

Wiltshire County Council

Clear Communications:

A guide to communicating for everyone

October 2006

Produced by the Communications Team in conjunction with the
Corporate Equalities & Diversity Steering Group and Staff Fora.

Contents

Introduction

Section 1: The basics

1.1 Planning

1.2 Plain English

1.3 Language

1.4 Design

Section 2: Audiences

2.1 People whose first or preferred language is not English

2.2 Blind and partially sighted people

2.3 Deaf and hard of hearing people

2.4 Deafblind people

2.5 People with Learning disabilities

2.6 Websites

Section 3: Help and information

Section 4: Glossary

Section 5: Language

Section 6: Research

Section 7: Conclusion

Section 8: Organisations offering communication services

Introduction

We produce a lot of information for the public about the work of the County Council. This information is produced in a lot of different ways, for example, leaflets, letters, reports, and e-mails. To be effective this information must be easily available, clear and easy to understand. If we are to use resources effectively and efficiently then it is important that services ensure that all the information produced is accessible to all of the people for whom it is relevant.

This guide aims to do two things. Firstly, to give general advice and help on communicating and secondly, to give advice for people with specific communication needs.

Local people have a wide range of communication needs. Some people can understand complex information while others find it more difficult. People may have a disability which means you may have to communicate in a different way. Some people may not speak, read or understand English.

You should take the needs of your audience into account when planning how you will communicate with them.

This guide will help you produce information that is clear. It will help you get your messages across and produce information that meets the needs of your audience.

Section 1: The basics

If you follow a set of basic ideas your information will be clearer and easier to understand.

1.1 Planning

Plan what you want to communicate following the five 'w's – what, who, when, why, where – and how. Decide what you want to tell people, who you want to tell, when you want to tell them, for what reason and how you are going to tell them.

1.2 Plain English

All information should be produced in Plain English. Producing information in Plain English will make it easier to understand. It will also get your message across to more people in a friendlier way.

Writing in Plain English will also make your information easier to change into other formats, for example translating it into another language or reading it onto an audiotape.

If you would like more information about Plain English you can visit the Plain English campaign's website at www.plainenglishcampaign.co.uk. We have also included some tips about Plain English in the guide. Here are the main things you should consider.

- Keep your sentences short. Ideally sentences should be less than twenty words.
- Use active verbs. Use 'Brenda kicked the cat' rather than 'the cat was kicked by Brenda'.
- Use 'you' and 'we'. Use 'You can get information from...' rather than 'Information is available from...'
- Use words appropriate for the reader. Use the simplest words that fit in with your audience. This does not necessarily mean using only simple words.

- Avoid jargon especially when you produce information for the general public.
- Don't be afraid to use instructions. Use 'Take your empty bottles to the recycling centre' rather than 'Empty bottles should be taken to the recycling centre'.
- Say 'we discussed the matter' rather than 'we had a discussion about the matter'.
- Use positive language. Use 'please recycle your bottles so that we can turn them into something else' rather than 'if you don't recycle your bottles we can't turn them into something else'.
- Use lists where appropriate.

Here are some examples of simpler words and their more complicated versions in brackets.

- Extra (additional)
- Fill-in (complete)
- Details (particulars)
- Before (prior to)
- Send (forward)
- End (terminate)

You can get detailed information on the Plain English Campaign website www.plainenglishcampaign.co.uk

1.3 Language

English is a living language, and is constantly changing; ensure that the language you use does not give offence.

Examples are given in Section 5.

1.4 Design

As well as using Plain English, you should also consider **Clear Print** when it comes to design. The RNIB has Clear Print guidelines on its website www.rnib.org.uk. Many of these guidelines are included in this guide.

Here are a few tips that will make publications more accessible.

- Consider your audience's needs. Remember that the less people who can read the information you provide, the more may require an alternative format.
- Use simple and clear designs. The different elements of design – text, pictures, and diagrams – should be clearly separated from each other.
- Use contrasting colours for the text and the background, for example, black writing on a yellow background. Yellow is less reflective than white.
- Written information like booklets and newsletters should be easy for people to pick up and handle.
- People should be able to find their way around the information easily.
- Plan your front page to get people's attention. A good-looking front page will encourage people to pick up the document in the first place.
- Colour coding is often used as a tool for breaking up information into sections. Keep to a few, bold, primary colours that can be named easily.
- Numbers should be printed clearly as they can be easy to misread. Choose a typeface that has clear numbers as well as clear letters.
- Information should be printed clearly and boldly. Use a typeface or font, which is large and has big clear letters. The County Council has adopted 11 point as a minimum font size.
- Use matt paper. Reflections from shiny paper can make it difficult to read text.
- Do not use italics, underlining or all capitals.

Section 2: Audiences

Some people will have more obvious communication needs; other people will have hidden communication needs; for example, with hearing or seeing, learning disabilities, or a foreign language. Remember that for many people, hearing and vision change as part of the ageing process.

Always consider your audience, and their needs. This section will help to alert you to a range of needs, and to possible solutions and actions to consider.

Remember that the spoken word is only 7% of face to face communication. We also communicate through non verbal communication, which is information that is communicated without using words. Non verbal communication makes up 93% of communication, through facial expression, posture, gesture and tone of voice.

Non verbals can include shaking hands, posture, facial expressions, appearance, voice, tone, expression in your eyes, eye contact, how close you stand to others, how you listen, hand movements, the way you move and stand. These non verbal messages vary between cultures. There are different etiquettes related to different cultures; if you are to communicate effectively you need to gain an understanding of these differences.

2.1 People whose first or preferred language is not English

Make the information you produce available in other languages. This does not mean you have to print leaflets in advance in other languages or alternative formats. It may not be practical to have several languages or alternative format versions in advance if you are unlikely to use them.

