

# Health literacy: life support from library and knowledge specialists

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Developing people  
for health and  
healthcare

[www.hee.nhs.uk](http://www.hee.nhs.uk)

Jan 2019



Level B



Cardiac Department  
 Cedar Ward  
 Colorectal  
 Florence Nightingale Ward  
 James McKenzie Ward  
 Lister Ward (Stroke Rehabilitation Unit)  
 Marjory Warren Ward  
 MEMS  
 Neurology  
 Oxygen Clinic  
 Pain Management  
 Pasteur Ward (Hyper-Acute Stroke Unit)  
 Radiology Reporting Hub  
 SRU  
 Surgical Ambulatory Care Unit (SACU)

C46

Level C

You are on this level



Departments on this level

Accident & Emergency (A&E)

AMU (East)  
 AMU (West)  
 Breast Care Unit  
 Cash Point  
 Cellular Pathology  
 Diabetic Retinal Screening (OPD)  
 Edith Cavell Ward  
 Endoscopy  
 ENT Emergencies (OPD)  
 Fracture Clinic  
 Frailty Assessment Unit  
 Foot Clinic  
 General Ultrasound  
 Gymnasium  
 Gynaecology Outpatients  
 Hearing Centre  
 Imaging Department  
 Lionel Cosin Ward  
 Macmillan Nurses & Counselling Team  
 Maxillofacial Clinic

Medical Ambulatory Care Unit  
 Multi-Faith Prayer Room  
 Nuclear Medicine, MRI & CT Reception  
 Occupational Therapy  
 Orsett Ward  
 Osler Ward  
 Outpatients  
 PALS  
 Pathology (Blood Tests)  
 Pharmacy Inpatients  
 Pharmacy Outpatients  
 Physiotherapy  
 Pre-Operative Assessment  
 Renal Unit Entrance  
 Restaurant and Coffee Lounge  
 Shop  
 Toilets  
 X-ray

Way Out (on this level)

Level D

Elizabeth Fry Ward  
 William Harvey Ward

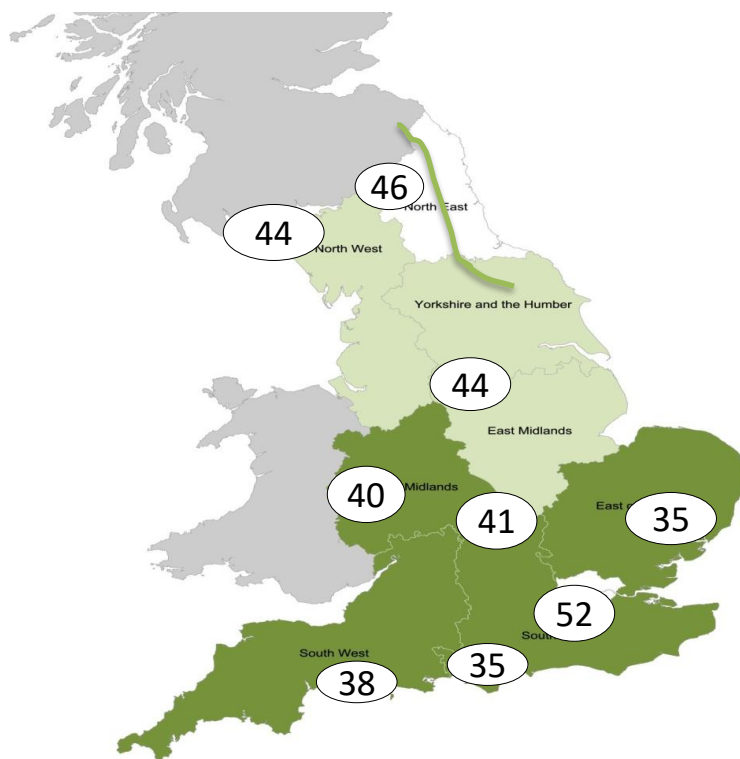
# Health literacy

Both system and  
personal roles to:

