



10.0 Marketing and Communications

Accessible Formats and Languages

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Introduction

This document sets out what organisations should do to ensure that the information they provide is accessible to all.

Accessibility

Accessible means:

- Information can be obtained easily
- Information obtained is in your users' preferred format
- End users can understand it
- End users can reach it physically
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Image: Accessible formats

Your aims should be:

- Remove barriers to accessing information wherever possible
- Comply with all legal duties and responsibilities in terms of access to information
- Ensure all your staff are aware of the options for the provision of information and promote those options to users

Engaging with Your Audience

One method of communication will not suit all. Always keep your audience at the forefront of your mind and consider which channels they are likely to use when they are likely to use them as well as the type and tone of message that will resonate with them.

By telephone

Always quote a preferred 'main' number and welcome calls through:

- **Typetalk** (provides a link between any textphone user and a hearing person)
- A **minicom** number (this service is a telephone typewriter device for communication between deaf, hard of hearing, speech-impaired and/or hearing persons)

In person or in writing

Remember to advertise your full address and postcode so that people can visit you easily. State your normal public hours, and if appointments can be made outside these hours. If you encourage visitors, ensure that your reception areas are fully accessible.

Email

Encourage people to contact you via email but consider a generic email that is accessed by more than one person for general enquiries, as opposed to a named individual, to ensure that responses are not delayed when one person may be busy or on leave.

Your website should also show your full contact details as well as providing contact forms and email hyperlinks to make it as easy as possible for your user to get in touch.

Fax

Fax is still preferred by some users and is useful for returning documents that require a signature, although electronic signatures with providers such as DocuSign, HelloSign, SignNow or PandaDoc are growing in popularity.

Digital communications: website / newsletters

All your users may potentially have an accessibility need at one point in their life. Designing content in a way that helps them access it will make sure that nobody is excluded.

In the UK, 1 in 5 people have a disability - this could be visual, hearing, motor (affecting fine movement) or cognitive (affecting memory and thinking).

The Government Communication Service (GCS) has identified the following examples:

Ability	Permanent	Temporary	Situational
Vision	Blink	Cataracts	Eye Irritation
Hearing	Hearing impairment	Ear infection	In a noisy cafe
Motor	Parkinson's Disease	Arm in plaster	On a moving train
Cognitive	Memory issues	Medicine side-effects	Stressful situations

Building accessibility in right from the start

You should build accessibility into your content right from the start. This means you need to start thinking about how users might access and use your service before you design or build anything.

Screen readers

People with visual impairments may use screen readers. This is a type of software which will read aloud the content of a website or document and describe what is on the screen to help users navigate.

It is important to be mindful of the limitations of software like this so as to avoid any potential problems for people. Screen readers are not capable of interpreting the contents of an image so where an image is used alternative text or "alt" tags should be provided that describe what the image is.

Social media responsibility

Remember that your social media channels are not only for supplying information – it is a great forum for two-way conversations. Your audience may opt to contact you via these channels as opposed to having the conversation elsewhere.

These channels provide an opportunity to show your audience that you are listening, therefore monitoring, and responding to queries is important. Depending upon the channel, the format for conversations may be more informal than via the traditional methods already mentioned.

When faced with tricky queries from a disgruntled audience member, it is always better to remain positive on the channel and to swiftly take the conversation offline by requesting if you can make contact directly.

Writing accessible social posts

When drafting accessible social posts, it is important that you consider the following points:

- Ensure the language is relevant to the target audience. Avoid jargon that may confuse the audience and stay away from acronyms where possible.
- Stick to 25 words per sentence and avoid large chunks of text.
- Use line breaks to create space.
- Avoid bold, italicised, or capitalised texts in your post.
- Limit emojis to 2-3 per post and avoid repeating the same emojis consecutively.
- Hashtags should use upper case at the start of new letters, for example #MentalHealthWeek
- Avoid using more than one hashtag per post.
- Use full links rather than shortened links where possible. If using shorter links, Bitly tracks analytics and performance and also allows for more character count in posts.

Designing accessible assets

When creating assets for use on social media, it is important you consider the following points:

- Do not use colour to convey a key message in isolation (**for example to describe an action**)
- Do not use colour in isolation to distinguish between information in charts and tables. Be sure to publish the data too.
- Avoid pale colours on pale or white backgrounds (**and dark colours on dark backgrounds**)
- Low contrast is difficult for many people to read. Use a colour contrast checker to check the contrast between your background, text, and other components – it should have a minimum ratio of 4:5:1
- Think about using a smaller colour palette or check intersecting colours individually when using more than 3
- Gradients can be confusing or distracting – use block colours instead.

