

# 5 main points for making information for disabled people better

A guide for people who work for public organisations



**Easyread version**

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## A few words from Anne McGuire



People who design services need to think about how they can meet the needs of the people who use them - school children, passengers and the public.



Having good information is an important part of making sure services can meet people's needs.



Disabled people are important customers. There will be more disabled people in the future. By including disabled people, when setting up and running a service, you will make your service better for everybody.



The law says that public organisations must look at how everything they do affects disabled people. This means that they must think about disabled people's needs and ask them what they think.



It is important to think about how you give customers information, including disabled people.



You should think about all the information you give out, in leaflets, on websites and even through other organisations.



You should ask disabled people what information they need and how they want to get it. It is not just about how you give people information. Different groups might need different information.



Even so, we think that there are some main points to think about and we have put them in this guide.

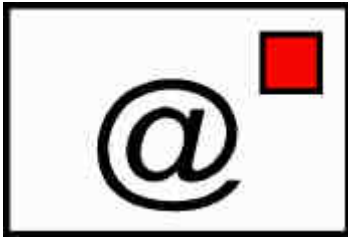


This guide is part of a project that the Office for Disability Issues is doing to help public organisations make information better for disabled people.



We are going to carry on working on this project and we would like to know what work is being done on good information. Please tell us if what you are doing is working well.

Please e-mail us at



**office-for-disability-issues@dwp.gsi.gov.uk**



We are all busy people, but we must work hard to make sure that services include everybody.



This guide is meant to be a first step in finding the right ways to do things. We hope it will at least get you thinking about how you give out information to disabled people.



Thank you

Anne McGuire  
Minister for Disabled People



## What is this paper about?



This guide is part of a project that the Office for Disability Issues (ODI) is doing to help public organisations make information better for disabled people.



As well as this guide, the ODI has written a report about how things are going at the moment and what needs to happen. It is called 'Making Information Better for Disabled People'.



[www.officefordisability.gov.uk/publications](http://www.officefordisability.gov.uk/publications)



We would like to thank all the organisations that have helped us with the project and given us some examples of making good information.



There is a list of these organisations and their contact details at the back of this guide.

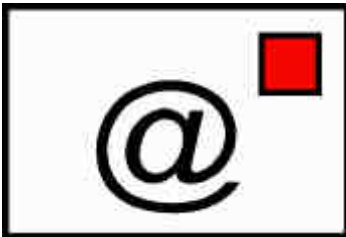


This project is not finished yet. We are going to do more work on the 5 main points in this guide and will be testing them with some public organisations.



If you want more information about the project or the examples in this guide, please get in touch.

Email:



[office-for-disability-issues@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:office-for-disability-issues@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)

**Office for Disability Issues  
The Adelphi  
1-11 John Adam Street  
London  
WC2N 6HT**





## Introduction



Good services need to be accessible and need to make sure that people are not left out. Having good information is an important part of making this happen.



Disabled people are an important group of people and many of them use public services. They need information about services and how to get them.



Many disabled people have had problems getting the information they need. Making information better for disabled people will make things better for everyone.



The law says that public organisations like government, schools, hospitals or emergency services must make things equal for disabled people in all their work.



This guide is to help public organisations make better information for disabled people.



We have come up with 5 main points:

1. Talk to disabled people from the start



2. Give out information in different ways and different places



3. Make sure information meets the needs of the people using the service



4. Give people clear information about other services



5. Make sure people know who is giving them the information



These main points should be used together to help you with big projects, like setting up new services, or small projects, like writing a leaflet.



It is never too late to start making good information but it is best to use these 5 points from the start.

## The 5 main points and examples



### Point 1 - Talk to disabled people from the start

Information and services should focus on what the people using services need.



Spending time and money on including disabled people from the start will help you meet their needs.



It is important to involve a wide range of disabled people and act on what they tell you.



You should find out what people who use services and carers think about your information and services, and how they can be made more accessible.



You can do this by getting in touch with groups of disabled people, setting up a forum or taking on a disabled person to be a 'champion' and speak up for others.