- Access
- Understand
- Appraise
- Use

“The personal characteristics and social resources needed for individuals and communities to **access, understand, appraise and use information and services to make decisions** about health” WHO 2015

## Scale: literacy element (16-65 years)

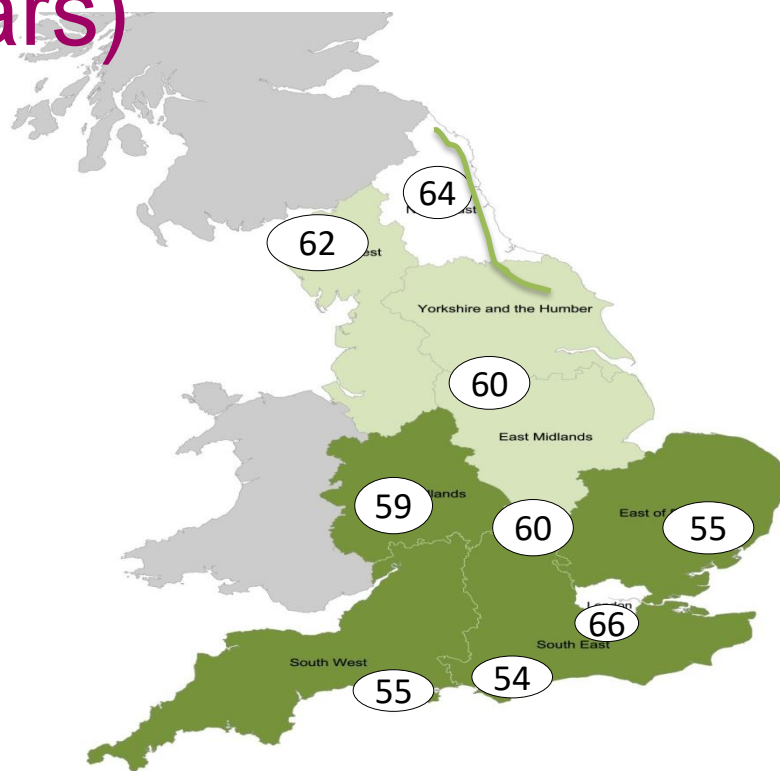


Text (literacy)  
component of  
health materials

**National average**  
**43% not understanding**

Slide taken from Presentation to the Health Literacy Group UK Seminar 'Improving health information to promote health literacy'  
Gill Rowlands, Professor, University of Newcastle and Aarhus University, March 2015

# Scale: literacy and numeracy (16-65 years)



Text (literacy)  
AND  
numeracy  
component of  
health materials

**National average  
61% not understanding**

Slide taken from Presentation to the Health Literacy Group UK Seminar 'Improving health information to promote health literacy' - Gill Rowlands, Professor, University of Newcastle and Aarhus University, March 2015

# Continuum of experience

- **Functional** – read appointment letters, understand time, follow simple medicines guidance
- **Interactive** - ability to balance content from different sources and to make decisions
- **Critical** – ability to read critically and to challenge sources



