



Make it clear

A guide to making information easy to read
and understand

Mencap 60

Celebrating in 2006/2007



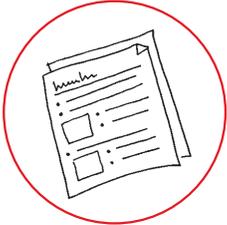
People with a learning disability have helped to make this guide about making the things you write easy to read.

Things to think about



The words you use

2



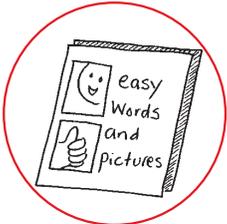
Where to put words on the page

3



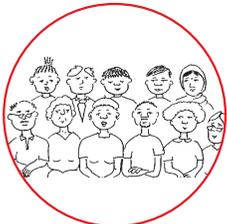
How to use pictures

4



Choosing the type of writing and the paper

5



Making it easier for everyone to understand

6



Where to put words on the page

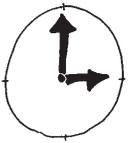
- Try to keep everything about a subject on the same page.
- Do not split words over 2 lines.
- Do not split sentences over 2 pages.
- Use page numbers.
- Try not to use columns. It is easier to read straight across the page.
- On forms leave a lot of room for people to fill in their name and address.





How to use pictures

- Putting pictures next to words will help your reader understand what the words mean.
- Use the same picture to mean the same thing in everything you write.
- Pictures should go on the left. Words should go on the right.
- Do not break up paragraphs with pictures.
- Do not print text on top of or across a picture.
- Show times with clocks. Times should be 12 hour not 24 hour. For example 1.00pm not 13.00.
- Use clear pictures. Some pictures in a cartoon style can be confusing or childish.
- Maps are difficult to understand. Use pictures of places that people will recognise. Explain how to find the place in words as well as pictures. Try not to use the words left and right.
- Charts are difficult to understand. Try not to use them.
- Using a pretty picture on a poster or leaflet will not help your reader if it does not help them to understand what the information is about.





Choosing the type of writing and the paper

a

a

14pt

16pt

18pt

- Use a typeface that is clear. Like Arial. This is a sans serif typeface. Serif typefaces can be harder to read.
- Text should be at least 14 point or bigger.
- Make sure headings are clear.
- Think about the colour of the paper and the colour of the writing.
- Make sure the writing stands out against the colour of the paper.
- Green is not a good colour for paper.
- Words in white on a coloured background can be harder to read.
- Black text on yellow paper can work well or black text on an off-white paper. Black on white also works well for lots of people.
- If you are writing something with a lot of pages think about using colour coding to make the different sections clear. Use the same colours in the index and the contents page. But remember – not everyone can recognise colours.
- Shiny paper makes it harder to see the words and pictures because it reflects light.





Making it easier for everyone to understand

- Making things easy to understand will help everyone to understand what you are trying to say.
- Information that you can read like a book is easier to follow than lots of sheets.
- Make your book A5 size or larger so it is easy to hold and turn the pages.
- Make it available in other ways if you can. Think about recording the information on a tape or CD.



Ask people with a learning disability to look at your information. They are the experts.

Listen to what they say and be prepared to make the changes they suggest.

Did you find this document useful and easy to understand?
We would like to know what you think.



Email your comments to csfeedback@mencap.org.uk

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Thanks to CHANGE for the use of the Picture Bank, and to Sue Hellard.