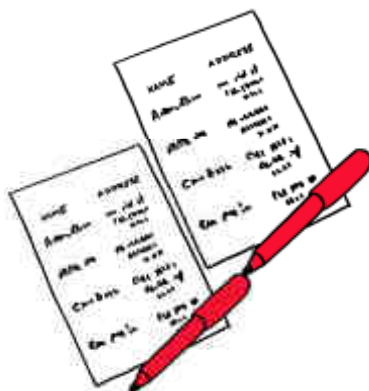
## A good example



Surrey County Council decided they needed to find out how many people with a learning disability lived in the area and more about their needs.



They asked people who use services about their needs and about services that were not meeting them.



From this information they could see that they needed lists of people with different disabilities and needs, to help local services support people.



The lists were set up and tested by people who use services. Over 5000 people have decided to put their names on the list. The lists have been used to make services better.



For more information see

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





## Point 2 - Give out information in different ways and different places



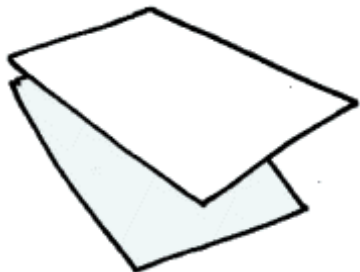
It is important to think about who the information is for and what their access needs are. All information should be clear and should not use difficult words.



Good information supports people to make choices about how they want to live their lives.



You should talk to disabled people about how to make the information that will be used by them.



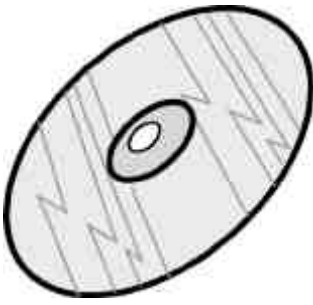
There are different ways of giving out information. They include:

- on paper



- over the telephone or textphone





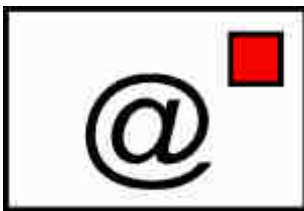
- DVD or CD-ROM



- in person

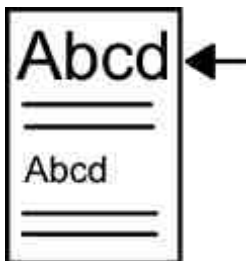


- on the internet



- using e-mail

There are also lots of ways of making information accessible. They include:



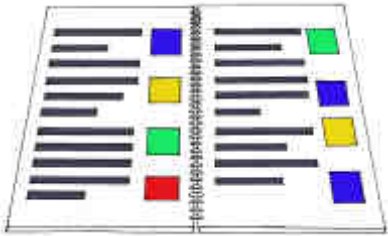
- large print



- CD or tape



- Braille



- Easy read



- Makaton



- Video



- Accessible websites



You can get more information from:

**[www.imagesofdisability.gov.uk](http://www.imagesofdisability.gov.uk)**

## A good example



The Directgov website gives the public information about government services. Part of the website is for disabled people and another part is for carers.



The website covers the whole country and gives people links to local services, charities and groups.



The website uses different ways to make information accessible. They include, films, leaflets that people can save on their computers and information on mobile telephones and digital television.



More people are using the website every year.

For more information see

**[www.direct.gov.uk/disability](http://www.direct.gov.uk/disability)**

and

**[www.direct.gov.uk/carers](http://www.direct.gov.uk/carers)**





### **Point 3 - Make sure information meets the needs of the people using the service**



This is about how you organise information. It should meet people's needs rather than the organisation's needs.



Different people will need information in different ways. Good information for disabled people may also help older people and people from minority ethnic communities.



Information needs to be easy to find and use. It should tell people about services, who can get them, how to ask for them and where to get more information.



You should look at the information you give out at the moment to see if it is organised in the best way possible.