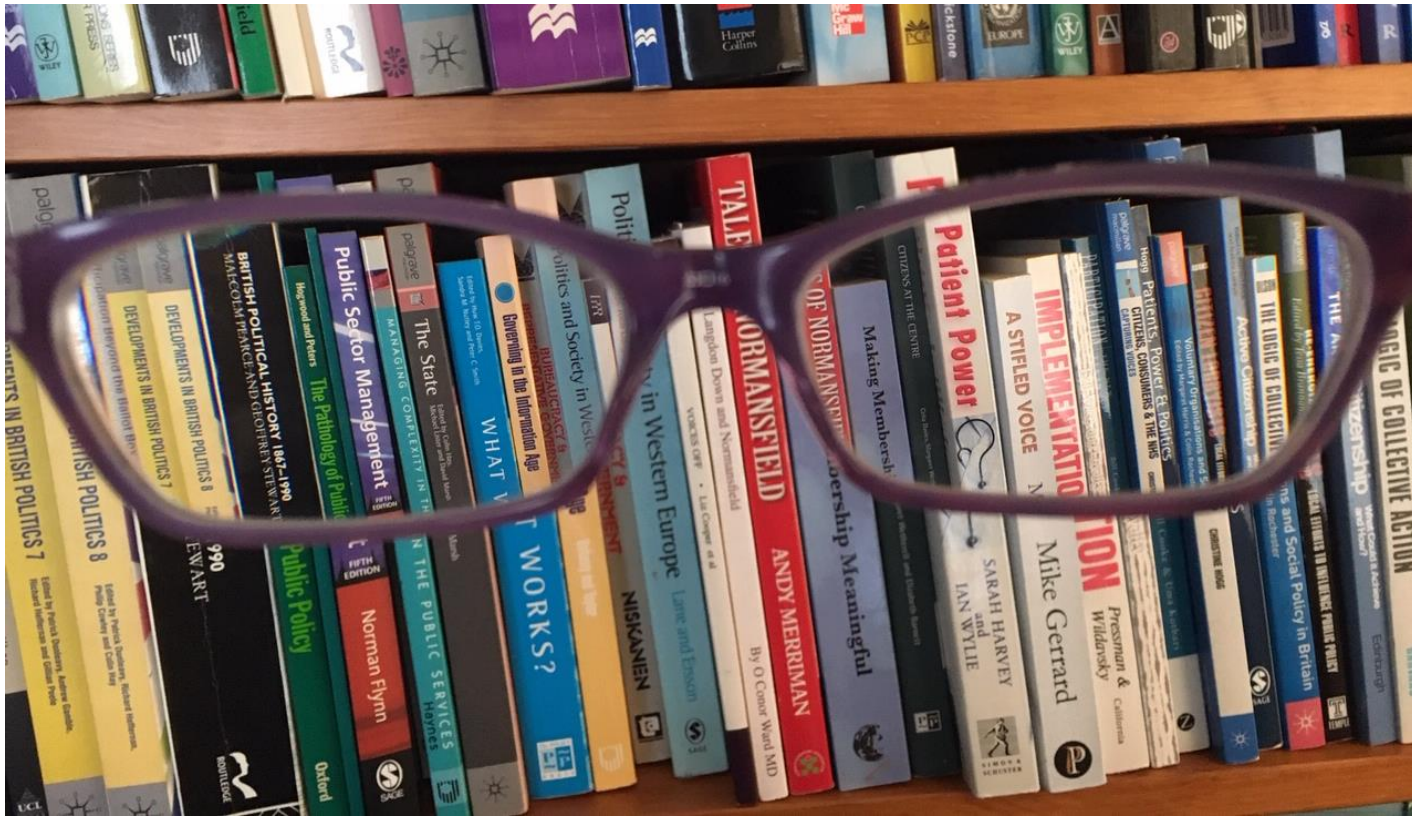
## Levels change

“I’m a professor, yet the first thing I did was I put ‘breast cancer’ into Google... because you’re frightened.”