You should make sure that you know how to get the information translated, or produced in other formats, remembering that this can take some time. Contact your service Communication Officer for further details. There is a list of contacts in Section 3.

For some people, including those who do not read or write in their mother-tongue, it may be more helpful to provide an interpreter to explain the document rather than a written translation.

Make a statement on documents you produce which states:

‘This information can be made available in other formats and languages on request. Tel

For corporate County Council documents, the phone number should be 01225 713000. For local offices, it may be appropriate to put a local phone number.

This statement needs to be written in 16-point large print in a prominent place appropriate for the publication.

Additionally this statement needs to be written in the most frequently used languages in Wiltshire.

A copy of this statement is available from the Equality and Diversity Officer and from the Design and Print unit.

Consider face-to-face interpreting as an alternative to translation. This means using an interpreter to explain the publication. Remember that some languages are not, or are rarely, written down. Interpreting can be cheaper than translation.

Wiltshire County Council has a contract with ‘Language Line’ a service that can interpret over the telephone. Language Line will provide training for staff who may be involved in accessing their service and provide a symbols chart to enable the client to identify the language(s) they speak. Ask your service Communications Officer for further details.

See also 2.4 Deaf and Hard of Hearing People, for information about British Sign Language.

Here are some tips to help you prepare information to be translated.

- Keep it simple. Use short words and sentences covering one thought or action.
- Avoid jargon or provide a glossary of terms.
- Do not use metaphors, simile or other figures of speech.

- Avoid humour because it may offend.
- Use every day speech
- Allow extra space on leaflets. Translations are ten per cent to forty per cent longer than the original.
- Avoid complex designs.
- Use graphs, symbols, pictures and icons carefully.

2.2 Blind and Partially Sighted people

People who are blind or partially sighted have different amounts of vision remaining. Some people are totally blind. Others cannot see very well. Their level of vision and their preferred method of communication will determine the right type of communication to meet their needs.

Written information

When writing for people who are partially sighted there are things you can do to make it easier to read. Here are a few tips. This is not an exhaustive list but it will get you thinking about what is needed. These guidance points are useful to all readers, including those with dyslexia or specific learning difficulties or disabilities:

- Ensure page numbering and headings/captions for photographs are also in large print.
- If large print documents are bulky, comb binding them is generally better than stapling.
- Use a large print size for printed information, at least 16. It may need to be bigger. 14 point is a common large font with some users. Always check with the person their preferred font size or format.
- It is preferable not to blow-up standard size print documents on a photocopier as this results in a deterioration in quality, for example from A4 to A3, which is also an awkward size to handle. A5 to A4 may be acceptable, but do ask the person. It is better to produce a large print version.

- Desktop publishing and computer word processing programmes like Word means that it is relatively easy to reformat documents in different font sizes as required.
- You can use either Serif or Sans Serif typefaces as long as the typeface is clear and the letters are easily recognisable. However, some people find Sans Serif clearer and easier to read. We use Rotis (Serif) or Arial (Sans Serif).
- Do not use lightweight, ornate or extra bold typefaces.
- Avoid using italics because people who are partially sighted find them difficult to read.
- Avoid using capital letters other than in punctuation. It is easier to read lower case letters than capital letters as the shapes are clearer and more distinct.
- The space between one line of text and the next should be at least 1.5 lines.
- Where possible write numbers as words rather than numerals, particularly for single numbers (i.e. below ten). If you use numerals make sure they are clear. A Font like Arial can help. It is easy to mistake 3, 5 and 8 or 0 and 6.
- Use matt paper. People with visual impairments find it difficult to read text on shiny paper.
- Use contrasting colours for the type and the background, for example, black writing on a yellow background. Yellow paper is less reflective than white.
- Align the text to the left hand margin. This makes it easier to find the start and finish of each and even spaces exist between the words.
- Some people find non-justified right-hand margins easier to read. A ragged right-hand margin leads to easier reading. For a dyslexic reader and some other readers, justified text, with its uneven spaces between words, can create visual patterns of white space, which are hard to ignore. They distract the reader, who loses the place.

- Write text horizontally across the page. Vertical or curved text is very difficult for partially sighted people to read.
- Do not put text over graphics.
- Watermarks like “DRAFT” should be avoided. It is better to use such wording as a Header or Footer on each page.
- Ensure page numbering and headings/captions for photographs are also in large print. Think about letter heading text sizes which contain your contact details.

Braille

Braille is a system of raised dots, which enables blind and partially sighted people to read by touch.

Some people who are blind or partially sighted read Braille. Others do not. Translation services can provide information in Braille.

Braille is the right medium to use when information needs to be remembered or reviewed, if a person wishes to read silently or where the information is to be learnt or memorised.

If information will go out of date quickly it may be easier to consider other methods of communication.

If you do need to commission Braille translation, talk to an expert at an early stage and remember that it can take time to produce information in Braille. Contact your service Communication Officer for further information. Section 3 has a list of contacts.

Moon

This is also a method of communication that is used by some people with a sensory loss. Used by diabetics with sight loss and also known to be used by Deafblind clients.

Audiotape

Clear and concise audiotapes or compact discs of information are another method of communication. These can be produced by County Council staff or by specialist organisations. Some organisations provide training to enable them to be produced in-

house. Information about organisations can be obtained from the Equality and Diversity Officer.

Computers

Computers can aid access to information in a number of ways. Web pages can be made to be fully accessible following agreed international standards like the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI). Information can be accessible through e-mail or produced on CD-ROMs or DVDs. The computer user can change the view, or use software to convert text to speech. BSL videos can be made available.

Video

Use subtitles and BSL as appropriate, e.g. training or publicity material. A standard of speech, subtitles and BSL on all videos means most people can access your publicity. On the Internet, some videos have only a BSL interpreter as this is clearer for Deaf people, with no distractions. Commentaries or scripts can be added in text files or Html. Note that there may be a file size issue on the Internet so that only Broadband users can access some files. In this case, you may need to also add a version for lower speed connection users. As always, consider your audience in making your choice of format.

