

## Your response

### Some points about accessibility for people with a learning disability

Mencap is in the process of redeveloping its website, partnering with external agencies to explore what matters most to people with a learning disability – as well as their parents, carers and supporters when it comes to accessing websites and using them.

These are some of the key findings from people with a learning disability when it came to accessibility. Although this has a particular focus on engaging with websites, we feel they are valid principles across digital interfaces in general.

- There is a demand for adapting the content to the users' needs, but less awareness amongst people with a learning disability regarding technologies to assist with this, ie. Readaloud software.
- Icons without context or explanation were not well understood – for example a commonly used [accessibility icon](#) was recognised more as being an indicator of a male toilet than for options to adapt font, colours, etc.
- Bigger is better for text size – research participants found larger text to be preferable in all A/B testing questions.
- Line breaks at the end of each sentence were found to be more accessible by research participants.
- It was clearer to participants that buttons would generate an action if there was an icon indicating what that action was.
- Preceding a text link with an icon better indicated to research participants that there was a link functionality.
- Commonly used platforms among research participants included YouTube, Amazon, and BBC iPlayer, with many reporting the ease of searching for content and the display results being particularly highlighted as positives.
- Frustration by session-blocking experiences like pop-ups, logins and overwhelming 'wall of text' displays were raised in informal discussions.
- Through discussion with participants, it was discovered that accessibility needs are often compounded by other complexities, such as digital literacy, confidence or anxiety around "getting it wrong".

Mencap has its own set of **Make It Clear guidelines** – see attached document. Our guidelines have been developed alongside people with lived experience to support the production of accessible communications.

Mencap would welcome the opportunity to discuss the production of effective and accessible communications for people with a learning disability with Ofcom.



# **Make it clear**

**A guide to making accessible information**

# What is in this guide?



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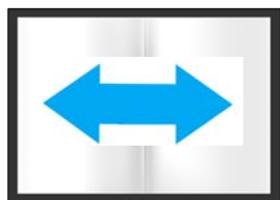
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# What is accessible information?

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## What is accessible information?



Accessible information means information that is easy to understand.



This means that information sometimes needs to be given to people in a different way.



Accessible information can help people to understand information.



It can help people keep their information private.





Sometimes people will be able to understand accessible information on their own.



Sometimes people will need someone to help them.



Easy read is 1 way to help make information clearer for people with a learning disability.



You could also make accessible information by:

- Making or watching a film





- Talking to someone on their own using pictures and objects



- Explaining the information using Makaton



- Making voice notes to explain the main bits of information



- Supporting someone to talk to other people with a learning disability who know about it.

# Make your accessible information with people with a learning disability

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## Make your accessible information with people with a learning disability



Ask people with a learning disability to help you plan what information should be included.



Ask people with a learning disability to test your accessible information when it is finished.



- Are the words easy to read?



- Is there anything they did not understand?



- Are the pictures or films helpful?

# Plan your accessible information

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## Plan your accessible information



Think about who your information is for.



Think about what they may know already.



What do you need to explain?

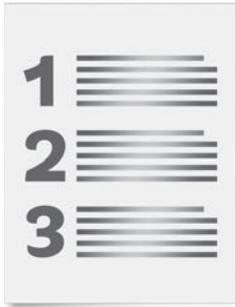


Think about the best way to explain the information.





Think about all the different ideas and topics in your information.



Break the ideas down as much as you can.



Think about the order the ideas need to come in to understand the information.



If you are making an easy read document and a not easy read document, plan them both from the start!

# Writing accessible information

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## Writing accessible information



Use short words.



2 or 3 easy words are often better than 1 long one.



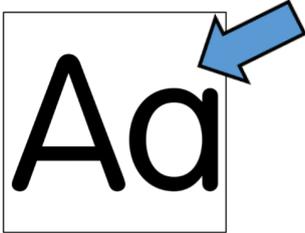
**Font** means how your writing looks.



The best fonts are **sans serif**.



Sans serif means there are no extra lines or curly bits on the letters.



The best fonts have a letter 'a' that look like this.



They have clear space between letters and words.



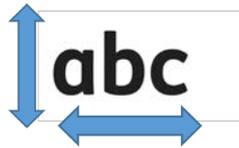
**FS Mencap** font is easy for most people to read, but not everyone has it on their computer.



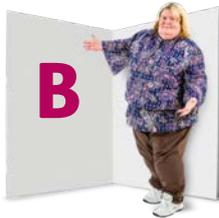
**Tahoma** font is quite easy to read, but the letter 'a' is curly.



Use Tahoma font when you can not use FS Mencap.



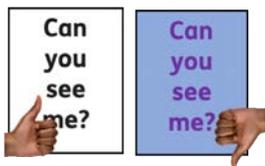
Use size 18 – 24 font.



