so on. Having a Health Passport means you don't have to repeat yourself and ensures that health care professionals have the information they need to treat everyone in a timely manner.



## What is a Communication Passport?

A Communication Passport provides a practical and person-centered approach to passing on key information about you.

## Who are Communication Passports for?

Communications Passports facilitate communication with first responders, medical personnel. They should be carried by people with communication disorders, people who don't speak the dominant language, very young children and people with disabilities, including anyone with a hearing impairment. A communication passport is a way of supporting a person with communication difficulties across transitions, drawing together complex information (including the person's own views, as much as possible) and distilling critical information in a clear, positive and accessible format.

Communication Passports support children, young people and adults who cannot easily speak for themselves. A Communication Passport pulls together complex information and presents it in an easy to use format. A person's Communication Passport should be easy to read, informative, useful and fun. Above all, the Communication Passport should be in an accessible format, enable the individual to share the information contained and reflect their personality and interests.

The communication passport belongs to the person – not to staff or family, though they may help him or her learn to use it appropriately, and keep it updated. Passports are especially important at times of transition, when new people come into the person's life and information needs to be passed on. They are also helpful when new or temporary staff or volunteers meet the person, helping them quickly acquire key information.

One example is introducing a person to a new foster family. The process of creating a passport can help in assessing an individual's needs and identifying gaps in assessment and/or treatment areas.

Background on Communication Passports: <https://www.callscotland.org.uk/blog/personal-communication-passports/>

## **Workshop Opener: Think-Pair Share Expand**

[Think-pair-share-expand is a collaborative learning strategy where learners work together to solve a problem or add to solutions. This strategy requires learners to (1) think individually about a topic the instructor wants to raise; and (2) share ideas with a single colleague, and (3) then with the group.]

**Emergency Health and Communication Passports describe important aspects about a person's special health care and communication needs, all in one place. They are designed to be shared with many types of emergency responders and healthcare providers. They are useful for providing pertinent information to those who are not very familiar with providing care to individuals with special needs and communication difficulties.**

**Preparing medical, health and communication passports before an emergency or disaster situation arises can provide an invaluable resource under a range of likely scenarios. These passports can provide crucial "in the moment" information to first responders, EMT personnel, firefighters, shelter personnel, *et al.* at times when time is of the essence.**

**Some of the many times when such passports can make an important difference include:**

- when injured young people with disabilities are evacuated to a busy emergency room that is responding to a major event,**
- when EMTs arrived at a non-English-speaking home to help an elderly person in distress,**
- when the fragile elderly arrive in an emergency shelter that has no knowledge of their medical or medication needs,**
- when the evacuees from a nursing home arrive at an emergency medical tent where the attending personnel must quickly triage" new arrivals.**

**These are just a few specific instances drawn from previously documented incidents. On the back of this paper, please list some other kinds of incidents in**

which you think health and/or communication passports might make an important difference.

## Helpful Samples/Videos/Resources for ICE Cards, Health and Communication Passports:

<https://widgit-health.com/ICE-communication-cards.htm>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1erY9tb9C7o>

[https://www.health.qld.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0032/858362/3.-Julians-Key-Health-Passport-100gsm-LHC-staple.pdf](https://www.health.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0032/858362/3.-Julians-Key-Health-Passport-100gsm-LHC-staple.pdf)

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/6cs/wp-content/uploads/sites/25/2015/03/healthcare-passport.pdf>

<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/information-for-patients/people-with-learning-disabilities/my-healthcare-passport/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BYDI8aMmDXk>

<https://www.center4healthandsdc.org/health-passport.html>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vr3bw1LAdTE>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=whCNPDr7vlg>

<https://vimeo.com/364781207>

<https://cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/caregiver-advocacy-network/health-passport>

<https://www.patientprovidercommunication.org/gallery/?Category=Emergency%20Communication>

<https://mycommpass.files.wordpress.com/2020/05/laura2020may.pdf>

<http://www.healthcarebusinesstech.com/hospital-patient-passport/>

<https://www.callscotland.org.uk/blog/personal-communication-passports/>

### Health Passport Video

**The Health Passport is a document that will support people with Intellectual Disabilities having equal access to healthcare and will help to let healthcare staff know all about the abilities and needs of people with an Intellectual Disability who come in to contact with a Healthcare Setting. It will help health care staff to provide better care. The Health Passport contains a number of sections that will provide information about the person including personal details, Communication abilities, Medical history etc.** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1erY9tb9C7o>

### Health Passport Samples

My Health Passport describes important aspects about a person's special health care needs, all in one place. It was designed to be shared with many types of healthcare providers, in clinic and hospital settings. It is useful for providing pertinent information to those who are not very familiar in providing care to individuals with developmental and communication difficulties.