Public presentations and meetings

Here are some tips for making public presentations clear for people who are blind or partially sighted.

- Keep it simple, short and uncluttered.
- If you use PowerPoint or other presentation slides make sure the text is large and clear.
- Do not try to cram too much onto a slide, use two or three instead.
- Use bullet point lists rather than dense text.
- Provide clear paper copies of the slides for participants to follow and keep. Some people will need one slide per printed page, rather than 3 or 6 slides, so that it is large enough to read.

- Some people will find it helpful to have conference talks (e.g. on Microsoft Word) and presentations (like PowerPoint) on a CD or DVD so they can access them on their computer.
- If you are in a room with windows consider that the person with the hearing impairment may prefer to have their back to the window. This may enable them to see the face and lip-read.
- Flash photography can cause problems for some people, as can some computer presentations that include Flash.

More information

More detailed information about communicating with blind or partially sighted people can be found in the RNIB 'See It Right' campaign pack. There are brief details on the RNIB website, and full copies are available from your service Communication Officer.

2.3 People who are 'colour blind'

Colour blindness is not a total loss of colour vision.

Colour-blind people can recognize a wide range of colours but certain ranges of colours are hard to distinguish.

When preparing presentations, posters, displays, web pages and any other documents consider the following guidelines:

- Do not use red and green together, use purple and green.
- For graphs and line drawings, label parts of the graph on the graph itself rather than making a separate colour-coded key. People who are colour-blind find matching the same colours in distant places to be extremely difficult. Do not use colour only, show difference in both colour and shape. Use a few bold colours with for example, solid and dotted lines, different symbols, various hatching.
- Red does not appear as a bright and vivid colour; avoid using it on a dark background.

2.4 Deaf and hard of hearing people

Deaf people can prefer the capital “D” as this signifies that they are part of a Deaf community with its own language and culture, rather than seeing themselves as disabled people. We have followed this convention in this guide.

People who are Deaf or hard of hearing have different levels of hearing. Some are profoundly deaf and hear no sound; others can hear some sound.

The type of hearing impairment and their preferred method of communication will determine the right type of communication to meet their needs. Usually people who are Deaf or hard of hearing need help with face to face or telephone communications.

Always check how Deaf and hard of hearing people would like to receive information.

Here are some tips to remember when communicating face-to-face with people who are Deaf or hard of hearing.

- Even if someone is wearing a hearing aid it doesn't mean they can hear you. Ask if they need to lip-read.
- If you are using communication support always remember to talk directly to the person you are communicating with, not the interpreter.
- Before meetings, check with the Deaf person and their interpreter(s) where they wish to be seated.
- It is important to make sure you have face-to-face or eye-to-eye contact with the person you are talking to.
- Make sure you have the listener's attention before you start speaking.
- Speak clearly but not too slowly, and don't exaggerate your lip movements.
- Use natural facial expressions and gestures.

- If you're talking to a Deaf person and a hearing person, don't just focus on the hearing person.
- Don't shout. It's uncomfortable for a hearing aid user and it looks aggressive.
- If someone doesn't understand what you've said, don't keep repeating it. Try saying it in a different way instead.
- Find a suitable place to talk, with good lighting and away from noise and distractions.
- Check that the person you're talking to can follow you. Be patient and take the time to communicate properly.
- Use plain language and don't waffle. Avoid jargon and unfamiliar abbreviations.
- Meeting rooms should be checked beforehand to ensure that they are fully accessible and allow full participation in the meeting, conference or event.

Here is some basic information about common types of communication techniques for communicating with Deaf and hard of hearing people.

British Sign Language

Probably the best-known type of communications, British Sign Language or BSL, is a language in its own right, not a translation of English, and has developed naturally within the Deaf Community. BSL has its own grammar and instead of using sounds to make words in a string, it uses hand-shapes that move in a defined space, facial expression and body language.

The County Council has a contract for the provision of BSL with Gloucestershire Deaf Association who can be contacted as follows: Telephone 01452 372999 Minicom 01452 372600
Fax 01452 372288 Email: admin.glosdeaf@btconnect.com

BSL signers can be used to enable the full participation of Deaf people in conferences and meetings but it must be remembered that a BSL signer may need to take a break every 30 minutes, therefore some conferences/meetings may require more than one BSL signer if the meeting is to continue without additional breaks.

BSL signing can be put on video/DVD to make the speech accessible; it can also be valuable in making website information more readily accessible to Deaf people.

See also 2.2 **Video**

Local Communication Services Offices – South West

http://www.rnid.org.uk/.howwehelp/our_services/communication_services

RNID Communication Services South West

Berkeley House, The Square, Lower Bristol Road, Bath BA2 3BH

Telephone: 01225 485770 – Text Phone: 0800 622 401 – Fax: 01225 485771 – E-Mail: sw-csu@rnid.org.uk

Other types of communication support

There are other communication support services that some Deaf and hard of hearing people prefer to use.

Sign Supported English

Some Deaf people use Sign Supported English (SSE), which uses signs that follow an English grammatical structure. Although SSE is not a distinct language, British Sign Language/English interpreters can usually offer an SSE service that can be booked through RNID Communication Services.

Makaton

The Makaton[®] Programme takes signs from British Sign Language (BSL) and uniquely designed Makaton Symbols, and arranges them to match the spoken and written sequence of English.

Communication support workers

Communication support workers (CSWs), also known as personal communication assistants, usually work with Deaf students. CSWs are not usually qualified BSL/English interpreters, though more are now training at this level. RNID does not offer a booking service for CSWs but you can read more about them on the www.rnid.org.uk website.

