

Making Word Documents Accessible

The Disability Discrimination Act states that you must ensure your information is accessible to disabled people.

To meet the needs of disabled people:

Avoid using small fonts and setting large blocks of text in italics.

Use styles to add structure to your documents, e.g. use the heading style to create headings rather than just making text look like a heading by making it bold.

Provide alternative labels for all images. To do this, right-click on the image, then select Format Picture. A dialogue box will appear. Select the Web tab and then add the appropriate alternative text.

Create clear uncluttered pages, with plenty of white space. Use bulleted lists when appropriate as they can be easier to understand than long paragraphs.

Avoid animated or flashing/blinking text.

Ensure there is good contrast between elements on the page, e.g. text and background colours.

Use the built-in table tools when creating columns of text. Don't use tabs to create tables.

Use descriptive link text for links, when linking to web pages within your documents.

Add space around paragraphs using style formatting options rather than using carriage returns. This is particularly important if you intend to convert your Word documents into PDF files.

Provide your staff with disability equality training. A key barrier for disabled people is negative attitudes towards them.

If you have embedded sound files, provide a text transcript of the sound file content.

For more information, contact:

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