

## Guidelines on producing information in an accessible format.

Information for people with a learning disability is usually produced by local offices or centrally through the Devon Learning Disability Partnership Board or Puddle Board.

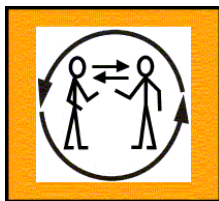
If you are ever asked to produce information in an accessible format then there are certain guidelines which you can follow.

Remember, everyone with a learning disability is different and so any information you produce will never be able to work for everyone.

### Plain English

- Always use plain English. Write out what you want to say and then try and cut out everything that is not relevant.
- Look at the words you use. Is there a simpler word that would work as well? Try to avoid jargon. If you have to use a jargon term then always explain what it means.
- Be consistent. If you start by saying 'people' do not suddenly change to 'client' or 'service user' to describe the same thing.
- Be personal. Always write in the first person. 'You' and 'we' is direct and easy to understand.
- Write for adults. It is possible to be clear without being childish.
- Try not to use lots of punctuation. Avoid colons (:), semi-colons (;) and hyphens (-). Try not to use commas. If there are 2 separate ideas in 1 sentence then try and use a full stop instead.

### Symbols and Pictures



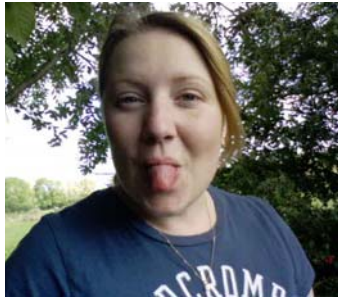
Pictures can be very useful and can make your information clearer and easier to understand.

Many people think of symbols such as Widgit, but there are many different types of symbols and pictures that can be used.

- Symbols are only helpful if your reader understands them. Try and choose one or two simple picture symbols and put them next to your text.



Use a symbol or picture that supports your text and makes it clearer. Do not use symbols which are not relevant. If you cannot find the symbol you want you may need to draw it yourself or find something else.



Kelly

Photographs are the best way of supporting your text. They are not abstract like symbols and you can take your own photos. Photos also help people with more complex needs.

If you use a photo of a particular person always put their name underneath.

- Be careful if you are using Widgit. If you simply type into your document it will put a symbol above every single word. It is best to pick one or two clear symbols and then place them next to the text you want to explain.
- There are many different symbols packages. In Devon the symbols used in 'My Life My Plan' are the only ones which are consistent across the county.
- You can find common symbols at [www.learningdisabilitiesdevon.org.uk](http://www.learningdisabilitiesdevon.org.uk).  
You can copy and paste symbols from this site into your own document.

- Avoid clipart it can be unhelpful.

## Style

- The smallest font you should use is 12 point. 16 point is good although some people prefer 20 point.
- Print black on a white or pale yellow background.

Use bullet points or text boxes to separate information or make important information stand out

- Put titles in **bold**. Do not underline or use *italics* as this can be confusing to read.
- Use only clear fonts like Arial or Univers.
- Use thick, matt paper so that the writing on the other side doesn't show through and the paper won't give off a glare.
- Do not justify your text. Leave a ragged right edge.
- Do not separate words over two lines. In the same way do not separate pieces of information. Start a new line or a new page.
- Be creative!

## **More Information**

If you would like more information on accessible information and resources speak to

Kelly Fitzsimmons  
Information Officer – Exeter  
Room A127  
01392 382372  
07971 547642

or

Kathryn Bird  
Advocacy Development Co-ordinator - Devon  
Ivybank  
01392 385507

If you would like more information on Plain English speak to

Jo White  
Public Information and Communication Officer  
Room A127  
01392 382332

## **Useful Websites**

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

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

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

[www.through-the-maze.org.uk](http://www.through-the-maze.org.uk)

[www.drc-gb.org](http://www.drc-gb.org)

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

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

[www.changepeople.co.uk](http://www.changepeople.co.uk)

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

[www.google.co.uk](http://www.google.co.uk) – use Google images for pictures if you have time to search.

