

Making text accessible

Achieving access for all





Making text accessible.

Most people who have a visual impairment, including the majority of those who are registered blind, can read text if it is presented in the right way. Advances in new technology have now also opened up more ways of presenting text to people who have no sight at all.

Clear print.

- All text should be in a **minimum** of 12 point (preferably 14 point) and Arial font. This is accessible to the majority of people with visual impairments and therefore reduces the requirement for large print requests. This also meets RNIB guidelines.
- Ensure there is a good contrast between print and background paper. When
 using coloured paper or background tints these should be very pale with a
 dark print. Black print on white or yellow background is the most accessible
 because it gives the best contrast.
- Use matt paper. Glossy (art) paper reflects light and can make print difficult to read.
- Use uppercase letters sparingly. A couple of words for a heading are acceptable but not for body text.
- Reverse (negative) print can be used but the font type should be strong such as Ariel or Univers. Some people with specific visual impairments prefer this. However, always avoid "condensed" fonts.
- Align left for text, as this keeps spacing even. Don't justify or split words at the end of a line.
- When using columns ensure the margins clearly separate the text or, where space is limited, use a vertical line between columns.



Alternative text formats.

- Using e-mail or CDs is the most easily accessible format for many blind or partially sighted people. In Rich Text Format (RTF) and with the right computer programmes it can be converted into speech or enlarged to a personally accessible point size.
- All text documents should be capable of being reproduced in 16 to 22 point sizes and can be converted to Braille, a system of raised dots which may be used by some blind people.
- Text read onto CDs is accessible not only by people with a visual impairment but also people with a learning disability, dyslexia or other reading difficulty. It can also be read into community languages other than English.
- DVDs are a very accessible format for people with a learning disability, and those who are deaf or hard of hearing when subtitled and signed.
- Moon, a system of raised curves and lines, is used by a very small number of people, mostly elderly or by people with limited dexterity. It is easier to learn but even bulkier than Braille.
- The internet is used by many people with a visual impairment and also makes information more accessible to people with mobility impairments.
- Plans and maps can be printed in raised outline through the RNIB.
- The telephone is accessible to most visually impaired people.
- All printed information should be available on request in large print, Braille or CD and in languages other than English. For information and advice contact the Council's Translating and Interpreting Service on **020 8407 1369**.



Clear text guide.

- Always use plain language and where possible keep text as simple as possible.
- Explain any technical terms.
- Keep text clearly separated from graphics and/or artwork.
- Include picture or symbol formats where possible. This helps to make the information more accessible to people with reading difficulties.
- Keep sentences to one point of information. Avoid long sentences. This helps people with memory or concentration difficulties.
- Keep paragraphs short, about five to seven lines and to one subject.
- Do not use jargon, and when using acronyms ensure that the definitions are given when they are first used.

Further guidance on producing information in alternative formats can be found on Card 7.