Other types of communication support

This is where you can find out about the most common kinds of support services that are used to help communication between Deaf and hearing people. Common services include sign language interpreting, video interpreting, lip speaking, speech-to-text reporting, Deafblind interpreting and note-taking. The people who provide these services are often referred to as language service professionals.

Lip reading

Some Deaf or hard of hearing people lip-read. This means they follow the movement of your lips to help them understand what you are saying. That is why it is important to look at the person you are talking to and speak clearly, but don't talk too slowly or exaggerate your lip movements.

Hearing loop

If you are arranging a meeting or conference check if there is a loop system fitted at the venue and ask if it is in working order.

If a loop system exists make sure you know how it works and test it in advance.

If no loop system is available at the venue you can hire systems. But make sure it is tested at the venue.

2.4 Deafblind people

http://www.rnid.org.uk/information_resources/communicating_better/advice_for_communicating_with_Deafblind/Deafblind_tops.htm
<http://www.sense.org.uk/>

Deaf Blindness varies from person to person. No two people's needs are the same. Some people are completely deaf and blind while others have some hearing and/or vision.

You should check with each Deafblind person how he or she wants to receive information. Some people may use an interpreter others may want information in Braille.

There are specialist workers in specific organisations i.e. Deafblind UK. Seek advice prior to meeting the client, as communication without the right training and knowledge would be embarrassing and very difficult.

As ever, all information should be presented in Plain English.

The following sections are illustrated with photographs to illustrate how an Easy Read document can look.

2.5 People with Learning Disabilities



People with learning disabilities sometimes find it hard to understand new or difficult information. By using Plain English techniques set out earlier in the booklet you can make information more accessible to people with learning disabilities.

Audio tapes are a good way of communicating information to people who are unable to read.

Here are some further tips:

- Think carefully about the words and language you use when producing information for people with learning disabilities.
- Use easy words and talk to your reader.
- Make your sentences plain, easy and short.
- Give your information in clear chunks.
- Don't forget whom you are writing for. If you are writing for young people or adults, about adult topics. It's OK to use unusual words if they are necessary and you explain what they mean.
- Be consistent and repeat words rather than using different words to say the same thing.
- Do not use phrases that say one thing, but mean something else. For example, 'Keep your eye on the ball'.



- Some people with learning disabilities will find the concept of number hard to understand. Writing numbers as figures, rather than words, can make number concepts easier.



- People with learning disabilities say that they prefer times to be written in a 12-hour clock, rather than 24-hour clock. Digital clocks are easier to understand.

- Do not split one word over two lines with a dash or hyphen. Some people also find it easier if sentences are short, and better still are kept to one line.
- Make your document easy to see, read and follow. Use plenty of space around words and pictures. People can be confused when pages are crowded with lots of words, pictures and diagrams.



- Keep symbols with the text and in one place, this makes your information easier to follow.



- Use pictures or photographs to get key messages across. Pictures and photographs should be clear, bold and easy to see. They should help make sense of the words they go with.

Symbols



Not all people with learning disabilities relate to text or symbols, it is therefore important to ask what means of communication people prefer. Symbols and pictures are useful in helping some people to understand text and to be more independent.

Symbols are often used in documents known as “**Easy Read**”.

Government consultations and reports are often produced in this format. Their simple explanation can be useful to anyone wanting a summary of the main document. A search for Easy Read in Google (or any other computer search engine) will find various on-line examples.

There is no nationally agreed symbol system. Whatever symbol system you choose you should try to consider the following points:

- Try to use the same symbols in the same way in different settings. Adopt a clear policy on using symbols that is in keeping with what is happening in your local area.
- Try to use symbols that are pictorial and show what they mean rather than abstract symbols.
- Use photographs where possible, especially when referring to a particular person or place. Digital cameras can be very useful for this.
- Remember Data Protection Policy when using photographs.
- When using photographs keep the subject matter central and large enough to avoid confusion by having unnecessary clutter in the photograph.



- If you have a choice of symbols for one concept you should ask people with learning disabilities which they think is best.



- Some Wiltshire County Council services have effectively used the 'Photosymbols' programme to produce accessible information using real pictures in real situations. We have also added some of our own images specific to Wiltshire in order to improve communication. This programme is available on CD Rom from the Equality and Diversity Officer.
- Further advise and translation services are listed in Section 7 of this document.

2.6 Websites and electronic information

For people with access to a computer, documents can be more accessible if provided by email or disc as this can enable:

- the font size to be increased
- a talking programme to be used to read the document
- photographs or other images to be used to communicate

Ask people how they can most easily access information from documents.

Section 3: Help and information

More information about this guide is available from the communications unit on 01225 713114.

The WCC Intranet has a number of pages of information that can help you with your communication.

The WCC Communications unit members and their roles:

<http://wccintranet/index/organisation/communications/communicationsteam.htm>

The WCC Communications Toolkit

<http://wccintranet/index/tools/commstoolkit.htm>

Further guidance is available from the Equality and Diversity Officer and from your service communications officer.

Corporate Services	Jo Huntley	01225 771618	joannehuntley@wiltshire.gov.uk
Libraries & Heritage	Kathryn Preston	01722 324145	kathrynpreston@wiltshire.gov.uk
ESD	Judi Gardner	01225 781359	judigardner@wiltshire.gov.uk
DCE – Educ.	Jackie Bedford	01225 713757	jackiebedford@wiltshire.gov.uk
Families	Helen Lau	01225 757506	helenlau@wiltshire.gov.uk
DACS	Angela Stansby	01225 713923	angelastansby@wiltshire.gov.uk
Fin & IT	Nicola Williamson	01225 718006	niclolawilliamson@wiltshire.gov.uk

Other useful information can be found on a number of websites as follows:

Disability Rights Commission www.drc-gb.org

Royal National Institute for Blind People www.rnib.org.uk

Royal National Institute for Deaf People www.rnid.org.uk

Plain English Campaign www.plainenglishcampaign.co.uk

WCC is a member of the **Employers Forum on Disability**. They produce two useful **communication guides**. These can be purchased at the member's rate, either in a standard version, or at extra cost as a WCC version:

Welcoming Customers (A5 28 pages)

Disability Communications Guide (A5 20 pages)

Further details are available from HR.

