How to make **information accessible**

a guide to producing easy read documents

Why did we write this guide?

There are almost a million men and women of all ages in England with a learning disability. There are many reasons why someone may have difficulty with language and learning.

Language is very important because it helps people to take control of their lives. Having a learning disability can affect every part of a person's life. It can prevent people from getting the information they need to make choices.

Having difficulty reading or writing, for whatever reason, can affect education; employment; finances; health and family life.

The National Equality Partnership believes that people who have learning disabilities have the expertise and knowledge to provide information to those who may find reading and writing difficult.

The National Equality Partnership and CHANGE, a leading national organisation led by Disabled People, have produced a guide to make written information accessible.

Who are we doing it for?

This guide provides clear guidelines for umbrella organisations on producing documents and information in accessible, easy to read text and pictures. We hope that you will make your information more accessible to people with learning disabilities and their organisations. We also want you to encourage other organisations to make their information accessible.

'How to make information accessible - a guide to producing easy read documents' was funded by Capacitybuilders under the Improving Support programme. **For more information see:**

www.improvingsupport.org.uk/equalityanddiversity

About the National Equality Partnership

The National Equality Partnership supports the third sector to challenge inequality, and promote equality and human rights. We offer training and information to umbrella bodies and infrastructure organisations. We also help them network and campaign together to challenge inequality.

The National Equality Partnership is led by the Women's Resource Centre in partnership with the Consortium of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Voluntary and Community Organisations, Voice4Change England and NAVCA (National Association for Voluntary and Community Action). Our work is closely informed by our reference group which includes all equalities sectors as well as generalist organisations.

Contents:

Introduction 2

What you should know 6

Practical advice 12

Preparing your document 20

Making the writing accessible 28

Adding pictures 34

Checklist 38

Examples 40

Introduction:

Accessible information is information that people can understand. It means different things to different people. For some people it is information in large print or Braille. For others it might be information translated into their first language.

When CHANGE talks about accessible information we are thinking of the needs of people who find reading and writing hard. For us, accessible information means Easy Words and Pictures.

Easy Words and Pictures is a type of accessible information people with learning disabilities at CHANGE have been developing over the past 15 years. Easy Words and Pictures has writing in short, simple sentences without any hard words or jargon.

Easy Words and Pictures also uses clear, easy to understand pictures that support these words. This type of information is very accessible to people with learning disabilities, but also to people who find reading and writing hard or do not have English as a first language.

Because we have been using Easy Words and Pictures for a long time, we know that it works if it is done right.

However, we also know that to get it right takes time and effort. You might not have the time or money to make all your information accessible to the CHANGE Easy Words and Pictures standard.

This is why it is very important for you to think carefully about which of your documents are going to be the most useful to people with learning disabilities. Those documents should be made accessible using Easy Words and Pictures. Other information could be made accessible using different methods such as multimedia.

For ideas on other ways of making information accessible - such as using multimedia - please visit CHANGE at **www.changepeople.co.uk** or ring us on **0113 388 0011**. More contact details can be found at the back of this guide.

For complete and detailed advice on how to produce accessible information using the CHANGE Easy Words and Pictures method, this guide is the best starting point.

What you should know:

What is jargon?

Most people agree that writing information in jargon is not a good idea. But not everyone is clear on what jargon is.
As a rough guide consider this:

Jargon words are words that professionals often use to communicate with each other. The meaning of these words might be obvious to the people working in the same profession, but to others they might be hard to understand. If you feel it is important for people to know a jargon term, make sure you use it alongside an explanation of its meaning.
Examples of jargon words that are often used:

- Biopsy (taking a very small amount of tissue from your body for tests)
- Litigation (the process of taking legal action)
- Referendum (asking the public to vote yes or no on a political question)
- Misdemeanour (a small crime that is not as serious as murder or rape)
- Malignant (a serious disease such as cancer that is getting worse as time passes)

What are hard words?

When writing information in easy read it is not enough to avoid jargon words. Your text should also be free of any hard words. Hard words are words that are not generally used in everyday conversation. You might not think of a word as hard, but remember that you are trying to reach as many people as possible, including people who might find reading hard. Always ask yourself if there is an easier or shorter word you can use instead of a more complicated, hard word. If there is not, simply explain what the word means.

Examples of hard words that are often used:

- Exaggeration (saying something is bigger than it really is)
- Contemplate (thinking)
- Annual (every year)
- Radiate (spread out from)
- Participation (taking part)
- Aggravate (make something worse)

How to give information out to people

People, who find reading hard, will find reading long documents hard. We have already said, that it is important to think about which of your documents will be useful to people. This is because you might not have the time or money to make all your information accessible and available. Even if you were able to do so, ask yourself how much time your audience is likely to spend with your documents. People with learning disabilities might need extra time and support to access information given to them, no matter how accessible it is. So be aware that accessible information is information that is short and clear.