The Health Passport is four pages long and includes sections describing communication methods, medical history, current medications, allergies, pain, managing distress, mobility needs, self-care, eating, drinking, favorites food and drinks, sensitivities, leisure activities and more. It is available in both English and Spanish versions. [http://flfcic.fmhi.usf.edu/docs/FCIC\\_Health\\_Passport\\_Form\\_Typeable\\_English.pdf](http://flfcic.fmhi.usf.edu/docs/FCIC_Health_Passport_Form_Typeable_English.pdf)

This four-page healthcare passport includes information and visuals to help Spanish speakers communicate their needs and preferences in an emergency. However, the visual aids are clear enough to also help non-Spanish speakers understand the passport holder's needs. Some of the information present includes: biographical information, language ability, important medical information, daily requirements and preferences. There are also sections for preferred activities and how to make future appointments.

<https://studylib.es/doc/6380504/mi-pasaporte-de-salud---florida-center-for-inclusive-comm...>

## **My Health Passport App**

**My Health Passport is an initiative developed by the Gold Coast Hospital for people with complex communication and or healthcare care needs. The basic layout has been adapted from the paper based "Health Passports" currently in use throughout the United Kingdom and Ireland.**

**My Health Passport is a living document which is maintained by the patient and or their support team. "My Health Passport" is person-focused having the potential to highlight the person's strengths, medical needs, as well as their personal preferences and support needs**

**For patients who have difficulty communicating their needs "My Health Passport" is potentially a useful resource as it has the potential to support the person to have a voice and direct their care during medical interventions and times of stress.**

**For example many people with intellectual or cognitive disabilities are routinely admitted to Accident and Emergency wards often with little or no information regarding communication style, support needs and previous medical history (electronic records are not always available or comprehensive). This is potentially where "My Health Passport" has the ability to best support the person and their medical team in accessing up to date information quickly.**

**My Health Passport has a clear and simple layout which uses a traffic light coded system. The Home page ( Blue ) identifies the person and their immediate emergency details. The Red section covers Information that you must know during emergency situations as well as information around individualized calming techniques and potential triggers. The Amber section addresses areas important to the person with regards to personal care and safety. The Green section for many people is the most important as it covers communication style, likes and dislikes.**

**Finally "My Health Passport" offers a holistic picture of the person in front of you and not just a list of medical needs and or diagnosis.**

## **Handout: Benefits and Features**

**There are many benefits to using Health Passports. Some of these are:**

- **Improves care coordination by connecting authorized providers, state agencies, and medical consenters with health information from various facilities and clinicians.**
- **Allows providers and other appropriate persons to monitor compliance with prescription regimens.**
- **Reduces risk of harmful interactions between medication, allergies, and/or chronic health problems.**
- **Increases communication between the main stakeholders in the member's care plans.**
- **Allows non-clinical member advocates (selected state employees and medical consenters) to review portions of a child's general health history and doctor visits to best understand and respond to the child's needs — physical, behavioral health, and medication needs.**

**Once you have accessed Health Passport, you will be able to see the following information:**

- **Medications - Health Passport presents a summary of medications. You can access more detail, including the name of the prescription, the prescribing clinician, date filled, dosage, quantity, dosage instructions and formulary information. This medication information can reduce incidents of drug-drug, drug-allergy and drug-food interactions.**
- **Visit History - With Health Passport, you can view information regarding visits for which claims have been submitted, including the description of the service provided, the provider's name, diagnosis and the service date.**
- **Growth Chart - You can review growth chart measurements entered by a provider. This includes weight, height or length, head circumference and BMI.**
- **Lab Results - Providers typically only have lab results for tests that they ordered so medical consenters and caseworkers may never see them. By using Health Passport you have access to all collected lab results.**
- **Immunizations - This section displays a list of a STAR Health member's immunizations collected from ImmTrac, the state immunization registry.**
- **Allergies - You can review existing allergies that have been noted in the Health Passport by providers. You will also be able to see if there are any allergy and medication interactions.**
- **Texas Health Steps (Texas Health Steps/EPST) - You will be able to see electronic documentation of well-child screenings and forms. Some providers may also choose to add additional information outside of these standard childhood screening forms into the system. In those cases, you may be able to view more detailed medical and behavioral health information that is relevant to the child's care.**