Section 4: Glossary

Braille - Braille is a system of raised dots, which enables blind and partially sighted people to read by touch.

BSL – see also SSE

Clear Print - This is a set of guidelines on designing printed information that is accessible to people with sight impairments. It is promoted by the RNIB. It focuses on some basic design elements, for example font, type size, contrast and page navigation.

Easy Read – Is an alternative format that gives people with learning disabilities access to the same information as everybody else. Most documents contain words and phrases that some people find hard to understand. Documents are re-written using simple language and specially commissioned clipart images/photographs to make them more accessible and easier to understand. **See also Photosymbols.**

Deafblind- In the UK today, there are an estimated 24,000 people with dual sensory loss or total Deafblindness. This means that they have sight and hearing loss to such a degree that it leads to problems with communication, mobility and accessing information.

Font - a specific typeface, at a specific point size and in a specific style. **See Sans Serif and Serif fonts**

Interpreting – To change someone’s spoken words from one language to another.

Language Line - a service that can interpret over the telephone. Over the years, Language Line has evolved to become an interpreting and translating service for more than one hundred and fifty languages.

Loop system – A loop system is an electronic system set up in a room to help people who are hard of hearing hear more clearly.

Makaton – a system that combines signs, symbols, and speech to provide multiple modes of communication

Moon – Since it has similarities to ordinary print characters, it is easier to learn by blind persons who previously read visually. However it has the disadvantage that it takes about 80 times the volume of the print version. The high cost of production has meant that few books are

printed in this medium. The number of moon readers has dwindled to about 400, most of who are in the UK.

Photosymbols – a system of full colour pictures for making easy read information. They come on a disc so you can use them to make your own easy read reports, booklets, forms, posters, signs and websites. The pictures are a mix of people, objects, places and everyday things. They are widely used by people with learning difficulties, but anyone who finds reading difficult can benefit from them.

Plain English – is language that the intended audience can understand and act upon from a single reading.

RNIB – The Royal National Institute of the Blind is the UK's leading charity offering information, support and advice to over two million people with sight impairments.

RNID - The Royal National Institute for Deaf People is the largest charity working to change the world for the UK's 9 million deaf and hard of hearing people.

Sans Serif and Serif fonts – Serif means “a smaller line used to finish off a main stroke of a letter, as at the top and bottom of M”. Times Roman is the most common Serif font. Arial, used in this document is a Sans- or Non-Serif font. Sans means “without”.

See it Right - Practical advice on designing, producing and planning for accessible information people with sight problems. The See it Right Pack is available as a book and CD-ROM from the RNIB. The See it Right logo is awarded to websites that have undergone a web accessibility audit by RNIB.

Translation – Changing words from one language into another, it usually refers to written or printed words.

Typeface – A type of printed letters.

Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) – the WAI guidelines are widely regarded as the international standard for Web accessibility. WCC is committed to ensuring accessibility of its Web site for disabled people. New and updated web content produced by our organisation conforms to W3C/WAI's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0, Conformance Level AA.
<http://www.w3.org/WAI/>

Section 5: Language

As mentioned under section 1.3, it is important to use language that does not cause offence to anyone. Remember that language is powerful. Check out the language you use, appropriate language is always important.

Here are some examples to consider:-

The word 'disabled' is an adjective, not a noun. Do not say 'the disabled', but say disabled person.

Avoid the expression 'wheelchair bound' or 'confined to a wheelchair' but use 'person who uses a wheelchair'.

Use the expression 'non-disabled' rather than 'able bodied'.

Check out appropriate language, for example through web sites belonging to the Equal Opportunities Commission and Commission for Racial Equality.

Section 6 Research

If you are communicating with a particular section of the community, for example, young people, ethnic minorities, older people or disabled people you should do some research to ensure that you take their specific needs into account.

Remember that some groups are quite small and there is the danger that the same people could be used too often resulting in questionnaire overload, so it is important to liaise with other researchers.

Wiltshire County Council has its own team that can provide help and advice on conducting research surveys. The Intelligence Network on the Intranet gives details of the Council's research projects. This includes the People's Voice, Tomorrow's Voice and the Carers' Voice. Contact for information on the voices' consultation database: e-mail tomfrost@wiltshire.gov.uk;

Here are tips to help you target your messages to specific groups.

Do your research.

- Review past studies and research about the group.
- Involve representatives and experts.
- Use community based groups.

Develop and test your information material, for example, leaflets, posters etc.

- Use members of the group to develop the materials.
- Use focus groups to test the materials.
- Use feedback from groups to revise the materials.

Section 7 Conclusion

The key phrase throughout this guide has been 'consider your audience'. Remember that if you are not sure what people need, do not be afraid to ask. If you do this, you will maximise the effort of your communications and successfully get your message across.

Section 8 Organisations offering communication services

Providers of interpretation services

Alphaplus Training and Translations Ltd

Experienced and qualified professional interpreters in 60+ languages

Freephone 0800 018 43 54 or tel/fax 01984 656751

Emergency out of office hours 01984 656727

Typetalk 18001 01984 656751

Email alphaplus@zetnet.co.uk

Providers of Transcription to Braille, Moon, Large Print and Audio Cassette

Access Communication

National Library for the Blind

Far Cromwell Road

Bredbury, Stockport

SK6 2SG

Telephone: 0161 355 2000 Text phone: 0161 355 2043

Fax: 0161 355 2098

Email: enquiries@nlbuk.org

Web: www.nlb-online.org

Braille, Moon, Large print, Audio, DAISY and Multi-media transcription, production and consultation.