In most cases you will have to:

- Go through your text and pick out the important facts
- Summarise what you want to say
- Simplify complex information and explain it using examples from every day life
- Break information up into smaller chunks and maybe give them out separately
- Leave out what is of little or no use to people

This is hard to do and often feels like it makes your information less valuable. You might also feel like you are taking control of what to tell people and what not to tell them. If it is done right, however, there is no reason to worry about this. Remember that it is not about how much information you give out to people. What matters is how much of it is understood. If you are worried that you are leaving too much information out of a document, provide accessible details of how people can find out more. **Having a contact telephone number is often the most useful to people. Things that are hard to explain in writing can often be made clear over the phone .**

Accessible information and the law

Having accessible information makes it possible for people to make informed choices about things that are important in their lives. Accessible information gives people power and freedom – it is also their right.

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)

The Disability Discrimination Act was passed in 1995 to end the discrimination that many disabled people face. The Act was extended in 2005 to give disabled people rights in the areas of employment, education and housing. Most importantly it says that organisations that provide services to the public should make those services accessible to disabled people. This includes making the information you give out accessible.

The Disability Equality Duty (DED)

The Disability Equality Duty came into force in December 2006. It says that all public sector organisations must make sure they respect the rights of disabled people. People who work in the public sector such as policemen, health professionals, teachers and social workers must think about how their work affects disabled people and what they can do to make sure everyone is treated fairly and equally. Again, this includes making sure that the information given out is accessible.

Accessibility and presentation

Accessibility is more important than the way your document looks. You might spend a lot of money on making a document look impressive and professional but if no one can understand what it says, then that money is wasted. This does not mean, however, that accessible documents have to be second class or not as good as standard documents. People with learning disabilities, people who find reading and writing hard and people who do not speak English as a first language still have taste and a sense of what is made well. **Don't offend them by giving them something that looks like you don't care.** Not only will it make people feel like they are not valued, it will also make your organisation look bad. Finding the right balance between the way something is presented and the way it works can seem hard. But it does not have to be.

Simply remember:

- Always put accessibility first but take time and care when making your information accessible.
- Plan the production of easy read documents at the same time you plan your standard documents. That way they do not become an afterthought and need to be rushed.
- Put enough money aside for good quality printing.
- If your organisation is producing a range of documents (such as a large print version, an easy read version and versions in foreign languages) design them so they look and feel like they belong in a set and are equally important. That way no group will feel like they are being treated as separate or second class.
- Think about how you distribute your easy read documents. Leaving them lying around in places that are themselves not accessible to disabled people might be a waste of time and money.

Involving people with learning disabilities

People with learning disabilities are the experts on accessible information. This is because they know what works for them and what does not. It is common sense to involve the people you are trying to communicate with in your work process. Ideally you will involve people with learning disabilities from the very beginning by finding out from them, what kind of information it is they want. You should consult with people not only on the documents themselves but also on the best way to make them available.

In general, consultations work best if you:

- Make use of local advocacy groups or organisations run by disabled people whenever you can. They will have plenty of experience with accessible information and will be able to give you expert advice.
- Work with people face to face in steering groups and workshops instead of over the phone or through the post.
- Make sure you support people to get their views across and take what they say seriously.
- Allow people enough time to give their feedback. You might need to work in small, accessible sessions instead of long, all day meetings.
- If you have to post material out to people, make sure they have the support they might need to give their feedback. You can do this by supporting people to set up steering groups in their place of work, advocacy group, care home, day centre or local community.
- Make sure you give people enough background information about the document they are working on. This will ensure people can make informed comments.
- If you cannot involve people in making your document accessible, at least make sure you get feedback on your finished document before distributing it.

Practical advice:

Working with Easy Words and Pictures

If you have never worked with Easy Words and Pictures before, here are a few pointers that might help you.

Both pictures and words have their strengths and weaknesses when used on their own. **Words can:**

- Explain things in great detail
- Give people a lot of information
- Limit misunderstandings and leave little room for different interpretations

However, if you cannot read very well, or do not read English, then even good writing is not very helpful. **Pictures can:**

- Be understood by anyone, no matter what language they speak or how well they read
- Show a specific person, object or place as well as simple actions
- Look more interesting and less off putting than plain text
- Be seen more easily than text

However, pictures alone can be limited at showing complicated actions or explaining complicated ideas. There is also a limit as to how much detail can be put into each picture before it becomes hard to "read". Sometimes pictures can be interpreted in different ways, depending on who looks at them. This is why words and pictures are best used together. That way the pictures can support and explain the words without trying to replace them. **Pictures can also do the following things:**

- Give the reader a good idea of what the text is about before they start reading.
- Be specific and detailed enough to give non readers an idea of the main points made in the text.

