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**Code of Practice on Producing Information** (Revised - September 2022)

**Supplement A - Preparing the Document**

**Contents Page No**

**1. Introduction ……………………………………………………………………………. 3**

**2. Languages other than English …….…………………………………………….. 3**

**3. Braille, Large Print, Tape & Disc ………………………………………………… 4**

**4. Style**

**4.1 Size/ format of Text ………………………………………………………………….. 5**

**4.2 Colour ………………………………………………………………………………………. 6**

**4.3 Overprinting ……………………………………………………………………………… 6**

**4.4 Layout ………………………………………………………………………………………. 7**

**4.5 Tables, Text boxes etc ……………………………………………………………….. 7**

**5. Printing ……………………………………………………………………………………….. 7**

**6. Binding ………………………………………………………………………………………… 8**

**7. Alternative Formats Message ………………………………………………………. 8**

**1. Introduction**

When preparing documentation or information relevant to Derry City and Strabane District Council facilities and services the following practices should be implemented: -

**2. Languages other than English**

Derry City and Strabane District Council has a select list of translators and interpreters which is updated every 3 years. If you receive a request for a document to be translated into an alternative format you should inform the Policy Officer (Equality) (Tel: 028 71 365151 Ext 6705, or email: [equality@derrystrabane.com](mailto:equality@derrystrabane.com)).

ThePolicy Officer (Equality) will process your request normally within 5 working days – although this may vary slightly depending on the size of the document and format being requested.

Translating information into different languages shows everybody that the services of the Council are for all the people of the Derry City and Strabane District Council area.

It is not always useful to translate into written form because many people can speak their first languages but cannot read it. You should therefore consider producing audio or video recordings (CD/DVD).

Videos are one of the most effective ways of getting information to BSL (British Sign Language) or ISL (Irish Sign Languages) users since their knowledge of written English is often very limited.

If you have a document translated into a language other than English, remember to put this statement on the front cover of the English version:

**This leaflet on (subject) is available in Irish, Ulster Scots, Chinese, Urdu (or whatever the language is required).**

**Contact: Policy Unit,**

**Tel: 028 71 253253 Ext 6705,or**

**E-mail :** [**equality@derrystrabane.com**](mailto:equality@derrystrabane.com) **for copies.**

Also, on each of the translated leaflets, put the leaflet’s title **in English** on the back cover. This will help all staff know what the translated leaflets are and where to display them.

Where practicable staff should endeavour to anticipate need/demand for information in alternative formats to ensure that all publications are available at the same time and in the same design format as the original English version.

For further information or to make arrangements for a document to be translated or to arrange for interpretation services (including sign language), please contact thePolicy Officer (Equality).

**3. Braille, Large Print, Tape & Disc**

**Braille**

Under the Disability Discrimination Act, disabled people are entitled to receive information in whatever format they require.

For many visually impaired people, print is not their preferred method of receiving information. The Council will provide information in Braille, in audio format and on disc etc., upon request**.**

**Large Print**

There may still be a need for a small number of large print copies of documents to be made to cater for severely partially sighted people, upon request. In these circumstances **18-point text** is recommended for documentation.

The letters should be set within a “leading” or spacing which is at least 2 points bigger than the letters themselves. **The Style guidelines set out in the next section should also be followed.**

**Disc**

An increasing number of visually impaired people wish to be sent information on computer disc, so they can enlarge it and print it to their own requirements on their home computers.

**4. Style**

The guidelines below are aimed at making information easier to read and may be of assistance in communicating young people, those people who have a visual impairment and people with a learning disability. The following recommendations should be followed for written information:

**4.1 Size/ format of Text**

* A minimum of 14 point is recommended for use in leaflets and any public document that is less than two pages.
* Longer documents should be produced in a minimum of 12 point (14 point is recommended to reach more people with sight problems).
* Where summary documents are prepared to improve accessibility, these should be produced in a minimum of 14 point.
* Where a request is received for a large print version of a document this should be prepared in a minimum of 18 point (or in the individual’s preferred font, if specified)
* Always use a clear typeface – such as Arial, Helvetica, Univers or Swiss 721 Roman. Choose a font with easily distinguishable characters. In some fonts it may be easy to confuse certain characters, for example (capital i) with l (lower case L). Also you must ensure numbers are distinct – in certain typefaces 0 and 6 can be confused.(Accessible Media)
* Avoid the use of italics
* Do not use block capitals, for example, in headings. People recognise words by their shape. Using block capitals particularly affects people with reading difficulties.
* Underlining should also be avoided as it makes it more difficult for people with a visual impairment to recognise the shape of the words as the underline intersects with the letter descenders (tails of letters like p and g).
* If there is a need to add emphasis to text it is recommended that a bolder font weight is used.
* Use “ragged right” and not “fully justified” text. Fully justified text (justified on both sides) creates uneven spaces in text that makes it difficult to read.
* Avoid splitting words over two lines by using hyphens as this disrupts reading flow.
* Generally, all text should be set horizontally. Text set at an angle or following a curved line is more difficult to locate and read. Text set vertically is extremely difficult for a reader with low vision to follow, and should not be used.
* Avoid fitting text around images if this means that lines of text start in a different place and are therefore difficult to read.
* Sentence and paragraph length should also be kept as short as possible.