Adept

6 Leck House

2-4 Lake Street

Leighton Buzzard

Bedfordshire

LU7 1TQ

Telephone: 01525 373964 Fax: 01525 850030

Email: transcription@adept-uk.org

Web: www.adept-uk.org

Provides an audio tape, Braille and large print transcription service. They also operate an automated internet ordering service called “**Fastrack**” this allows documents of up to 1200 words to be processed and distributed in 24 hours.

AIRS (Access to Reading and Information Services)

Gateshead Central Library
Prince Consort Road
Gateshead
NE8 4LN

Telephone: 0191 433 8450 Text: 0191 478 4039

Fax: 0191 477 7852 Video: 0191 478 5986

Email: airs@gateshead.gov.uk

Web: www.asaplive.com/AIRS/Home.cfm

Provides Braille, large print, cassette and sign language video alternative formats.

Anglia Ruskin University (ARU)

Regional Transcription Centre (RTC)
Sawyers Building, Bishop Hall Lane
Chelmsford
CM1 1SQ

Telephone: 01245 493131 ext 3175 Fax: 01245 269488

Email: rtc@anglia.ac.uk

Web: www.anglia.ac.uk/rtc

Provide Braille, analogue and digital audio, large print, electronic text, tactile maps and diagrams, accessible business cards.

Braille Bureau

County Hall
West Bridgford
Nottingham
NG2 7QP

Telephone: 0115 977 3157 Fax: 0115 981 7153

Email: darren.beniston@nottsc.gov.uk

Provides Braille, large print and cassette.

Braille Transcription Service

23 Masefield Ave
Upper Stratton
Swindon
SN2 7HT

Judith Furse 01793 644346 Email: jf@23masefield.freemove.co.uk

Braille and proof-reader providing transcription service, print to Braille or Braille to print.

Braudio Audio Transcriptions

8 Morpeth Terrace
North Shields
Tyneside
NE29 7AN

Telephone: 0191 258 6324 Fax: 0191 258 6324
Email: braudio@hotmail.com

Audio cassette transcriptions

Dataplus Solutions

74 Reddicap Heath Road
Sutton Coldfield
West Midlands
B75 7EN

Telephone: 0845 644 2384 Fax: 0845 644 2384
Email: audio-transcriptions@blueyonder.co.uk
Web: www.audio-digital-transcription.co.uk

Audio transcription and large print transcription.

Disability Resource Team

2nd Floor, 6 Park Road
Teddington
Middlesex
TW11 0AA

Telephone/Text: 020 8943 0022 Fax: 020 8943 5162
Email: mauricepress@enterprise.net
Web: www.disabilityresourceteam.com

Provides tape, braille and large print transcription service.

MagRay Document Services

178 Castle Rd
Northolt
Middlesex UB5 4SG

Telephone: 020 8864 7208 Fax: 020 8933 5740
Email: ray@magray.co.uk
Web: www.magray.co.uk

Braille transcription and embossing service. Print to Braille or Braille to print.

Monument Tape Services

20 Laburnam Road
Wellington, Somerset
TA21 8EL

Telephone: 01823 662 104

Email: admin@mts-labsound.org.uk Web: www.mtslabsound.org.uk

Transcription to audio cassette.

Partially Sighted Society

PO Box 322

Doncaster DN1 2XA

Telephone: 01302 323 132 Fax: 01302 368 998

Email: doncaster@partsight.org.uk

The Partially Sighted Society provides information in large print.

Playback Service for the Blind

Resource Centre for the Blind

17 Gullane Street

Glasgow G11 6AH

Telephone: 0141 334 2983 Fax: 0141 334 2983

Email: info@play-back.org.uk Web: www.play-back.com

Provides audio transcription.

Rakaso Systems Ltd.

PO Box 931

London

N12 9XF

Telephone: 020 8446 5555 Fax: 020 8446 8620

Email: rakaso@btopenworld.com

Provides print to Braille transcription.

Repro House in association with Leads

Repro House, 5 Ashfield Grove

Whitley Bay, Tyne and Wear

NE26 1RT

Telephone: 0191 253 3712 Fax: 0191 289 5462

Email: hugh.twiss@reproleads.co.uk Web: www.reproleads.co.uk

Transcription to Braille, large print, audio cassette and disk.

RNIB (Royal National Institute for the Blind)

105 Judd Street
London
WC1H 9NE

Telephone: 020 7388 1266 Fax: 020 7388 2034

Email: helpline@rnib.org.uk Web: www.rnib.org.uk

Provides transcription to a range of alternative formats, including Braille, cassette and moon. Has regional offices.

Techno-Vision Braille Services Ltd

76 Bunting Road Industrial Estate
Northampton
NN2 6EE

Telephone: 01604 792 777 Fax: 01604 792 726

Email: info@techno-vision.co.uk Web: www.techno-vision.co.uk

Provides transcription to Braille.

The Dog Rose Trust

83 Greenacres
Ludlow
Shropshire
SY8 1LZ

Telephone: 01584 874 567 Fax: 01584 874 045

Provide facilities for the understanding of all environments for people who are blind or visually impaired. Specialises in the design of tactile material, acoustic sound guides, scale models with interactive sound commentaries, large print and Braille guides.

Ubiquus Reporting

Clifford's Inn
Setter Lane
London
EC4A 1LD

Telephone: 020 7269 0370 Fax: 020 7405 9884

Email: infouk@ubiquus.com Web: www.ubiquus.co.uk

Stt provides support service for organisations and individuals with hearing impaired requirements.

V.I.P.E.R.

Huddersfield Library
The Transcription Service for Vision Impaired People
Princes Alexandra Walk
Huddersfield
HD1 2SU

Telephone: 01484 221 955 Fax: 01484 221 952

Email: hudlib.viperser@kirklees.gov.uk

www.kirklees.gov.uk/community/libraries/whatservice/viper.shtml

Transcription services to Braille, audio cassette, CD and tactile maps.