- Assist the reader in case the text proves difficult or some words cannot be understood.
- Make the text look less intimidating. Having pictures or photos on a page makes a document look friendlier and less like hard work.
- Take up space so that there is a limit to how much written information is shown on each page.

If pictures are used in training, presentations (e.g. PowerPoint slides) or in handouts (e.g. to take away from a workshop) they can also:

- Support people to keep track of things that are being discussed.
- Give structure to the presentation and add visual interest.
- Support people who could not take notes to remember issues that have been read out to them and discussed with them.

You could think of the picture as a drawn headline. A headline usually includes keywords from the text and sums up what the text is about. A picture should do the same. Because in Easy Words and Pictures, each key statement made in the text has a picture to go with it, a person looking at just the pictures, should get a rough idea of what the document is about.

When working with Easy Words and Pictures you will quickly notice that it is easier to find pictures for some types of text than it is for others. **Text that is easily supported by pictures is usually about:**

- Specific actions (e.g. how to make an appointment for a smear test)
- Specific processes (e.g. what happens during a mammogram)
- Instructions, especially if presented as do, and do not (e.g. how to reduce the risk of diabetes)
- Lists of specific things, places or people (e.g. what types of leisure activities are available in a residential home)

Other types of text may require more imaginative use of pictures. Such texts are usually about:

- Ideas, especially if the text debates or discusses them (e.g. should there be a new set of guidelines to define what a hate crime is?)
- Concepts and abstract themes (e.g. national identity, enlightenment, civil courage, spirituality etc.)
- Statistics (e.g. breakdown of the outcome of an opinion poll)

It is possible to put pictures to these types of text but you will have to simplify the message. You will also have to be more creative with how you use pictures and maybe combine several pictures to make a clear statement. You might also need to commission new pictures drawn especially for your document. This is often the best solution and can get very good results. Just be careful your combinations of pictures do not become too complicated or they might end up as hard to 'read' as the text. The best way to make sure your pictures work, is to consult with people with learning disabilities directly.

You can make the task of finding the right pictures much easier, if you edit your information so that it contains only:

- Clear instructions
- Facts
- Statements

Your information should try to limit or avoid:

- Detailed background information
- Multiple points of view
- Statistics and data
- Detailed explanations

- Discussions and debates
- Subtle variations on the same theme

How to choose the right pictures

In Easy Words and Pictures, each key statement should be supported by a picture. Once you have made your writing accessible (see 'Making the writing accessible' pg 26) read through your text and group the sentences that together contain key information or key statements. You should now have a series of single sentences or short paragraphs that each need to be supported by a picture. Go through them one by one and pick out the key word or key words in each. You can use the keyword or keywords to decide what picture you should choose. **In the same way, the keyword is the focus of the sentence, it should be the focus of the picture.**

However in many cases it is not enough for the picture to simply show the person, object or place that is the focus of the text you are working with. **Whenever possible, the picture should also reflect the statement that is being made about that person, object or place.**

'Many People in the area said they were worried about their homes being burgled.'

(This picture shows a burglar, but does not show people worrying about being burgled.)

'Many People in the area said they were worried about their homes being burgled.'

(This picture shows someone worrying about being burgled.)

When re-writing your text in easy words, you will notice that there is often more than one way to say something. It is the same with pictures. Do not get too worried about finding the one perfect picture that shows exactly what you want to say. Instead, be creative and work with what you have. **The solution is often to use Microsoft Word or other software to combine pictures or to add extras like:**

- Speech and think bubbles (with additional pictures in them, not words)
- Arrows
- Ticks and crosses
- Thumbs up or thumbs down

1)

'This is why we will support people to look at how they can make their homes safer.'

(This pictures shows people discussing ways in which their homes could be made safer.)

2)

'This is why we will support people to look at how they can make their homes safer.'

(This picture shows ways in which homes could be made safer.)

Picture 1) is the better solution but both pictures are acceptable. This shows that there is often more than one solution when working with easy words and pictures.

Which documents to make accessible

You should try to make as much of your information accessible as you possibly can. But if you cannot make all your information accessible or if you cannot afford to commission new images for all your publications, try to focus your resources on those documents that are going to be the most useful to people with learning disabilities. Remember that it is better for people to have 1 truly accessible document they can read, than 5 slightly accessible documents they cannot read.

If you have to choose which of your documents to make accessible using Easy Words and Pictures, consider the following:

- **What information is going to be truly useful to your audience?**
  The lives of people with learning disabilities can be just as busy as those of everyone else. If people take the time to read your documents, you should make sure it is worth their while. You can do this by consulting with people with learning disabilities directly. Support people to tell you what information they think is going to be useful to them.

- **How many people will be affected by the information in your document?** 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.