## My Health Passport

**My Health Passport describes important aspects about a person's special health care needs, all in one place. It was designed to be shared with many types of healthcare providers, in clinic and hospital settings. It is useful for providing pertinent information to those who are not very familiar in providing care to individuals with developmental and communication difficulties.**

**The Health Passport is four pages long and includes sections describing communication methods, medical history, current medications, allergies, pain, managing distress, mobility needs, self-care, eating, drinking, favorites food and drinks, sensitivities, leisure activities and more. It is available in both English and Spanish versions.**

**The PDF form is customizable so you can download it to your computer, fill it in, print it and save it to be updated as necessary.**

**Download your free personal copy at [My Health Passport](#)**

### **Mi Pasaporte de Salud:**

**<https://studylib.es/doc/6380504/mi-pasaporte-de-salud---florida-center-for-inclusive-comm...>**

**This four-page healthcare passport includes information and visuals to help Spanish speakers communicate their needs and preferences in an emergency. However, the visual aids are clear enough to also help non-Spanish speakers understand the passport holder's needs. Some of the information present includes: biographical information, language ability, important medical information, daily requirements and preferences. There are also sections for preferred activities and how to make future appointments.**

## **Workshop Trainee Behavioral Outcomes**

**What concrete behavioral outcomes might be expected from training activities focusing on passports? A number of opportunities to support and document behavioral changes by trainees can be incorporated within a module about passports, beginning with having trainees fill out segments of a passport in class. Other opportunities might include filling out a medication list that goes into an emergency kit, personalizing blank spaces on a communication board, or filling out a foldable "In Case of Emergency" card.**

## Communication Passport Samples and Guides

<https://communicationmatters.org.uk/types-of-aac/communication-passports/#:~:text=A%20communication%20passport%20is%20a,clear%2C%20positive%20and%20accessible%20format.>

<https://www.communicationpassports.org.uk/Home/>

[https://www.widgit.com/resources/health/a\\_and\\_e/](https://www.widgit.com/resources/health/a_and_e/)

<https://www.findresources.co.uk/communication-passports>

<https://healthwatchbury.co.uk/accessible-information-standard-communication-and-information-needs-passport/>

[https://littlepuddins.ie/autism-communication-passport/?utm\\_source=rss&utm\\_medium=rss&utm\\_campaign=autism-communication-passport&utm\\_source=rss&utm\\_medium=rss&utm\\_campaign=autism-communication-passport](https://littlepuddins.ie/autism-communication-passport/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=autism-communication-passport&utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=autism-communication-passport)

[https://widgit-health.com/download-files/aande/2013/A-E\\_Communication\\_Passport\\_2013.pdf](https://widgit-health.com/download-files/aande/2013/A-E_Communication_Passport_2013.pdf)

### **Paper or Apps for your Health/Communication Passports?**

**Paper-based Communication Passports are used in many countries, but people are also starting to make digital passports due to the advantages of additional media such as video and speech/audio output, ease of updating and sharing.**

**It is up to you whether you choose to have your Health/Communication Passports in paper or digital form. Here are a few sites who give you the option of providing your information digitally. One is in the US and the other is in the UK, but it shows you what others are doing.**

<https://carepassport.com/>

<http://pamis.org.uk/services/digital-passports/>

### **Sample Workshop Sub-Topics**

**What do I have to include about my current medications?**

**How can I get a Spanish version?**

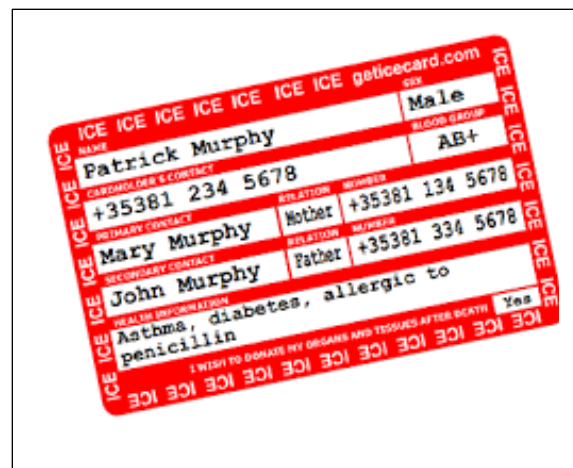
**How can I use my Spanish passport to communicate with an English speaker?**

**What can I use to describe my communication methods?**

**How can I communicate my food and drink preferences in an emergency shelter?**

## Attachment A What is an ICE (In Case of Emergency) Communication Card?

ICE Cards contain the contact details of the people you need to be contacted in an emergency. They contain important information about health and medical requirements. Medical professionals are trained to look for an ICE card for information they need. An ICE Card is something everyone can and should carry with them everywhere they go. You can find different kinds of ICE Cards on the Internet.