Vis - Ability

Helen Bollington
Central Library, Walker Place
Rotherham

South Yorkshire S65 1JH

Telephone: 01709 373 658 Fax: 01709 373 659

Email: rdis@btconnect.com

Transcription to Braille.

Vision Support

67 Liverpool Road

Chester

CH2 1AP

Telephone: 01244 651900 Fax: 01244 651909

Email: marketing@visionsupport.org.uk

Web: www.visionsupport.org.uk

A voluntary sector company specialising in high volume production of alternative formats including: Braille, modified large print, audio, CD & electronic text formatting. Guaranteed 48 hour transcription, specialising in bespoke and personalised communication such as bills / statements, correspondence, and marketing literature.

Vision Support Trading (VST)

Beech House

Park West, Sealand Road

Chester CH1 4RJ

Telephone: 0244 651900 Fax: 01244 651909

Email: marketing@vstrading.co.uk Web: www.vstrading.co.uk

Produce literature in Braille, large print and audio tape.

VOCAL EYES

1st Floor

54 Commercial St

London

E1 6LT

Telephone: 020 7375 1043 Fax: 020 7247 5622

Email: enquiries@vocaleyes.co.uk Web: www.vocaleyes.co.uk

A charity set up to service the needs of theatres and theatre companies wishing to present audio description to their visually impaired audiences.

Voluntary Braille Transcribers Group

8 Segbourne Road

Rubery

Birmingham

B45 9SX

Telephone: 0121 453 4268 Email: Braille@vtg.org.uk

20 members who hold the RNIB Braille proficiency certificate. Will take on commissions from companies. Put print into Braille.

Providers of Sign Language Interpreters, Video Subtitles and Speech to Text services

Alpha Plus

(corporated member of the Association of Sign Language Interpreters)

Freephone 0800 018 43 54 Typetalk 18001 01984 656751

Emergency out of office hours 01984 656727

Email alphaplus@znet.co.uk

British Sign Language (BSL)<>English interpreters

Written <> signed translation between English and BSL

e.g. letters and reports on or onto video and CD rom

Speech to text reporters (Palantypists) Deafblind communicators

Lipspeakers.

BDA (British Deaf Association)

69 Wilson Street

London

EC2A 2BB

Telephone: 020 7588 3520 Text: 020 7588 3529

Fax: 020 7588 3527 Videophone IP: 81.138.165.105

Email: helpline@signcommunity.org.uk

Web: www.signcommunity.org.uk

Provides consultation on and production of BSL videos, primarily in the London area.

Confederation of Transcription Information Services (COTIS)

Project Office

67 High Street

Tarporley

Cheshire

CW6 0DP

Telephone: 01829 733351 Email: administrator@cotis.org.uk

Web: www.cotis.org.uk

Self Help Grouping of tape recording services, cassette libraries etc. large & small, to share knowledge and expertise. Registered charity, have produced guidelines and tapes to improve production of tape recordings.

Council for the Advancement of Communication with Deaf People

Durham University Science Park
Block 4, Stockton Road,
Durham
DH1 3UZ

Telephone: 0191 383 1155 voice Text: 0191 383 7195

Fax: 0191 383 7194 Email: durham@cacdp.org.co.uk

Web: www.cacdp.org.uk

A directory of Sign Language Interpreters.

EyeGaze Ltd

1 Riverside Business Park
St Annes Road
Bristol BS4 4ED
Tel : +44(0)117 958 8800

Just Communication

Surditas House
Bromsgrove Road
Redditch, Worcestershire
B97 4QY

Telephone: 01527 582 080 Text: 01527 582 082

Fax: 01527 582 083 Videophone: 01527 582 081

Email: office@justcommunication.co.uk

Web: www.justcommunication.co.uk

Nationwide providers of Sign Language Interpreters.

RAD Interpreting Service

The Pines, Lynderswood Farm
London Road
Braintree
Essex
CM77 8QN

Telephone: 0870 774 3525 Text: 01245 495 077

Fax: 0870 774 9526

Email: interpreting@royaldeaforg.uk Web: www.royaldeaf.org.uk

Providers of Sign Language Interpreters - covering Kent, London, Essex and East Anglia.

REMARK! ACCESS

13 – 14 Greenwich Quay
Clarence Rd
Greenwich
London
SE8 3EY

Telephone: 020 8691 0210 Textphone: 020 8691 0226
Fax: 020 8469 3689 Email: info@remarkaccess.co.uk
Web: www.remarkaccess.co.uk

Providers of Sign Language Interpreters and produce BSL translations in many formats including videos, DVD and the internet.

RNID (Royal National Institute for Deaf People)

19 – 23 Featherstone Street
London
EC1Y 8SL

Telephone: 020 7296 8064/8066 Text: 020 7296 8065
Fax: 020 7296 8083 Email: se-csu@rnid.org.uk

Sign language interpreters, deaf – blind interpreters, lip speakers, note takers and speech to text services are available through local communication services offices.

Scottish Association of Sign Language Interpreters

Donaldson's College
West Coates
Edinburgh EH2 5JJ

Telephone/Text: 0131 347 5601 Fax: 0131 347 5628
Email: mail@sasli.org.uk Website: www.sasli.org.uk

The register of Sign Language Interpreters in Scotland

Screen Subtitling Systems

The Old Rectory, Church Lane,

Claydon, Ipswich, Suffolk IP6 0EQ

Telephone: 01473 831700 Fax: 01473 830078

Email: support@screen.subtitling.com

Web: www.screen.subtitling.com

Providers of subtitling.

Sign Language Information Centre

Hazeldean Terrace

Edinburgh

EH16 5RU

Telephone/Text: 0131 664 2858

Email: office@slc.co.uk Web: www.slic.co.uk

Providers of sign language interpreters.

