



HABINTEG
Disability Equality Centre

Transcription Services.

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

For significant numbers of visually impaired people, an alternative to print is required, such as information on audio tape, in Braille, on computer disk or via telephone helplines.

Whilst Braille is the most commonly recognised communication method for blind and partially sighted people, the number of fluent Braille readers in the UK is quite small, approximately nineteen thousand. However, for people who use Braille, for example deafblind people, it is a vital communication method. Braille is most widely used by people of working age. There are two grades of Braille: Grade one is a letter for letter transcription; and Grade two is a 'shorthand' version for more experienced Braille readers.

The RNIB consider audio tape to be an extremely important medium for many visually impaired people. However, it is not suitable for everyone, and only a third of visually impaired people own a tape recorder. Use of audio tape is weighted towards younger people.

Information technology can enable access to information for visually impaired people. Providing information on computer disk or CD-ROM, via electronic mail or through the Internet, can allow a visually impaired

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The project is based within the RNIB Education Centre in Wales and aims to produce curriculum materials in Welsh Braille for visually impaired children throughout Wales.

Introduction:

The purpose is to ensure that all our Contact Centres comply with the legal requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act Part III and our duties towards our disabled customers. This brief looks at the provision of Alternative Formats.

The requirement:

We are required to make our products and services fully accessible to our customers. This includes offering customers alternative contact channels (such as textphones and email) and offering information in alternative formats. If a customer requests an alternative format we are, in most instances, obliged to provide it.

The formats:

Large print; Braille; audio tape or audio CD; Word document on a three and a half inch computer disk. It is a legal requirement to provide accessible information to disabled customers.

Please refer to the fact sheet 'Making our literature and forms accessible' for guidance on planning and designing literature and forms with design agencies.

There are various agencies offering Braille transcription, including major Braille producers, self-employed individuals, volunteers and prison transcription units. The type of material an agency can transcribe may vary depending on resources, and those with computers are likely to



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offer a quicker service, especially if the original information is provided on disk rather than paper. Many of these agencies can also produce large print, and some can produce Moon (a touch-reading system where script is embossed, like Braille, but using different 'symbols'). Larger transcription agencies can offer transcription on to audio cassette and computer disk formats.

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



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