

# Accessibility Guidelines for Written Resources



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## Why make your information accessible?

Accessibility by definition means easy to reach and understand. With nearly 500,000 Members of The Scout Association in the UK, it is important to consider accessibility when producing any new resource.

You should produce information that all Members can read because:

- It's fair - people with a disability should receive information that is accessible to them. Access to information enables all of us to make decisions and lead independent lives.
- It's the law - the Disability Discrimination Act means there is a legal duty to meet the information needs of Members with a disability.
- It makes sense – there are over 10 million people with a disability in the UK. This is a sizeable Membership base which cannot be ignored. Meeting the needs of all Members makes sense.

## Change the way you think

Read the information on this factsheet, and allow it to change the way you think about written resources. Think creatively about the best way to present tactile, audio or electronic alternatives to print.

Think about the audience and how many people might need formats other than

print. This may be hard to estimate but you should take whatever opportunities you can to learn about your Members needs. Make sure all printed information clearly gives people the opportunity to ask for the information in other formats.

Have procedures in place that enable the production of formats other than straight forward print. This may be as straight forward as knowing where to go to get print alternatives produced, rather than doing it 'in-house'.

## Typeface

There are no clear guidelines about typeface, as most books and newspapers are easy to read. However, a clear sans serif typeface is preferable for written text. This means that the text has no little 'feet'. Examples are Arial, Foundry Form or Gill Sans. Avoid fancy text styles such as Brush Script or Braggadocio.

## Type Size

Research suggests that reading speed increases as the size of the text increases. Increasing the font size from standard size print will increase the amount of people who are able to read it easily.

To make documents accessible to more people, the minimum text size should be 12 pt, ideally 14 pt. For large print documents, a minimum of 16 pt should be used.

## Alignment

Left aligning text makes it easier to find the start of the next line. Justified text, where text is aligned to both the left and right margins is easy to follow if the spaces between the words are consistent, which is hard to achieve with standard word processing or desktop publishing. It is therefore best avoided.

Aligning text to the right margin makes it difficult to find the start of each line. Centred text, where each line starts and ends in a different place is even harder to read blocks of text. You can however, centre titles or main headings.

## Contrast

Contrast between text and background is very important. The relationship between colours is more important than the colours themselves. Contrast is greatest when using very dark colours together with very pale colours.

You should avoid combining yellow with blue, or green with red, as these colour combinations are particularly difficult for people with colour blindness to tell apart.

## Images

All images should either support the main body of the text, or should be accompanied by a text caption explaining their significance. If you want text wrapped around an image, put the image on the right of the page rather than the left. This means the left aligned text will not be disturbed and makes it as easy as possible for the reader to find the start of the next line.

Setting text over an image makes it harder to read. Unless an image is completely even in tone, a photo of a clear blue sky for example, setting text on top of it will confuse the eye because the different colours and shades of the

background image will lead to changes in the contrast between the text and background colours.

## Aids to Communication

Pictures are important when communicating with people who may not understand the written word. 'Easy read' can be used in such a situation. This means writing things down clearly using short sentences and avoiding difficult words and acronyms. Easy read publications always use pictures to show what text means.

## Total Communication

This is about using whatever it takes to understand and be understood. By understanding this we can support a wider range of people to communicate with us and we can be better at communicating with them.

## Further Information

Free information on the Disability Discrimination Act can be obtained by contacting from Equality and Human Rights Commission.



[www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)



0845 604 6610

Practical advice on designing, producing and planning for accessible information.



[www.nib.org](http://www.nib.org)



020 7388 1266

Or contact the special needs office for advice on [specialneeds@scout.org.uk](mailto:specialneeds@scout.org.uk)