Softel

7 Horseshoe Park

Horseshoe Road

Pangbourne

Reading, Berkshire

RG8 7JW

Telephone: 0118 984 2151 Fax: 0118 984 3939

Email: enquiries@softel.co.uk Web: www.softel.co.uk

Producers of subtitled videos.

Trosol Subtitles

Unit 1, Cwrt-y-Parc

Parc Tŷ Glas

Llanishen

Cardiff

CF14 5GH

Telephone: 0129 2075 0760 Fax: 029 2068 1928

Email: derykwilliams@trosol.co.uk Web: www.trosol.co.uk

Providers of subtitling and translation services

Voice and Script International

132 Cleveland Street

London

W1T 6AB

Telephone: 020 7692 7700 Fax: 020 7692 7711

ISDN: 020 7692 7722 Email: info@vsi.tv Web: www.vsi.tv

Providers of subtitling in all languages.

Wordwave International

190 Fleet Street

London

EC4A 2AG
Telephone: 020 7404 1400
Fax: 020 7404 1424
Email: mail@wordwave.co.uk
Website: www.wordwave.co.uk

Providers of speech to text services, including remote speech to text services that make use of telephone conference call technology to enable writers to work remotely off site.

Providers of Transcription Services for those with Learning Disabilities

Adept

6 Leck House,
2 – 4 Lake Street,
Leighton Buzzard,
Bedfordshire,
LU7 1TQ
Telephone: 01525 373 974 Fax : 01525 850030
Email: info@adept-uk.org Web: www.adept-uk.org

Adept offer a range of transcription services and are able to transcribe materials into Picture-supported language and Easy Read.

Central Office of Information (COI) Communications

Hercules House
Hercules Road
London SE1 7DU
Telephone: 020 7928 2345
Fax: 020 7928 5037
Web: www.coi.gov.uk

COI work exclusively for public sector clients. They offer transcription services including Easy Read.

Easy Info Resource Base

VPST
Dominions House
Lime Kiln Close
Stoke Gifford

Bristol BS34 8SR
Email: info@easyinfo.org.uk
Website: www.easyinfo.org.uk

This is a new website about making information easier for people with learning difficulties. It includes a library of resources and guidance about producing easy-read information and a useful tool kit for designing and creating your own easy-read materials with links to the useful picture banks and picture and symbol generating software such as the Change Picture Bank and Widgit Software.

Inspired Services

Cotswolds Centre Drive
Newmarket
Suffolk CB8 8AN
Telephone: 0870 740 4887. Email: info@inspiredservices.org.uk
Web: www.inspiredservices.org.uk

Inspired Services can offer transcription into Easy Read, audio tape, CD or video formats for disabled people including people with learning disabilities. They place great emphasis on consulting people with learning difficulties to ensure they are properly involved in the process. This can be arranged with your local group or with one of Community Living's own self-advocacy group consultants. They can provide the Valuing People Clip Art Collection of illustrations that can be used when producing documents that are accessible for people with learning disabilities.

Makaton Vocabulary Development Project

31 Firwood Drive
Camberley
Surrey
GU12 3QD
Telephone: 01276 61390 Fax: 01276 61390
Email: mvd@makaton.org Web: www.makaton.org

Makaton[®] is a language using symbols. This organisation can give further advice and provide a translation service.

Mencap Accessibility Unit

Mencap
123 Golden Lane
London
EC1Y 0RT
Telephone: 020 7696 5551

Email: accessibility@mencap.org.uk

Web: www.mencap.org.uk/html/accessibility/accessibility.htm

Mencap Accessibility unit can edit your documents or write accessible documents for you. They can also produce scripts and record audio tapes.

They can give you advice on making your documents accessible for people with a learning disability, including sending a free copy of their guidelines for accessible writing '**Am I making myself clear?**'. They also offer training in how to write and design accessible documents for people with learning disability.

Real Voice Media

4a Greenway Business Centre

Doncaster Road

Bristol

BS10 5PY

Telephone: 0117 959 4424

Email: pete@realvoice.org or karl@realvoice.org

Web: www.realvoice.org

Real Voice Media are able to produce easy information in book, audio-tape, CD, website, video, CD-ROM format. They are also able to assist in compiling reports and producing agendas and minutes for meetings, conferences and working groups.

Widgit Software Ltd.

124 Cambridge Science Park

Milton Road

Cambridge CB4 0ZS

Telephone: 01223 425 558

Fax: 01223 425 349

Email: info@widgit.com Web: www.widgit.com

Their software, Writing with Symbols 2000, can be used to create a document with both words and symbols to aid people with learning difficulties.

Suppliers of Braille Equipment

Blazie UK

Canada House

272 Field End Road

Eastcote
Middlesex
HA4 9NA

Telephone: 020 8582 0450 Fax: 020 8582 0451

Email: barry.webb@blazie.co.uk Web: www.blazie.co.uk

Offer a wide range of equipment including embossers, braille notetakers, software and magnifiers.

Choice Technology (UK) Ltd

7 The Rookery

Orton Wistow

Peterborough PE2 6YT

Telephone: 01733 234 441 Fax: 01733 370 391 Email:

info@screenreader.co.uk Web: www.screenreader.co.uk

Suppliers of equipment to produce braille and large print.

Dolphin Systems for People with Disabilities

Technology House

Blackpool Trading Estate West

Worcester WR3 8TJ

Telephone: 01905 754 577

Email: info@dolphinuk.co.uk Web: www.dolphinuk.co.uk

Suppliers of braille embossers and paper, as well as screen reading software for the visually impaired.

Technovision Systems Ltd

Unit 12, 76 Bunting Road

Industrial Estate

Northampton

NN2 6EE

Telephone: 01604 792 777 Fax: 01604 792 726

Email: info@techno-vision.co.uk Web: www.techno-vision.co.uk