Using **bold** or **bold in colour** can be helpful to make important text stand out.



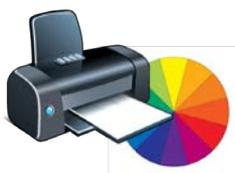
Lots of people find *italics* and words only in CAPITAL LETTERS very hard to read.



Make sure the writing is clear against the colour of the background.



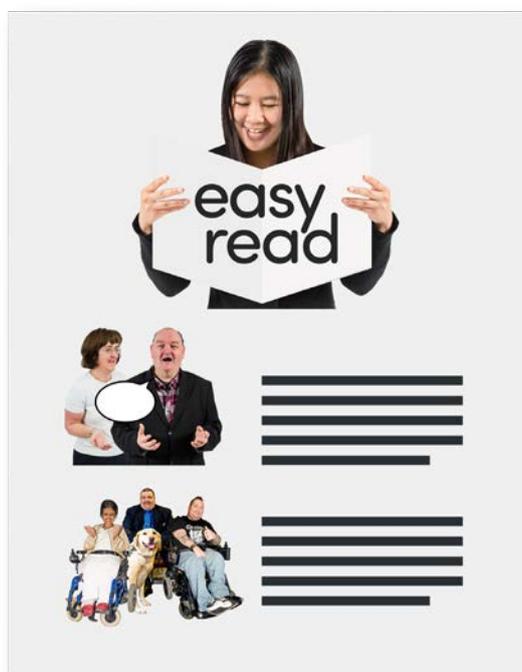
Use plain paper. Do not use shiny paper.



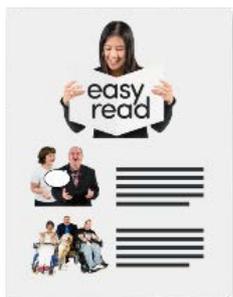
Always print your accessible information in colour.

# Easy read

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## Easy read



Easy read tells you the most important information.



Easy read can be used to help explain difficult ideas.



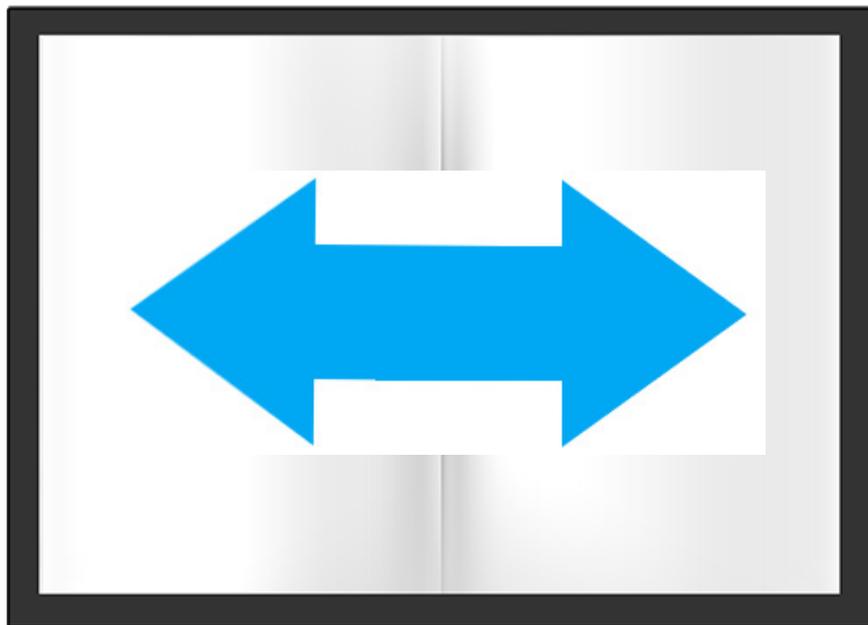
Easy read uses easy words and pictures.

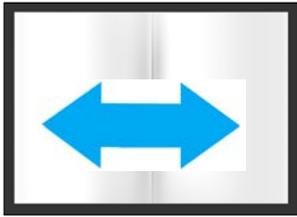


Most of the pictures in this easy read are from Photosymbols.

# Easy read: how long should easy read information be?

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## Easy read: how long should easy read information be?



An easy read leaflet or short booklet should not be more than 12 pages.



Longer easy read needs to be broken up.



A contents page at the front may be helpful,



or you could make a set of different booklets that go together.

# Easy read: planning the pages

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## Easy read: planning the pages



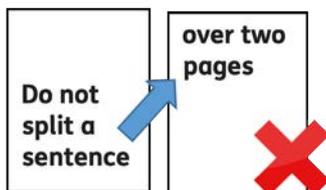
Try to keep each page about 1 subject only.



