



# How to make information accessible

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# Benefits of information accessibility



- ▶ Promote a culture of equal opportunity
- ▶ Reduce the risk of discrimination and lawsuits
- ▶ Good business sense as it provides access to information for those that are dyslexic, partially sighted and/or blind
- ▶ More customers and thus cash

# Document formatting for clarity

- ▶ Font style
  - ▶ Select a sans serif font such as Arial, Calibri or Verdana
  - ▶ Use a minimum size of 12 or 14 point
  - ▶ In general, avoid uppercase words, as they are harder to read. A word or two in capitals is acceptable, but avoid the use of uppercase for continuous text

# Document formatting for presentation

- ▶ Limit lines to between 60-70 letters per line
- ▶ Use line spacing between paragraphs to break up text and make reading documents easier
- ▶ Use wide margins
- ▶ Use boxes for emphasis or to highlight important text
- ▶ Avoid dense blocks of text by using short paragraphs. Limit paragraphs to between 4-6 lines long
- ▶ Use bold to highlight. Underlining or italic typefaces can make words run together
- ▶ Keep lines left justified with a ragged right edge
- ▶ Use bullets or numbers rather than continuous prose
- ▶ Use 1.5 or double line spacing

# Write for clarity

- ▶ Write in short simple sentences. Keep sentence length down to 15 to 20 words
- ▶ Don't start new sentences at the end of a line
- ▶ Call the reader "you". Try to imagine that you are talking to somebody sitting across a desk from you
- ▶ Give instructions clearly – avoid long wordy explanations
- ▶ Use active verbs as much as possible. Say "we will do it" rather than "it will be done by us"
- ▶ Be concise

# Write for readability

- ▶ Use flow charts to explain procedures
- ▶ Use graphics to help locate information
- ▶ Lists of “do’s” and “don’ts” are useful to highlight good practice
- ▶ Provide a glossary of abbreviations and jargon
- ▶ Put headings and page numbers in the same place
- ▶ A contents list is always useful together with page numbers
- ▶ When Microsoft Word finishes checking spelling and grammar, it can display information about the reading level of the document. For most standard documents, aim for a score of 70 to 80.
- ▶ To turn on the readability feature in Microsoft Word, press F1 to access help and search for readability

# Design for access

- ▶ Where possible, use coloured paper such as cream instead of white
- ▶ Avoid glossy paper as the glare makes it difficult to read
- ▶ Keep the design of leaflets simple
- ▶ On leaflets or posters about events, keep essential information about time and place grouped together
- ▶ On posters and boards, print lowercase instead of using joined writing
- ▶ When designing forms, allow extra space for partially sighted people and people that have problems with their hands to write bigger

# Design websites for access



- ▶ Website navigation should be easy
- ▶ Use pictures to break up text, but do bear in mind that large graphics make pages harder to read
- ▶ Offer alternate download pages in a text-reader friendly style
- ▶ Where possible, design web pages that can be downloaded and read offline for people accessing your site via mobiles on pay as your go tariffs
- ▶ Don't make text move – it creates problems for people with visual problems
- ▶ Offer a choice of background colours
- ▶ Encourage the use of website links at the end of sentences
- ▶ Avoid green and red/pink as these colours are difficult for those with colour blindness
- ▶ Make sure that it is possible for users to set their own choice of font style and size, and background and print colours