- **How long are your documents?** If you have a series of lengthy reports and policies to choose from, consider which ones can be summed up most effectively. It is easier to work on a well done summary that highlights the most important points, than it is to work on a long document that cannot be condensed any further.

- **How complex is the information?** Documents with clear instructions or facts can be made accessible more effectively than complex ones.

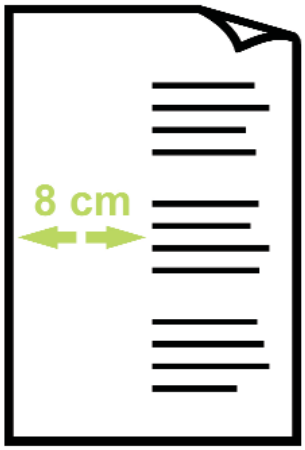
- **Can you combine key points from different documents?** If you still have trouble deciding which of your documents to make accessible, maybe you can combine the most important points from different documents in one accessible "newsletter".

- **Is there an alternative to Easy Words and Pictures?** Easy words and pictures is not the only way to make information accessible. These days DVDs, interactive CD ROMs or online video clips are all good alternatives. Or what about an open day with workshops held in the local community?

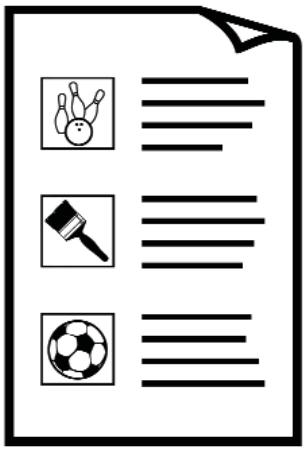
Every person with learning disabilities is an individual. If you follow the advice in this guide, you can produce information that is accessible to many, many different people. But there is no such thing as a perfect solution that will suit everyone. Many people will still need support to access easy read documents. Others will need information in a completely different format. Do not let this worry you. Information in Easy Words and Pictures, done well, makes a powerful tool to support the empowerment and inclusion of anyone who finds reading and writing hard. With it you will create an empowering starting point for your audience.

Thank you for working towards putting more people in the picture!

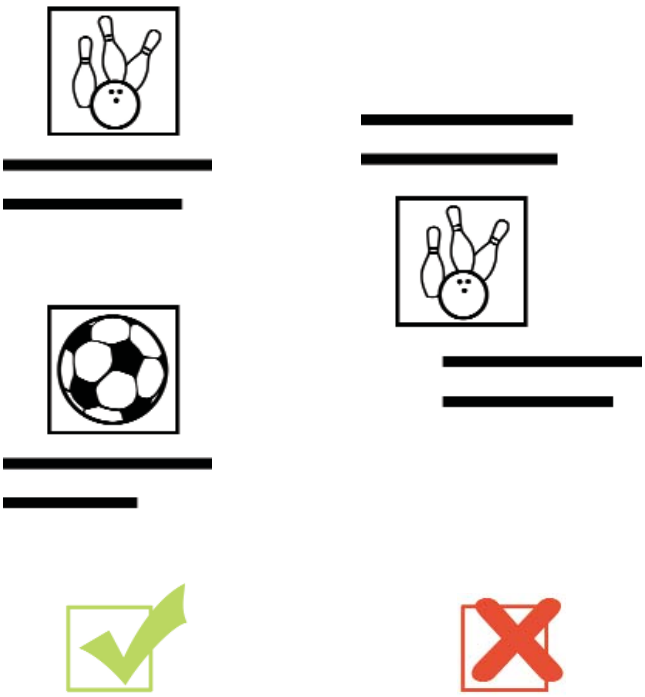
Preparing your document:



- Make a wide margin in your document for the pictures. People rely on the pictures as well as the text for information so **give the pictures at least 8 cm of space**.



- Most people find it easiest if the pictures are to the **left of the text**.

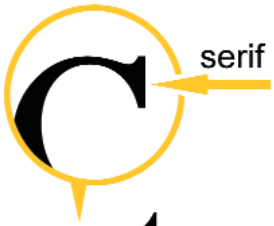


- If you decide not to put the pictures to the left of the text **make sure it is very clear which picture belongs to which part of text**.

cat pt 16

cat pt 12

- Use a clear, easy to read font and make it **at least 14 pt in size**. If you can, try to make the font 16 pt or even bigger.



cat

font without serifs

cat

font with serifs

- It is important that your font is clear and easy to read. **It should not have any serifs or complicated letter shapes**.

cat

cat

- Most people will find fonts that are made to look like handwriting harder to read than printed fonts.

