



**Disability Information Scotland  
Training Resources**

**Making Information Accessible 2022**

## **Making Information Accessible**

It is a requirement of The Equality Act 2010 (Section 20) that information is provided in accessible formats to suit the needs of disabled people.

These guidelines provide practical guidance on making printed and electronic information more accessible. Following them will benefit most people. They will be of particular benefit to disabled people who rely on screen-reading software to access information. They include general principles for all written information and specific guidance on writing and producing with certain software packages:

## **Making Written Information Accessible**

### **General Guidelines**

These guidelines for accessibility apply to written information such as that found in Word documents, PDF (Portable Document Format) documents, PowerPoint Presentations, emails and websites.

- Use clear plain language.
- Think of your intended audience and use terms they will understand. Explain the meaning of technical terms, unavoidable jargon, acronyms and abbreviations.
- Use correct punctuation.
- Use a clear plain font. Non-serif fonts like Arial are preferable.
- Avoid using a small size of text.
- Use left alignment for all text. Justified and centre aligned text should be avoided.
- Break text up using bullet points and space between paragraphs.
- Avoid blocks of text in italics, underlining or uppercase.
- Provide alternative text for non-text elements such as graphs and charts that are essential to understanding the text.

- Provide alternative text for pictures that add to the meaning of the text or enter a "null value" to enable screen-reading software to ignore them.
- Ensure good contrast between text and background.
- Keep graphics and pictures separate from the text, i.e. do not put text over pictures.
- Avoid animated or flashing/blinking text.
- Provide a text transcript for embedded sound files.
- Make the text for Hyperlinks specific and meaningful, for example "Microsoft's website" rather than "Click here".
- Provide Meta (extra) Information about your document such as giving it a title and author.

## **Guidelines for specific software packages**

### **Microsoft Word**

- ◆ If using Arial font, use Point 12 as a minimum. Point 14 is preferable.
- ◆ If using any other font, find a Point size equal in size to Arial 12 or 14, for example Verdana Point 11 or 13.
- ◆ Use Styles to create Headings and Sub-headings See the document **How to Use Styles for Accessibility in Word 365** in the Training Resources and Publications page on our website.
- ◆ Use Styles to create blank space around paragraphs.
- ◆ Use the built-in table tools when creating columns of text.
- ◆ Print on a matt paper to avoid glare caused by some gloss papers.

## Converting Word Documents into Accessible PDFs (Portable Document Formats)

- ◆ Use the accessibility checker in your Word software to check that your document is fully accessible before converting.
- ◆ Ensure 'document structure tags for accessibility' is checked in the document conversion settings. See our document **Producing an accessible PDF from Word** in the Training Resources and Publications page on our website for details on how to do this.
- ◆ After conversion, use the Adobe Accessibility Checker to check for possible problems. See our document **Checking Your PDF Document for Accessibility in Adobe Acrobat DC** in the Training Resources and Publications page on our website for details on how to do this
- ◆ If available, use a screen reader to check the reading order and to check that all the content is accessible.
- ◆ When posting PDFs on the web, add a link to Adobe Acrobat reader <https://www.adobe.com/uk/products/reader> and post an alternative version in Word or Plain Text. Ideally also provide the information as an HTML webpage.

## Accessible PowerPoint for Presentation and Web

- Use the Slide Master to create the basic layout, formatting, repeated elements such as headers and footers, and the background design.
- Text should be no smaller than 24 point. A non-serif font is preferable.
- Use inbuilt slide layouts or add content using 'Outline View' on the left hand panel of the Screen. Text not shown in 'Outline View' will not be picked up by screen-reading software. Text in manually added text boxes will not be displayed in 'Outline View'.
- Choose a background that prints or photocopies well in greyscale. If using a gradated background, check the contrast between text and background across all parts of the slide. Note that backgrounds are lighter when projected.

- Do not put the “whole story” on the slide. Instead use bullet points and short statements.
- Only use simple graphs, charts and tables that are big enough to be read.
- Keep animations and transitions as simple as possible. Avoid flickering or distracting sounds.
- On request, provide full size copies of the slides, rather than the handout version.

## **Good Practice for Emails**

- Always clearly state who the email is from and give your contact details.
- Include your Company Registration Number or Charity Number, if relevant, and an email Privacy Policy and Disclaimer.
- Avoid using Text Speak abbreviations. Screen-reading software will not be able to interpret these.
- For group emails use the BCC field to send to all recipients. This will enable screen-reading software to go straight to the text instead of first reading out the addresses of all recipients. This practice also reduces the risk of spreading viruses or malware.
- Use the Text Email Newsletter (TEN) Standard for sending Plain Text Newsletters – see [www.headstar.com/ten](http://www.headstar.com/ten)
- Use the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) WCAG 2 for sending HTML Newsletters – see [www.w3.org/WAI](http://www.w3.org/WAI) (Web Accessibility Initiative).
- If you use HTML, Include a link to a webpage with the same content as the HTML Newsletter.
- Do not send Newsletters to people who have not requested them.
- Always offer your recipients an opportunity to opt out.

## Making Websites Accessible

- Comply with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA. Find out more at [www.w3.org/WAI](http://www.w3.org/WAI) (Web Accessibility Initiative).
- When tendering for a website ensure that accessibility is built-in from the start. Use PAS78, “The guide to good practice in commissioning accessible websites” developed by the Disability Rights Commission and the British Standards Institute. [www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com) (Search: Web Accessibility).
- Create a website design that is flexible so that users can change colours, font and font size to meet their individual requirements.
- Do regular accessibility checks on your site using the automated tools provided by the Worldwide Web Consortium (W3C) [www.W3.org](http://www.W3.org)
- Involve disabled people in the planning and testing of your site.
- Get regular and organised feedback from disabled people about the accessibility and usability of your site.

This guide was produced to conform with the accessibility guidelines set out by SAIF (Scottish Accessible Information Forum)

Contact Us

## **Disability Information Scotland**

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