For fonts:

- Avoid using bold, italicised, or complex fonts which can be difficult to read
- Do not use small font sizes to try to crowd content onto social media graphics as a solution to too much copy. Instead, challenge the brief to see whether the information and message can be simplified.
- Minimise use of text in graphics using standard best practice for font size and alignment
- Do not justify text – ensure text is left-aligned, in line with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (**WCAG 2.01**) and make things clearer for people with cognitive disabilities
- A visual that uses fewer words with larger fonts can be punchier in a social feed and therefore have greater impact.



External Link

More information on making content accessible can be found in the UK Government service manual:

[UK Government Service Manual](#)

For imagery, gifs, animations, and video:

- Always use subtitles and closed captions on videography to ensure people can both hear and see the context of the video if they want to.
- Have a voice over on video and animated assets, to ensure people can both see and hear the post if they want to.
- Avoid moving images behind text which can be challenging for screen reader users
- There should be a minimum of 20db difference between background music and voiceovers on video content
- Social media platforms such as YouTube allow you to add subtitles and captions easily for free, but should always be manually checked for errors
- Apply the best practice on font sizes and colour contrast described above when designing video captions
- Check transition times on gifs, videos, and animations to ensure the audience can follow the content. As a guide, the average person reads approximately 200-250 words per minute, but be mindful of your audience and be aware that some cognitive impairments allow for a lower comprehension rate.
- Do not use multiple columns to share critical information in small graphics. And remember, just using bullet points does not fix this issue.
- Avoid flashing images as that can cause seizures. Nothing should flash more than 3 times a second.
- “Easy read” assets use iconography, illustration, or imagery to convey important messages for those who are illiterate or need support with the language being spoken.



External Link

An example of an Easy Read document and assets can be found on the UK Government website

[Coronavirus information leaflet: Easy Read](#)

Welsh Language Standards

The **Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011** makes Welsh an official language in Wales. This means it must be treated no less favourably than English.

While not all activity has to be translated in its exact context, an equal balance should be aimed for in terms of both English and Welsh speaking audiences being exposed to activity.

Languages other than English/Welsh

Consider telephone interpretation, which allows you to access a telephone translation service whilst your enquirers are on the line.

Face to face interpretation - if you have an appointment to discuss a specific issue you may need to arrange to have an interpreter present.

Translations

Consider information that your organisation distributes and whether it would be useful or beneficial for this written information to be translated into and available in languages other than English and Welsh. Consider simultaneous translations from Welsh for larger events.

Formats

Large print

Standard letters and information should be provided in point size 12 as a minimum. However, you should always offer to provide on request, the information in a larger point size than this.

Braille

Offer your information in Braille. For further information please contact RNIB. Please note that your information may be translated into English Braille or Welsh Braille.

Audio tape

Information can be made available on tape. For further information please contact RNIB or Wales Council for the Blind.

Signers

It may be necessary for you to provide British Sign Language at meetings and events. This needs to be arranged in advance.



Information

For further information please contact RNID or Wales Council for Deaf People.

Easy read

Easy Read is high quality accessible information aimed at people with a learning disability.



External Link

Learning Disability Wales operates an Easy Read service, and you can find more information about their service and what they do here:

[Easy Read Wales Website](#)

Further Information

RNIB Events Wales

Royal National Institute of Blind People

Tel: 029 2045 0440

Fax: 029 2044 9550

CymruEvents@rnib.org.uk

RNID

Action on Hearing Loss

Tel: 0808 808 0123

Textphone: 0808 808 9000

informationline@rnid.org.uk

Vision in Wales

Tel: 029 20473954

richard@wcb-ccd.org.uk

www.wcb-ccd.org.uk

Wales Council for Deaf People

Tel: 01443 485 687

Fax: 01443 408 555

Textphone: 01443 485 686

mail@wcdeaf.org.uk

www.wcdeaf.org.uk

Welsh Language Commissioner

Tel: 0845 6033 221

post@welshlanguagecommissioner.org

www.welshlanguagecommissioner.org

Easy Read Service

Learning Disability Wales

Tel: 029 2068 1160

easyread@ldw.org.uk

www.easyreadwales.org.uk



Cefnogi Trydydd
Sector **Cymru**

Third Sector
Support **Wales**

Third Sector Support Wales is a network of support organisations for the whole of the third sector in Wales.

It consists of the 19 local and regional support bodies across Wales, the County Voluntary Councils (CVCs) and the national support body, Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA).

For further information contact
<https://thirdsectorsupport.wales/contact/>

Disclaimer

The information provided in this sheet is intended for guidance only. It is not a substitute for professional advice and we cannot accept any responsibility for loss occasioned as a result of any person acting or refraining from acting upon it.