Arial
Verdana
Helvetica
Candara
Segoe

Tahoma
Myriad
Calibri
Corbel
Gill Sans

- **A good font to use is Arial or something that looks similarly plain.** Examples of good fonts include: Tahoma, Verdana, Myriad, Helvetica, Calibri, Candara, Corbel, Segoe, and Gill Sans amongst many others.

- **Avoid writing words in capitals**. This will make the word look unfamiliar and too uniform and people might find it harder to read.

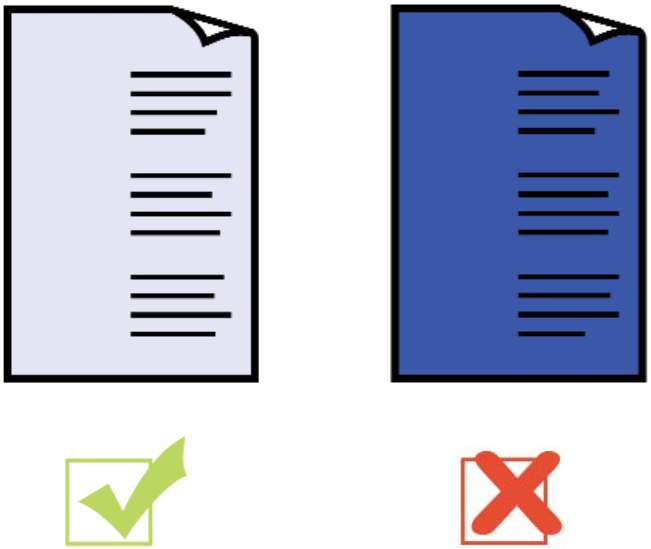
- **Add extra space between the lines of your text.** This will make it easier to read. (For Example in Microsoft Word choose 1.3 line spacing instead of single line spacing.)

- Be careful when using shadows, outlines, strikethroughs, gradients or colours on text. **Anything that interferes with the shape of the letters will make the words harder to read.**

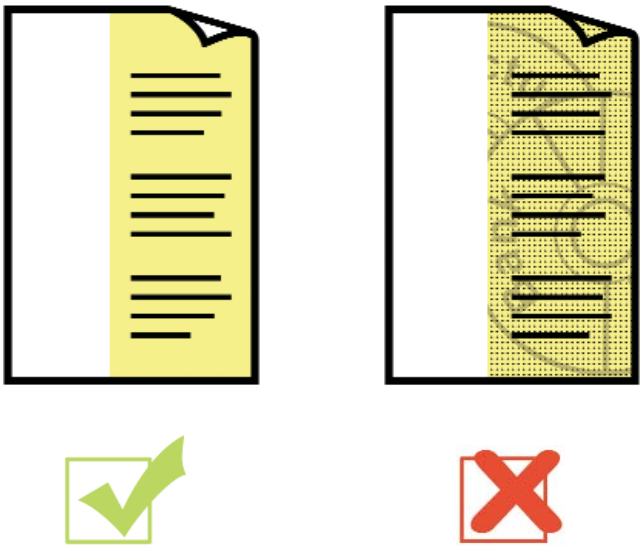
- Make sure your lines of text are not too long or too short. The average number of letters in an ideal line of text is about 60. However, if you use a larger font and add pictures to the left, fewer letters will fit in one line. This is not a problem, **but try not to make your line of text shorter than 5 words**. (Very short lines of text force the reader's eye to jump from one line to the next too quickly. This can feel uncomfortable and tiring.)

- **Your text should be aligned to the left and have a ragged edge on the right.** This layout will look familiar to most people. It will make blocks of text easier to read than right aligned, centred, justified or forced text.

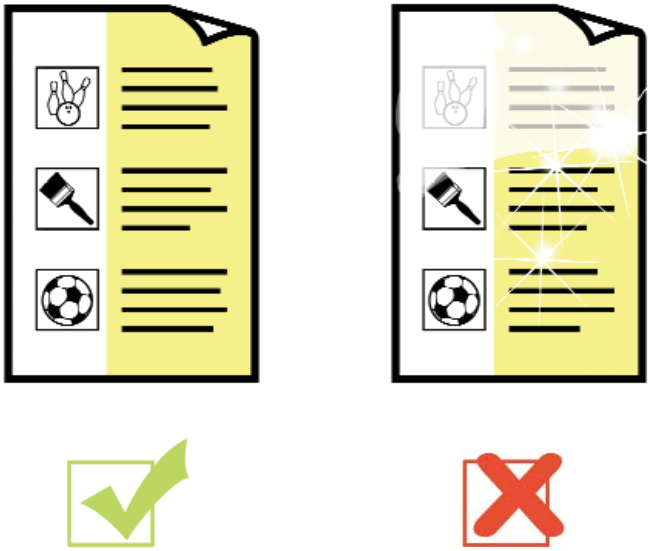
- Having a toned background behind your text reduces the glare of the paper and makes the text easier to read. Any pastel shade is better than white but **people with dyslexia find yellow especially helpful**.



