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**A guide to creating an accessible text document**

Almost 1 in 5 people have a disability1, so the chances are that a person with a disability, health condition, or impairment will be reading the documents you produce. Not all disabilities affect a person’s ability to read, however, there are some impairments and learning difficulties that can affect this. For example, in the UK, 1 in 10 people have dyslexia2; around two-million people have sight loss3; and 1 in 12 men and 1 in 200 women have colour vision deficiency4. It is important, therefore, that our work is as legible as possible.

The aim of this guide is to be as general as possible in order to meet the needs of a range of people. However, before publishing your documents, we encourage you, where you can, to ask your intended audience if they have any needs they would like you to be aware of.

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1. Give information clearly by using numbers or letters, but not bullet points as they can look as though they are floating around, and do not use Roman numerals.
2. Use large and clear text, such as Arial size 12 or 14 with 1.5 line spacing. Size 16 is the very minimum for large print but a larger size maybe requested. Do not use a serif font, i.e. a font with flicks at the ends of letters like Times New Roman.
3. The text must be a contrasting colour to the background colour, e.g., black text on cream, pale yellow, or light grey.
4. Avoid writing in front of images; write below or above the image instead.
5. Avoid using white text, as the text can look smaller than intended and blurry.
6. Do not write in columns.
7. Microsoft Word has an accessibility checker (if yours does not, try the online version). There is an [online guide](https://support.office.com/en-us/article/Use-the-Accessibility-Checker-on-your-Windows-desktop-to-find-accessibility-issues-a16f6de0-2f39-4a2b-8bd8-5ad801426c7f?ui=en-US&rs=en-US&ad=US) for how to use it and further [‘best practice’ tips](https://support.office.com/en-us/article/Make-your-PowerPoint-presentations-accessible-6f7772b2-2f33-4bd2-8ca7-dae3b2b3ef25).
8. If you want to emphasise a word use **bold** print, as underlining words, italicising, and block capitals can make reading more difficult.
9. Keep your sentences and language simple.
10. Where possible, use images to describe what you are writing about.
11. The most common colours people have difficulty distinguishing between are red and green5, 6.

**Top tips:**

1. If you think, ‘that is a bit blurry/bright/dull/dazzling/small’, change it.
2. If you are using the document for a meeting, send it out in advance for people to read.
3. Print off some copies for people attending the meeting to read.
4. Have at least one copy printed out on thick cream/yellow paper or card. This is because cream and yellow can be easier on the eye than white, and it is harder to see images and texts on the reverse side of thick paper/card, thus making it easier to read.
5. Be prepared to be make reasonable changes to your document if it makes it more accessible and inclusive.

**Reference list and a sample of further helpful guidelines** (if you cannot access the hyperlinks below, please get in touch)

1. [Diocese of Leeds’ guidelines for disability awareness](http://www.leeds.anglican.org/disability-inclusion)
2. [‘Guidance: Accessible communication formats’ (a government site)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inclusive-communication/accessible-communication-formats)
3. [Microsoft: ‘Making your content accessible’](https://support.office.com/en-gb/article/Accessibility-video-training-71572a1d-5656-4e01-8fce-53e35c3caaf4?ui=en-US&rs=en-GB&ad=GB)
4. [‘Visual Stress and Coloured Overlays’](http://www.whh.nhs.uk/_store/documents/orthoptics-visualstressandcolouredoverlaysjoinedleaflet.pdf)
5. [‘Writing dementia-friendly information’](http://dementiavoices.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/DEEP-Guide-Writing-dementia-friendly-information.pdf)
6. [‘Dyslexia Style Guide’](http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/common/ckeditor/filemanager/userfiles/About_Us/policies/Dyslexia_Style_Guide.pdf)
7. [‘Deaf awareness’](file:///%5C%5CDL-FS01%5CRedirectFolders%24%5Cfiona.hill%5CDesktop%5CDofL%20disability%20guidelines%5C1%29%09https%3A%5Cwww.actiononhearingloss.org.uk%5Chow-we-help%5Cinformation-and-resources%5Cpublications%5Cdeaf-awareness%5C)
8. [Colour vision deficiency](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/colour-vision-deficiency/) (['Colour blind awareness'](http://www.colourblindawareness.org/))

1 [Papworth Trust](http://www.papworthtrust.org.uk/sites/default/files/Disability%20Facts%20and%20Figures%202016.pdf) (accessed 23/04/2018)

2 [British Dyslexia Association](http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/about) (accessed 23/04/2018)

3[Royal National Institute of Blind People](https://www.rnib.org.uk/professionals/knowledge-and-research-hub/key-information-and-statistics) (accessed 23/04/2018)

4 [Colour Vision Deficiency (a NHS website)](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/colour-vision-deficiency/) (accessed 23/04/2018)

5[Colour Vision Deficiency (a NHS website)](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/colour-vision-deficiency/) (accessed 22/05/2018)

6['Colour Blind Awareness'](http://www.colourblindawareness.org/) (accessed 22/05/2018)

**By making these small changes, you will have made a big difference for someone - thank you.**