



A Brief Guide to Easy Read

Easy Read Documents

Easy Read is about making written information easier to understand. Easy Read documents have short, simple sentences often with pictures.

Easy Read is also known as:

- making information easier
- easier to understand information
- simple words and pictures
- easy write
- easy info.

Easy Read documents are used to make information more accessible to people with learning disabilities. They can also be useful for people with other communication difficulties including:

- acquired brain injury
- dyslexia
- people with hearing impairment whose first language is British Sign Language (BSL)
- people who do not speak English as their first language
- people who find reading difficult
- people with cognitive impairments such as dementia.

The Equality Act

Public authorities have a duty to promote equality and eliminate discrimination. This may involve making sure that disabled people have equal access to information.

There are two kinds of Easy Read documents.

Group 1: for the general population

These include documents that will be used by a lot of people. They may be an easy version of a more complex document.

Example: an easy read version of an Act of Parliament

Or, the easy read version may be the only one produced.

Example: a voluntary organisation supporting adults with a learning disability decides to make all its documents in easy read

Group 2: personalised

These include documents written for one person or, a small group of people. For example, people who share the same house. The words will be about that person or group and the pictures may be photographs of people and places that they know.

Example: the kind of support that a person needs

Some types of information are so specific they are going to be of use to only a handful of people. Instead of spending money on an easy read version, maybe you could simply speak to these people over the phone or in person.

It is likely that it will be preferable to speak to people in person, possibly using easy read information to help the discussion.

Example: how to do a job

Easy Read documents will not meet the needs of everyone who has difficulties in reading and understanding written information.

Easy Read documents will:

- allow some people to access the information independently
- provide a useful tool for support workers when working with individuals or groups
- enable people to make their own choices.

Easy Read documents are just one way of helping people understand information. Other ways include:

- speaking to someone
- film (DVD or internet sites like YouTube)
- Audio recordings (CD, MP3).

Top Tips for Writing Easy Read Documents

Things to think about before you start

Who the information is for

What they need to know

Why they need to know

80% of people with a learning disability have communication difficulties

Words

Use short words

Use simple words

Avoid putting more than one idea in a sentence

Stick to concrete ideas

Try to use I, we, you

Try to use the present tense

Try not to use jargon or long, hard words

If you must use a hard word, explain what it means

Numbers

Write numbers in figures

Use a clock to illustrate time

Length

Write short sentences

Keep your documents short

Don't miss anything important

Pictures

Pictures should support the meaning of the words

Pictures must be easy to understand

Pictures can be drawings, photographs or other images

Make pictures as big as possible

Where possible use pictures that have a meaning for the person or group of people. For example, use pictures that are local.

Layout

Use a large font size (at least 14 point)

Use plenty of white space

Use Ariel font

Use one colour of print

Use clear headings

Testing

Once you have written your document read it out loud. Can you get rid of more words?

Discuss the draft with a group of people who might use it. Make agreed changes and take it back to the group for agreement.

Useful Publications

How to make information accessible: a guide to producing easy read documents

Change, (2007)

www.changepeople.co.uk Type "Guide" in Search Box

How to use Easy Words and Pictures: Easy Read Guide

Disability Rights Commission (DRC), (2006)

DRC (replaced in Oct 2007 by the Equality and Human Rights commission), no date.

www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/how_to_use_easy_words_and_pictures.pdf

Inspired Services Guides to Making Information Easier

www.inspiredservices.org.uk Click onto "Free Stuff"

Guidelines for Accessible Documents

NHS Scotland, 2007

www.nhsforthvalley.com/LDMCN/LDMCNHomePage.html Click on Publications

Basic guidelines for people who commission Easy Read information.

Department of Health, 2009.

www.ldhealthnetwork.org.uk/docs/erguide.pdf

Useful Organisations

Enable Scotland, Accessible information Unit, 2nd Floor, 146 Argyle Street,
Glasgow G2 8BL

Tel: 0141 226 4541

Fax: 0141 204 4398

Email: enable@enable.org.uk

Website: www.enable.org.uk

FAIR, 95 Causewayside, Edinburgh EH9 1QG

Tel: 0131 662 1962

Fax: 0131 662 9486

Email: fair@fairadvice.org.uk

Website: www.fairadvice.org.uk

FAIR DEAL, 355a Tormusk Road, Castlemilk, Glasgow G45 0HF

Tel: 0141 634 4996

Fax: 0141 634 1094

Email: info@fair-deal.org

Website: www.fair-deal.org

Scottish Consortium for Learning Disability (SCLD), Adelphi Centre, 12
Commercial Road, Glasgow G5 0PQ

Tel: 0141 418 5420

Fax: 0141 429 1142

Email: info@sclد.org.uk

Website: www.sclد.org.uk

Contact us

Scottish Accessible Information Forum
Consumer Focus Scotland
Royal Exchange House
100 Queen Street
Glasgow
G1 3DN

Tel: 0141 226 5261

Fax: 0141 221 9695

Email: info@saifscotland.org.uk

Website: www.saifscotland.org.uk

August 2011