Trisha Greenhalgh



# Personal experience



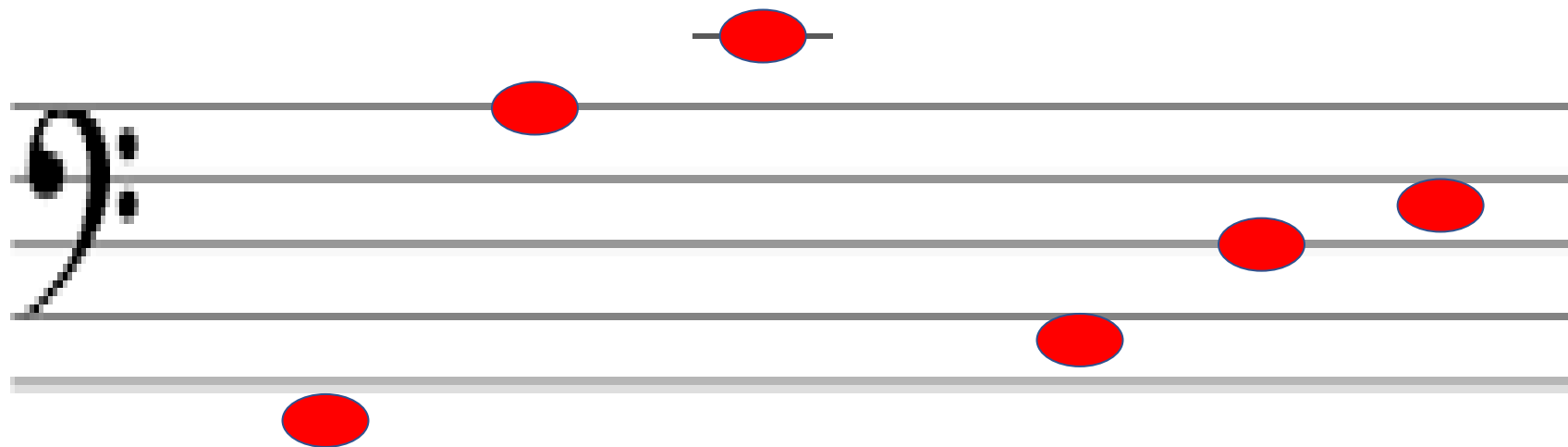


Low health literacy

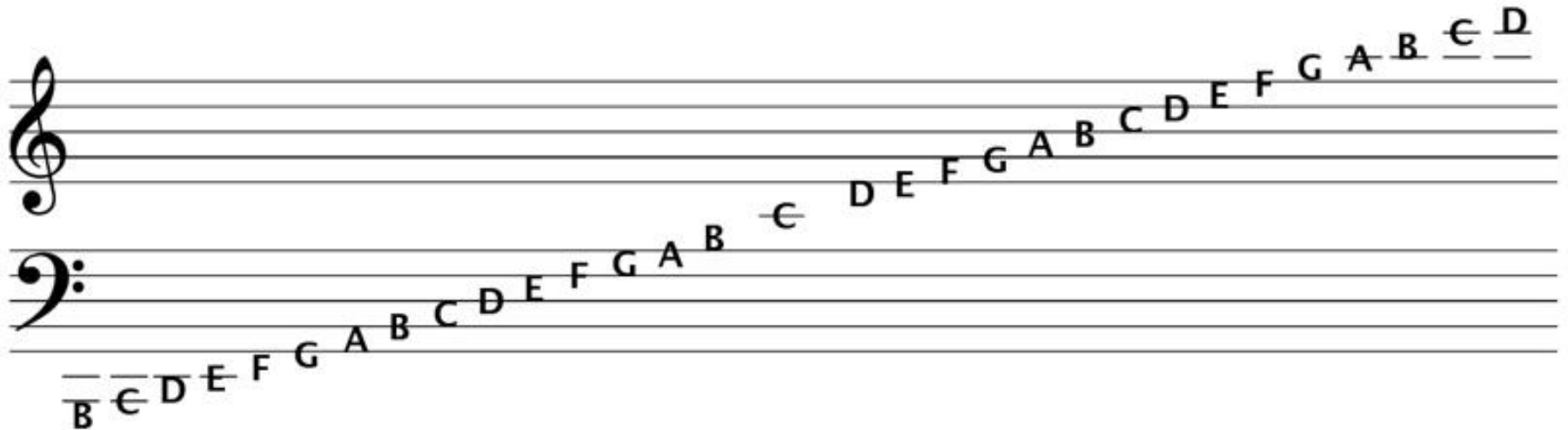
# What does it feel like?