**4.1 Size/ format of Text (contd)**

* The space between lines of text needs to be adequate - If it is too narrow, the print can be difficult to read, making it difficult for people with visual impairment to recognise word shapes. For larger fonts, more spacing is required between lines.
* Make sure the margin between columns clearly separates them. If space is limited, use a vertical rule.

**4.2 Colour**

* Using different colours in a publication can help people find relevant information quickly - but do not use too many.
* Ensure that there is as much contrast as possible between paper colour and print colour so that text is easy to read. High contrast between colours is crucial to legibility and this can be achieved by enhancing the difference between the lightness and darkness of colours
* Black and white produces the highest possible contrast.
* To help features stand out, exaggerate the lightness of light colours and darkness of dark colours when used next to each other as this will enhance contrast.
* Avoid using colours which are similar in lightness or similar in darkness next to one another, even if they differ in colour, for example light green and light red, as some people with low vision or colour vision deficiencies may not be able to tell the difference between these colours. Ensure that you choose colours that have a good differentiation for people with colour deficiency. You can find out more on the Vischeck website - <http://www.vischeck.com/vischeck/vischeckURL.php>
* Avoid using similar colours together, for example red and orange, or green and blue-green particularly if they do not vary in lightness as they will not be easy to distinguish.
* Avoid using achromatic colours (black, white, grey) against colours of similar lightness or darkness, for example dark grey against black
* Use matt paper that has a good contrast between the print colour and the paper colour – black print on off-white or yellow shades is best.

**4.3 Overprinting**

* Avoid using text on an image or patterned background as the colour contrast will vary and the shapes of the letters will be harder to identify or find - background should be solid.

**4.4 Layout**

* Use a clear, standard layout with headings that stand out from the general text.
* Be consistent and logical in laying out text and illustrations. It should be clear in which order blocks of text should be read and which illustration relates to which block of text.
* Users with a visual impairment may using magnification technology to read the document therefore only a small part of the page is visible at a time. It is therefore best to avoid placing information on the right hand side of the page without connecting it visually to the left margin.
* Where text or tables run on to two or more pages ensure that all headings continue onto all pages to ensure the reader can relate information back to the appropriate topic.
* Write all addresses as they appear on an envelope, not on one line separated by commas.

**4.5 Tables, Text boxes etc.**

* Tables/text boxes should be located between paragraphs and should not interrupt the flow of text.
* Tables/text boxes need to have sufficient space around text or information contained within the cell so that the contents do not merge visually with the borders of the table.
* Information within the cell should ideally be left aligned.
* Border lines in tables should be used to make it easier for the reader to locate information.

**5. Printing**

There are three important factors to consider when choosing paper for printing documentation:

* How much light the paper reflects. Avoid glossy papers as light will reflect off the surface and obscure the print. Matt laminated covers look very impressive and avoid this problem.
* Amount of ‘show through’. It is important to choose paper that is thick enough so that the text printed on one side cannot be seen on the other side to the extent that it interferes with legibility. If it is not possible to choose paper thick enough to prevent show-through, print single-sided. Using a paper colour of 10% - 15% tint can both help reduce glare and the writing on the other side will not show through.
* Colour of paper. Choose a paper colour that will give an adequate contrast between the text and background. Generally, white paper with black produces the best contrast. However, for some readers this produces too much contrast so an off-white colour may be preferred.

**6. Binding**

Documents should be bound on the left to enable them to be opened out flat for use with magnification technology.

Staples work well for shorter documents. Wire binding allows a larger document to be bound and still be opened out flat.

**7. Alternative Formats Message**

All Council publications should contain the following alternative formats statement:

**This document is available upon request in a number of formats including large print, Braille, PDF, audio formats and minority languages.**

**For further information on alternative formats please contact the Policy Unit by:**

**Telephone: 028 71 253253 (Ext 6705)**

**Email: equality@derrystrabane.com**