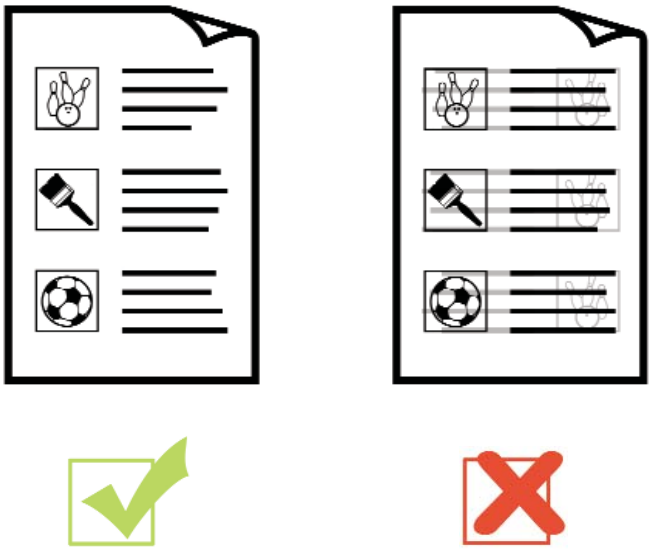
- If you use a toned background, make sure that there is still **enough contrast between background and text**.



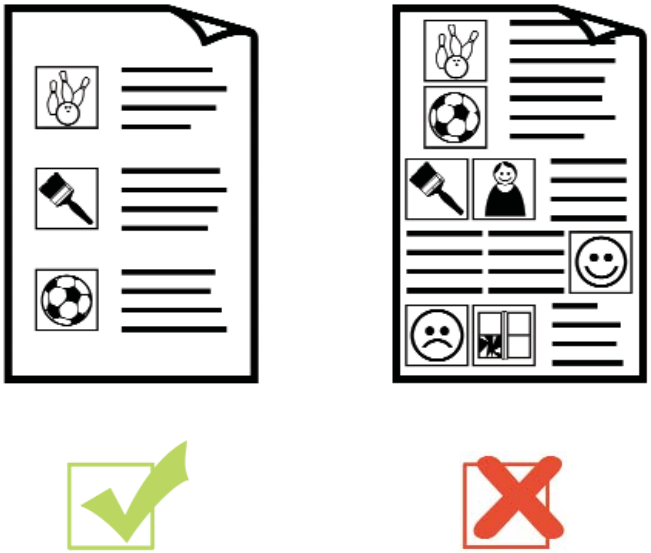
- A toned background is good but it should be made up of one flat colour. **Do not use patterns, strong gradients or faded out pictures behind text.** They will blend with the letters and make the text hard to read.



- Be careful what paper you choose to print your information on. Very shiny paper or paper that has been laminated can reflect the light and make reading hard for people with a visual impairment. **Paper with a matte or silk finish is better.**



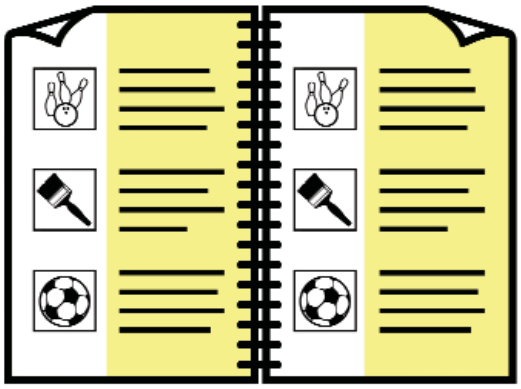
- **Make sure your paper is not too thin.** If text and images shine through the page, it will be harder for people to read your information.

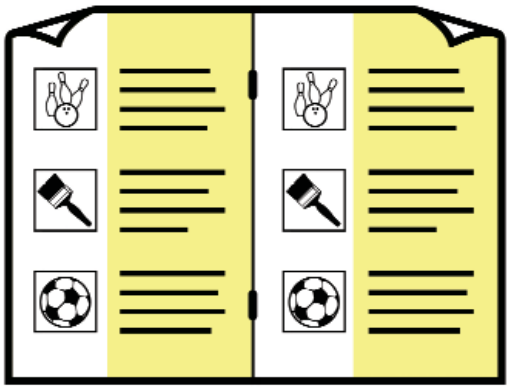


- Be aware that using big writing and lots of pictures means your information will take up more space. Your document will definitely become longer. This means you might have to choose large paper formats. **Do not try to squash things in or fit too much information on one page.** Lots of white space makes the page look less intimidating and helps people find their way around your document.