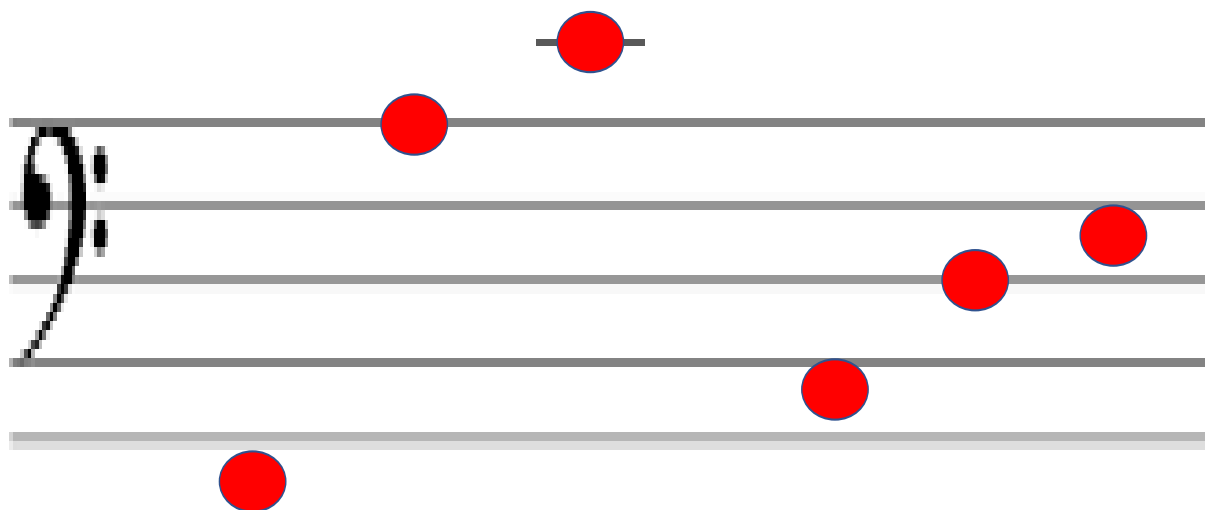
## What does this mean?



# Code



It was just...



**F A C A D E**



## How did it make you feel?



# Implications

- Misunderstanding
- Poor decisions
- Exacerbated inequalities
- Inappropriate use of medication
- Ineffective access to health services
- Poor health outcomes



Addressing health literacy

# How can we help?



# “How to” guide

Definitions

General communication

Verbal communication

Written communication:

- Style
- Design
- Print
- Pictures, photographs and symbols





## Potential LKS roles

- Raising awareness of:
  - Issue;
  - Techniques;
  - Resources.
- Identifying sources for patient information materials
- Contributing to evidence-based patient information that is widely accessible




# Health literacy friendly services 1/2

Element	Evidence
<b>Written communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidance to staff on language used</li> <li>• User testing</li> <li>• Policy</li> </ul>
<b>Spoken communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidance to staff</li> <li>• Staff use of tools, such as teach back, to check communication</li> <li>• Help offered as a matter of routine</li> </ul>
<b>Stock</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patient information materials either held in a range of formats or guidance on accessing range of formats</li> </ul>

## Health literacy friendly services 2/2

Element	Evidence
<b>Signage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Regular review of external signage to ensure service can be located</li><li>• Testing with library users of signage within service</li></ul>
<b>Training</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Training on health literacy awareness</li><li>• Training appropriate to roles on health literacy skills</li></ul>
<b>Policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Policies for the services reflect the health literacy needs of staff and service users</li><li>• [Health literacy policy for the service]</li></ul>



# Knowledge for Healthcare



- First 5 years of 15 year framework
- Consulting on next 5 years
- Patient information and health literacy part of the developments



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