



HABINTEG
Disability Equality Centre

Making literature and forms accessible.

This fact sheet has been produced to offer practical information on how you can make your information accessible to disabled customers and employees.

Introduction

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) aims to prevent discrimination against all disabled people. As an employer, we are required to make reasonable adjustments for disabled employees. One such adjustment is making information available in appropriate alternative formats, to suit an individual's needs.

As a service provider we are legally obliged to ensure that all our external consumer and youth communications comply with the DDA. The Act does not currently apply to our business customers, although emerging legislation may change this and making provision for business customers will be seen as good practice.

Every time you produce or update a piece of literature or a form, you will need to consider provision of this information for visually impaired customers who find accessing printed information difficult or impossible.

There are two million visually impaired people in the UK. Research conducted by the RNIB (Royal National Institute of the Blind) shows that sixty percent of all blind and partially sighted people regard themselves as print readers, if print is of sufficient size and clarity. Thirty six percent of blind people and seventy five percent of partially sighted people are able to read clear, large print 'comfortably'.



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Clear print

Clear print is an approach to producing literature focusing on textual and basic design elements, which make reading and understanding of the information easier for all customers. This approach helps to reach a wider audience by using typography which partially sighted customers are able to read. Using a clear print approach allows for design and visual elements to be applied in helping to improve clarity and navigation of information. This approach to inclusive design still allows for creativity.

The following points will assist in producing clear print:

- a minimum twelve point type size although fourteen point is preferred
- avoid light fonts; use medium or bold
- use bold rather than upper case for emphasis
- avoid use of all upper case in both text and headings
- avoid underlining
- avoid use of italics or any mix of fonts
- a sans serif typeface is preferred
- word spacing should be even and left justified
- avoid hyphenation
- words should not be divided or split across a line break
- the space between lines should be generous
- an ideal average line length should be between sixty and seventy characters per line
- aim for a good colour contrast, preferably light against dark
- if using white type, make sure the background colour is dark enough to provide sufficient contrast
- avoid printing text over design
- keep layouts clear and clean
- keep text and design separate
- group information logically



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- guide the user with a contents page and index
- do not range text around images
- text should be set horizontally
- allow a good margin around columns and use a vertical rule if space is tight
- page numbers and headings should be consistent
- use matt rather than glossy paper
- provide sufficient space for completion of boxes on forms, including 'tick' boxes
- make sure that numerals are clear

Plain English

It is good practice to apply Plain English methodology to any piece of literature in order to ensure your information is easier to understand. This will also help to identify and remove any unnecessary detail.

Welsh

As with standard English literature the requirements of the Welsh Language Act (WLA) mean that alternative formats must also be made available in Welsh. The process is explained in the section entitled 'Alternative formats'.

Producing forms

In producing and updating forms it is important to consider content and basic design elements, which make reading, understanding and completion of the form easier for our customers. Using a clear print approach when producing forms will help improve clarity and navigation for all customers. Using Plain English will also make



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reading and understanding of the information easier. This approach to inclusive design still allows for creativity and will help you reach a wider audience.

When reviewing the design and content of a form it may be possible to redesign certain forms in a combined clear print and large print format. The benefit of this approach means you will not have to produce two versions (standard print and large print) and allows the form to be used by a much wider audience. If it is not possible to produce your form in large print you will need to consider making provision of the form in large print as an alternative format. Customers must be made aware of the availability of the alternative format on the standard form.

When deciding whether to produce a form in clear print and/or large print you should consider: what parts will the customer be required to complete; and what information are you supplying the customer?

You will have to consider how the form will be used to find the best solution. It may not be necessary to enlarge information on the form, which is needed for purely operational requirements.

Alternative formats

Information can be produced in a range of alternative formats including: large print (minimum of sixteen point), audio tape, audio CD, Braille or Word document on a three and a half inch computer disk. It is advisable to make all of these formats available to ensure information is as accessible as possible – one format will not suit everyone.

To ensure customers are made aware of the availability of alternative formats a statement must be included, preferably on the



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inside front cover, otherwise in a prominent position, of all customer facing publications. It is good practice to ensure this statement is made easily accessible to the widest audience possible and for this reason we advise that sixteen point, sans serif font (such as Arial or Helvetica Neue) bold type is used.

Contact telephone and textphone numbers and mention of Typetalk are helpful to disabled customers and offer them an alternative way in which to contact us and receive information. Whenever a contact telephone number is quoted, you should also include the corresponding textphone number or encourage use of the Typetalk service. If it is not possible to do this throughout the piece of literature, ensure that it is done in all the main contact sections.

The following is an example of the type of statement you should include:

For more information on our products or services, or if you would like to request a copy of this booklet in an alternative format, please call the Customer Service Centre on T: (add telephone number). Textphone users can dial direct on (add textphone number) and we welcome Typetalk calls. Or, you can visit our website at (add website address)

Remember, every time you produce or update a piece of literature or a form, you should consider provision of this information for visually impaired customers who find accessing printed information difficult or impossible.

The following check list might be useful:



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- Use a Clear Print approach as follows:
 - a minimum twelve point type size although fourteen point is preferred
 - avoid light fonts; use medium or bold
 - use bold rather than upper case for emphasis
 - avoid use of all upper case in both text and headings
 - avoid underlining
 - avoid use of italics or any mix of fonts
 - a sans serif typeface is preferred
 - word spacing should be even and left justified
 - avoid hyphenation
 - words should not be divided or split across a line break
 - the space between lines should be generous
 - an ideal average line length should be between sixty and seventy characters per line
 - aim for a good colour contrast, preferably light against dark
 - if using white type, make sure the background colour is dark enough to provide sufficient contrast
 - avoid printing text over design
 - keep layouts clear and clean
 - keep text and design separate
 - group information logically
 - guide the user with a contents page and index
 - do not range text around images
 - text should be set horizontally
 - allow a good margin around columns and use a vertical rule if space is tight
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- Apply Plain English methodology
- Give contact textphone numbers or mention Typetalk if contact telephone numbers are used
- Make customers aware of the availability of alternative formats through an accessible statement, prominently positioned
- When designing forms, try to combine clear print and large print formats - if not possible, provide the form in large print as an alternative format
- For all other pieces of literature, provide a good range of alternative formats, such as:
 - Large print (minimum 16 point)
 - Audio tape
 - Audio CD
 - Braille
 - Word document on 3.5 inch computer disk

If you require this information in an alternative format, please contact Habinteg at hdec@habinteg.org.uk.



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