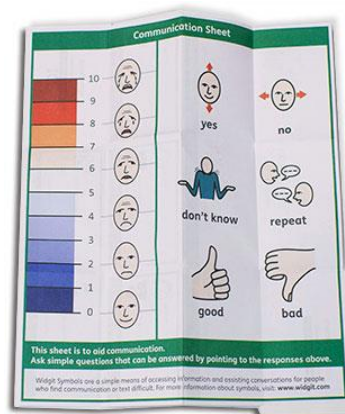


<https://widgit-health.com/ICE-communication-cards.htm>

### Who are ICE Cards for?

It is recommended that everyone carries an ICE card: they save time and save lives in medical emergencies.

A symbol communication sheet gives a quick visual tool that can be used by anyone to clarify understanding. If a person cannot hear or speak as a result of an accident then symbols are a very effective tool to aid communication.



For people travelling in a foreign country, symbols can aid communication with people who speak another

language.

Symbols are a common information tool used by people with a learning impairment or a communication challenge, for example Autism, Down's Syndrome or Dyslexia

People who are frail, have chronic medical conditions or have difficulty understanding or remembering are particularly vulnerable as they may depend more on medication and suffer injuries more easily.

People with dementia may find it easier to use symbols when communicating in an emergency situation.

People suffering a stroke may slur their speech and find it difficult to find words or understand speech.

**Everyone should carry an ICE Card.**

**In an emergency or a disaster, it might save your life.**

## **Attachment B: Personal Communication Passports**

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Back around 1990, my colleague, Sally Millar (now enjoying her retirement), was working with an adult with communication difficulties. (We'll call her Mandy.) Everything seemed to be in place for Mandy to spend a weekend's respite with a family – her communication book had been updated with appropriate vocabulary for the visit. The following week, Sally contacted the family to find out how things had gone.

"It was a disaster – we just couldn't communicate with her."

"Did Mandy not use her communication book? It's in the bag on the back of her wheelchair, but you have to get it out for her."

"Oh, we didn't want to pry into her personal things."

Sally realised there was a need for a simple, accessible way to store and recall important information for people with communication difficulties who couldn't speak for themselves and began to work on the problem, eventually leading to the creation of the "Personal Communication Passport" (sometimes abbreviated to Communication Passport). Sally presented her findings at various conferences in the 1990s and 2000s and CALL Scotland is still recognised as the place to go to for information and advice on Communication Passports. The book, **Personal Communication Passports: Guidelines for Good Practice**, was published in 2003 and is still available from CALL. Further information is available on the Communication Passports **web site**.

**What is a Communication Passport?** Personal Communication Passports are a practical and person-centred way of supporting children, young

people and adults who cannot easily speak for themselves. A Communication Passport pulls together complex information about the individual and presents it in an easy to use format. It should be easy to read, informative, useful and fun. Above all, the Communication Passport should be in an accessible format, so that the individual can share some or all of the information contained and should try to reflect their personality and interests.

Templates and ideas for creating Communication Passports are available from CALL Scotland's **Personal Communication Passports** web site, and from:

- **Brighton & Hove Learning Disability Partnership Board** (under Total Communication, Useful Documents);
- **Scope** (under Support and information, Communication difficulties, Communication resources);
- **My Communication Passport** (two example communication passports and a downloadable template);
- **Guidelines for making Communication Passports** Speech and Language Therapy Department. Dudley Learning Disability Health Service;
- **Oxfordshire Total Communication** (scroll down to Communication Passports for lots of useful resources);
- **Complex Needs** (series of slides on Communication Passports, with links to additional resources as part of a wider module on Communication);
- **Widgit** (free downloadable Communication Passport for use in Accident and Emergency in a hospital.)
- **The Benefits of Communication Passports** (parent describes benefits of Communication Passports – see also **My Communication Passport**);
- **WA's Individualised Services** (video produced in Western Australia to provide information about Communication Passports).

