

20 December 2009

The Information Standard receives its first certified members

The Information Standard gives the public a new way to find health and social care information they can trust

36 organisations that produce health and social care information for the public have become the first certified members of The Information Standard. They are now entitled to use the newly launched quality mark on their information materials.

The quality mark is awarded to organisations who meet the rigorous criteria of The Information Standard. By achieving certification, these 36 organisations have demonstrated that they have the necessary processes to ensure their information is accessible, accurate, appropriately researched, authoritative, clear, complete, readable, relevant, secure, up-to-date and well-designed.

Certified members of The Information Standard can use the quality mark on their information materials as a mark of quality and reassurance for the public.

The organisations that have been certified so far are:

Arthritis Care
Asthma UK
Blood Pressure Association
BMJ Group
Brain & Spine Foundation
Breast Cancer Care
British Dietetic Association
BUPA
Cancer Research UK
CancerHelp UK
Datapharm
Diabetes UK
DIPEX
Epilepsy Action
Macmillan Cancer Support
Multiple Sclerosis Society
National Association for Colitis and Crohn's Disease
National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence
NHS Doncaster
Oxfordshire County Council
Patient UK

Pennine Acute NHS Trust
Poole Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
Rethink
Royal Free Hampstead NHS Trust
Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust
Sue Ryder Care
Terrence Higgins Trust
The Carers Resource
The Disabled Living Foundation
The Prostate Cancer Charity
The Royal College of Psychiatrists
The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust
The Royal National Institute for the Blind
The Stroke Association
Thyroid UK

The majority of the of the general public (71%) feel overwhelmed by the health information available to them¹. The Information Standard scheme and subsequent quality mark were devised as a way to drive up standards among information producers, and help the public to recognise and choose reliable sources for their health and social care information.

Angela Coulter PhD, Hon FFPH, Hon FRCGP an independent healthcare analyst who advises on the scheme commented: “These organisations that are now able to display The Information Standard quality mark will immediately be able to differentiate themselves from competitors, as producing high quality information that people can rely upon. These organisations are the first to gain certification and their achievement is an important milestone for the scheme.”

There are more than 50,000 organisations producing health and social care information in England. Any of these can apply to join the scheme and become certified, whether they are a public sector organisation (NHS or local authority), a voluntary sector organisation or a commercial company.

Organisations who are interested in finding out more or signing up to The Information Standard should visit: www.theinformationstandard.org

Ends

¹ Omnibus survey of 1,000 adults commissioned by DH and carried out by TNS in March 2007

Media enquiries

Eleanor Pinkerton/Natasha Rydlewski

Tel: 0207 654 2386/0207 654 2137 or 0207 654 2399 (out of hours)

Notes to Editors**The Information Standard**

The Information Standard is a new certification scheme for the production of health and social care information. Any organisation producing health and/or social care information for the public in England can apply for certification. It is an independently governed, non-statutory scheme supported by the Department of Health. Certified organisations have demonstrated that they have the necessary methods and systems to ensure that the information they produce is accessible, accurate, appropriately researched, authoritative, clear, complete, readable, relevant, secure, up-to-date and well-designed.

- The Information Standard is similar to other schemes such as Fairtrade and will assess the organisation's processes rather than individual pieces of information. However, as an added check a random sample of information materials is also assessed to ensure the end product is consistent with high quality processes.
- The scheme operator authorises a number of certification bodies to carry out the assessment and certification of information producers against The Information Standard. These certification bodies will be specialists in carrying out such evaluations against standards. As part of this authorisation, certification bodies will need to achieve and maintain accreditation through the United Kingdom Accreditation Service