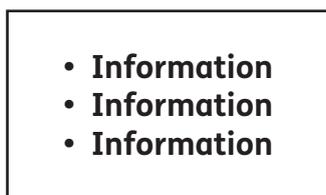
Use headings to make it clear what the page is about.



Good easy read has one idea per sentence.



Do not split a sentence over 2 pages.



Sometimes it is useful to use bullet points to put information in a list.

# Easy read: words

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Stop Hello Eat  
**Words**  
Person Day Open



## Easy read: words



Write words out in full.

**Hosp-  
ital** 

**Never** split a word over 2 lines.



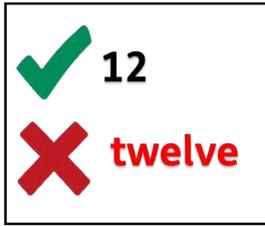
It can be confusing when there are things to do and not do in the same sentence. For example:



Do not forget to bring your boots.



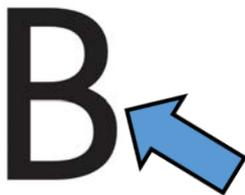
It is clearer to say: Remember to bring your boots.



Write numbers using figures instead of words. For example, 12, not twelve.



Explain any hard words.



Put the hard word in **bold**.



Explain the hard word in the next sentence. For example:



Check your **inbox** for new messages.



An **inbox** is where new emails go.

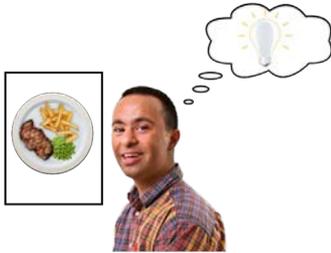
# Easy read: pictures

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## Easy read: pictures



Pictures can help people to understand an idea.



They can help people to pick out words they know.



Use 1 picture to go with every idea or sentence.



**words**

Pictures go on the left, words go on the right.



Try to show pictures of the real thing you are talking about.



Symbols or shapes can be harder to understand.



Show times using 12 hour clocks.



Pretty pictures may not be the best ones to help people understand!



If you use pictures from the internet, check you have permission to use them.



Use the same picture to mean the same thing.



Put as much meaning into your pictures as you can.



Photosymbols pictures have clear backgrounds.

So you can put them on top of each other to make different pictures.



To check your pictures:



Cover up the writing.



Can you tell what the page is about?



# Webpages

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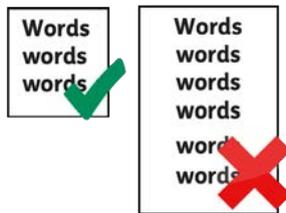




## Webpages



Some extra tips to think about when you are writing information for webpages.



Keep the webpage short.



Use big buttons for people to click on for more information.



Make sure photos are up to date and clear.



Use **alt text** to write what each picture is about.



Lady in  
wheelchair  
smiling with  
her hands in

**Alt text** is short for alternative text.



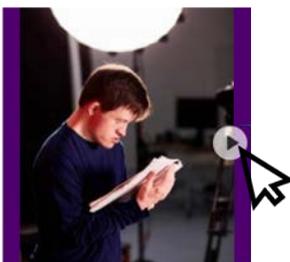
It is the words you can add to a picture on a website to let people know what the picture is.



The **alt text** words will show on a website if the picture will not load.



Screen readers tell people what is on a webpage. They use the **alt text** words to describe a picture.



Add an arrow for people to click on to look at different pictures.



People can click on the arrow to look at the pictures at the speed they choose.



Easy read information for the Mencap website needs to be written as easy read webpages.



You can ask an easy read web editor to make an easy read webpage for you.

# Videos

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## Videos



If you are using your phone to make a video, it is usually best to film in **landscape**.



**Landscape** means holding your phone so that the long side is at the top.



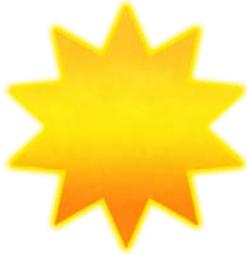
If your video is for social media, it is better to film in **portrait**.



**Portrait** means holding your phone so that the short side is at the top.



To avoid a shaky video, hold the phone or video camera with both hands, or use a selfie stick or a tripod.



Make sure you face the light or the sun when you film.



If you are filming indoors, you might want to find a quiet space and shut the doors and windows.



If you are filming someone talking, have a simple background so that people can focus on what they are saying, not what is happening behind them.

# Help with accessible information

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## Help with accessible information



If you need some help with making accessible information, contact [hello@mencap.org.uk](mailto:hello@mencap.org.uk)



They can:

- put you in touch with people with a learning disability who can help you with your information
- set you up with a Photosymbols account
- give you ideas about how to make your information more accessible
- give you feedback about your accessible information.



[www.mencap.org.uk](http://www.mencap.org.uk)

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