- Be aware that some people reading your document might be colour blind. Colour blindness can take many forms but most people have red–green blindness. This means they see the colours red and green as similar shades of grey. **When designing your document, it is a good idea never to rely on colours alone to make things clear.**

- **Think about using a colour code in your document.** This will help people to navigate through your text and to keep track of different chapters or sections. **Make sure the colour code is introduced in the index.** This will make it easier for people to find the pages they are looking for.





- Think about how your document will be bound. **You should choose a binding style that allows your document to be opened flat.** This will make it easier for people to place your document under a magnifier or to photocopy it. Spiral binding, plastic comb binding and saddle stitch (staple) binding work well. For thicker documents or books that will be used often, you could consider hard case binding or ringbinder folders with pullout pages. These might be more practical and hard wearing than binding styles with stiff, glued spines (such as perfect binding).

Do not publish your documents on loose pages even if they are contained in an envelope or sleeve. This is because the order of the pages can easily be confused or pages can be lost. If you print or photocopy information yourself, staple the pages together along the left edge or find another way to safely hold them together.

Making the writing accessible:

not needed	superfluous
tiring	strenuous
shared	collaborative

Your doctor might ask you to go to the hospital. At the hospital someone will take an x-ray of your chest. An x-ray is like a photograph. It allows the doctor to see inside your body.

Your general practitioner might refer you to the hospital to have an x-ray of your chest taken.

You could donate clothes you no longer need to a charity shop. The clothes you donate should be in good condition. The charity shop will not be able to sell clothes that are badly worn.

You could donate clothes you no longer need to a charity shop. The garments you donate should be in good condition. The charity shop will not be able to sell attire that is badly worn.

- Try to write your information in short, clear sentences. Do not use complicated words, words that are hard to understand or jargon words.

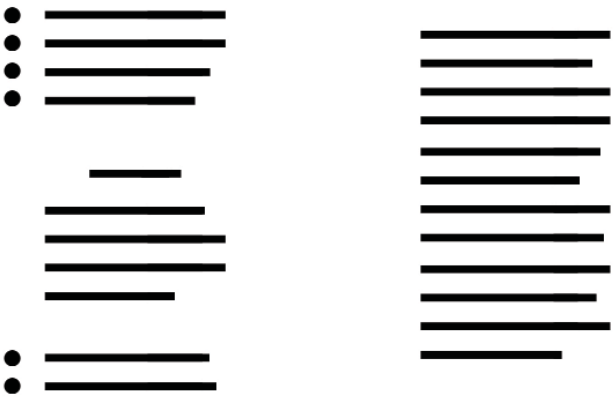
- If you have to use a hard word or a jargon word, make sure you explain it clearly in easy words. **You could also think of adding an illustrated word bank to your document.**

- **Be consistent with the words that you use.** If you refer to the same person or object several times in your text, always call them by the same name.

The name of the play is A Midsummer Night's Dream. It is showing at the London Theatre. The play will be on every Tuesday and Thursday at 4 pm and at 8 pm. On Tuesday the 12th of August the play is not showing.

The play, A Midsummer Night's Dream, is showing at the London Theatre every Tuesday and Thursday this month and will be on at 16.00 and the later time of 20.00, except Tuesday the 12th of August.

- **Try not to put more than one piece of information in each sentence.**



- **Use Bullet points and sub-headings to break up text and organise information.** This will make it easier for people to pick out and remember the facts.

You should not make the decision without reading the information. If you can not understand what is says, ask for support

You shouldn't make the decision without reading the information. If you can't understand what is says, ask for support.

- **Use 'do not', 'can not', 'would not' and so on instead of 'don't', 'can't' and 'wouldn't'** because some people rely on reading the 'not' to understand what is being said.

When you are on summer holiday, make sure your children are protected by sun screen.

When on summer holiday one should ensure one's children are protected by sun screen.

- Know who you are writing your information for and address them directly. **Do not address your text to an abstract 'one'.**

You should bring the books back after 3 weeks. You can not take out more than 6 books at a time.

You should bring the books back after three weeks. You can not take out more than six books at a time.

- **In general people find it easier to read numbers in the form of figures, not spelt out in letter.**

Next month the service and maintenance charge will go up by 10 percent to 45 pounds. It will not rise again till next year.

Next month the service/maintenance charge will go up by 10% to £45; it will not rise again till next year.