## Digital Passports

- Paper-based Communication Passports are used in many countries, but people are also starting to make digital passports due to the advantages of additional media such as video and speech/audio output, ease of updating and sharing. **Pamis** in Scotland, for example, have started to make **Digital Passports** for their clients in the form of an e-book that people can flick through on a smartphone or tablet. Practical uses of the Digital Passport from Pamis include establishing a communication pathway – for example, between school and home or empowering families with a tool they can use for training carers supporting people to understand the needs of the individual – for example, facilitating care assessments. Attachment B: Sample passports:



Halton Clinical Commissioning Group



St Helens Clinical Commissioning Group

# Health Passport



Nursing and medical staff please look at my health passport before you help me.

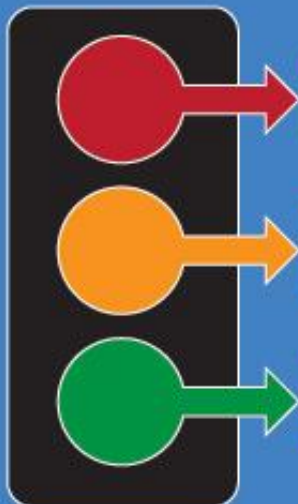
**My name is:**

Enter Data Here ...

**I like to be known as:**

Enter Data Here ...

Stick your photo here!



Things you must know about me.

These things are important to me.

My likes and dislikes.





# Things you must know about me...



**My name:**

Enter Data Here ...

**I like to be known as:**

Enter Data Here ...



**My date of birth:**

DD/MM/YY



**My address:**

Enter Data Here ...

**Postcode:**

PCODE



**My contact number:**

Enter Data Here ...



**How I communicate / what language I speak:**

Enter Data Here ...



**My next of Kin:**

Enter Data Here ...

**Relationship (e.g. Mum, Dad, Friend):**

Enter Data Here ...

**Their address:**

Enter Data Here ...

**Contact Number:**

Enter Data Here ...



**My Support needs and who gives me the most support:**

Enter Data Here ...



**Who I live with:**

Enter Data Here ...



**My religion:**

Enter Data Here ...

**My ethnicity:**

Enter Data Here ...

**My religious needs:**

Enter Data Here ...



**My GPs name:**

Enter Data Here ...

**Their address:**

Enter Data Here ...

**Contact Number:**

Enter Data Here ...



**Other services / professionals involved with me:**

Enter Data Here ...



**Allergies:**

Enter Data Here ...



**Medical interventions:**

Enter Data Here ...



**How to take my blood or give me injections:**

Enter Data Here ...



**My heart problems:**

Enter Data Here ...



**My breathing problems:**

Enter Data Here ...





**My risk of choking, or my eating, drinking and swallowing problems:**

Enter Data Here ...



**My current medication:**

Enter Data Here ...



**My Medical history and treatment plan:**

Enter Data Here ...



**What to do if I'm anxious:**

Enter Data Here ...



# These things are important to me...



**How to communicate with me:**

Enter Data Here ...



**How I take medication (crushed tablets, injections, syrup):**

Enter Data Here ...



**How you know I am in pain:**

Enter Data Here ...



**Moving around (posture in bed, walking aids):**

Enter Data Here ...



**Personal Care: (dressing and washing etc.):**

Enter Data Here ...



**Problems with my sight:**

Enter Data Here ...



**Problems with my hearing:**

Enter Data Here ...



**How I eat food (cut up, risk of choking, help with eating):**

Enter Data Here ...



**How I drink (small amounts, thickened fluids):**

Enter Data Here ...



**How I keep safe (bed rails, support with challenging behaviour):**

Enter Data Here ...



**How I use the toilet (continence aids, help to get to the toilet):**

Enter Data Here ...



**Sleeping (sleep pattern / routine):**

Enter Data Here ...



# My likes and dislikes...

**Likes:** For example - what makes me happy, things that I like to do?

**Dislikes:** For example - don't shout, food I don't like, physical touch.

Things I like:

Enter Data Here ...

Things I don't like:

Enter Data Here ...

# Notes

**Extra notes can be made here:**

Enter Data Here ...

**Completed by:**  
Enter Data Here

**Date:**  
DD/MM/YYYY

Based on original work by Gloucestershire NHS Foundation Trust and Sarah Stancer A&E Sister (2009) Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust.

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