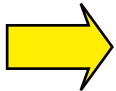
You could organise information under:



- important issues like getting a job or things to do in your spare time



- information for a group of people like young disabled people or carers



- important times or events in a person's life, like growing up, buying a house or becoming disabled.



Some people do not see themselves as disabled, so think about different ways of giving people information about services.



## A good example

The Elderly Accommodation Council (EAC) decided to set up a website called HousingCare to give people information and advice about housing for older people because the advice helpline that they run was getting too busy.



The way the information is set out makes it easy for people to find the information they need.



There are lists of information about sheltered housing, care homes, organisations that can make changes to homes and places to get advice.



There are questions to help people look for information like, 'Are you thinking about choices for the future?' and 'Do you need answers to problems?'





People can use their postcode to look for services in their area. People asked for this and it was set up.



People give their views about how to make the website better. They can do this on the website or over the telephone.



People have said that HousingCare is excellent and very useful.



For more information see

**[www.housingcare.org](http://www.housingcare.org)**



## Point 4 - Give people clear information about other services



Being able to tell disabled people where to go for other information is part of making information and services accessible.



It is a good idea to put information about other services in any information you give out.



It is a good idea to make links with voluntary organisations like charities and advocacy groups. They often give disabled people and carers information and support.



By working together you can save money and make sure that different groups do not keep doing the same work.

## A good example



Cheshire County Council set up a network of older people so they could find out what support and services they need now or might need in the future.



The network of older people holds meetings and works at a high level with councillors. They also campaign on issues like the cost of care, road crossings and healthy communities.



The network has over 500 members and the council listens to what they say.



At the moment, they are working on a guide to local services for older people.



For more information see

**[www.Cheshire.gov.uk](http://www.Cheshire.gov.uk)**



## Point 5 - Make sure people know who is giving them the information



Organisations should work at all levels to make information better for disabled people.



There should be time, money and staff to do this.



Disabled people feel that organisations that run services do not always know who should be giving information out across the country or in local areas.



How information is made and given out needs to be planned. Organisations need to work together and agree on who will do what.



Disability Equality Schemes should be clear about how information is made and given out. This should be checked often.

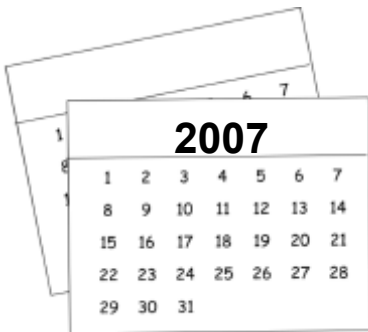
## A good example



In the London Borough of Hammersmith, a project showed that people had to go to lots of different places to get information about children's services. Often the information was not accessible.



People said that they wanted to get joined-up information in one place. A worker was taken on to bring together information about services for the families of disabled children in one guide.



600 guides were given out and a new guide is planned for 2007.



For more information see

[www.lbhf.gov.uk](http://www.lbhf.gov.uk)

## What next?



By putting in only a little time and money, your organisation can give disabled people good information.



Using these 5 main points will help you support disabled people to get better information and services.

There are other places you can get information like:



- The Disability Rights Commission – set up to support equal chances for disabled people



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

**Cabinet**Office

- The Cabinet Office – to help government work better and use what people who use their services tell them



[www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk)



Images of Disability

- Images of disability website for advice on information that includes disabled people



[www.imagesofdisability.gov.uk](http://www.imagesofdisability.gov.uk)



The best way to see how good information and services are is to see if they really make a difference to the lives of disabled people.



Checking how well your service works, including asking people who use it, is an important part of any service.



## Organisations that helped us with this project

- Cheshire County Council
- Directgov website
- HousingCare
- Surrey County Council
- London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham

## Credits



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 Office for Disability Issues  
HM Government

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[office-for-disability-issues@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:office-for-disability-issues@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)

Or you can write to us at:

Office for Disability Issues  
6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
The Adelphi  
1-11 John Adam Street  
London WC2N 6HT

Website: <http://www.officefordisability.gov.uk>

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