- **Be careful when using symbols, rare characters and certain types of punctuation in your text.** Characters like the ampersand (&) or symbols such as the one for percent (%) might be unfamiliar to people. **Try not to use the following:** #, &, ~, %, ^, /, £, $, €, { },

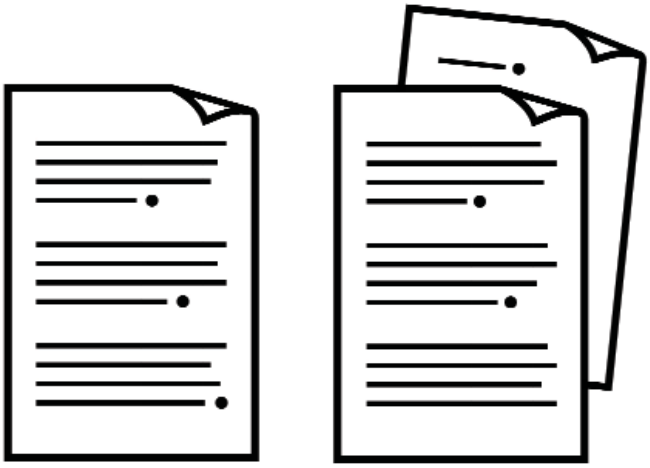
Your PCT will have information booklets around health. PCT means Primary Care Trust. This is your local health authority. For example they will have booklets on cancer and healthy eating.

Your PCT will have information booklets around health. E. g. booklets on cancer and healthy eating.

- **Be careful when using acronyms and abbreviations.** (An acronym is a word made up from the first letters of other words. For example NHS for National Health Service). Unless the acronym is very common, always explain what it stands for. Instead of using abbreviations, spell out the words.

You can get more information before you make your decision.

You can get more information be-fore you make your decision.



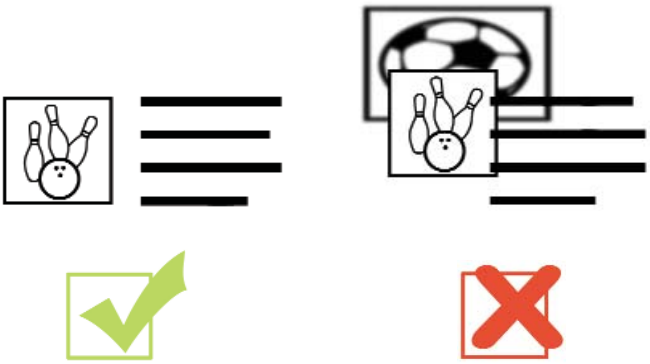
- **In general people find text easier to read if words are not hyphenated.** (Hyphenation means splitting a word into two parts if it does not fit onto the end of a line of text. The second part of the word is written on the next line of text.)

- **Do not allow sentences to stretch from one page onto another because people might get lost when turning the page.**

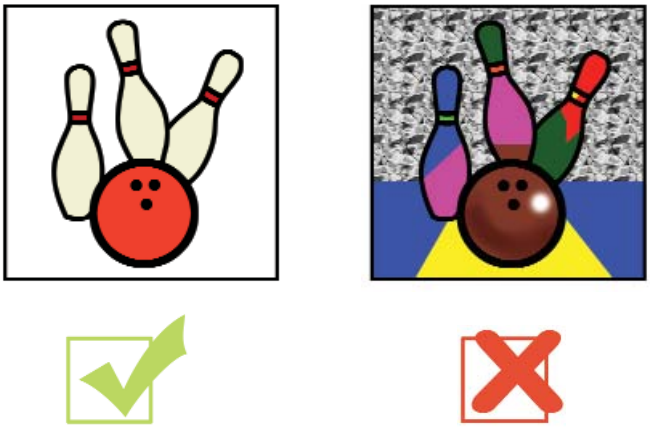
- **Remember that, while it is OK to summarise text, it is really important that the overall point of the document is not lost.** So a document about the importance of cervical cancer screening needs to make it clear where and when people should go for tests. This is more important than giving a detailed explanation of what cervical cancer is.

Adding pictures:

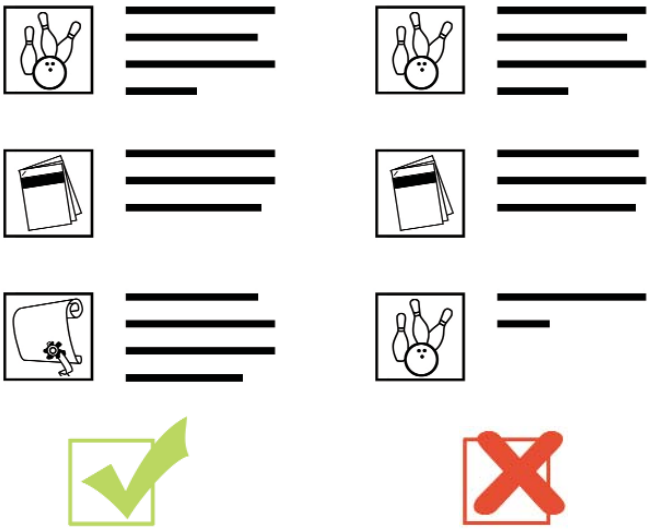
- **Make the picture as big as possible.**



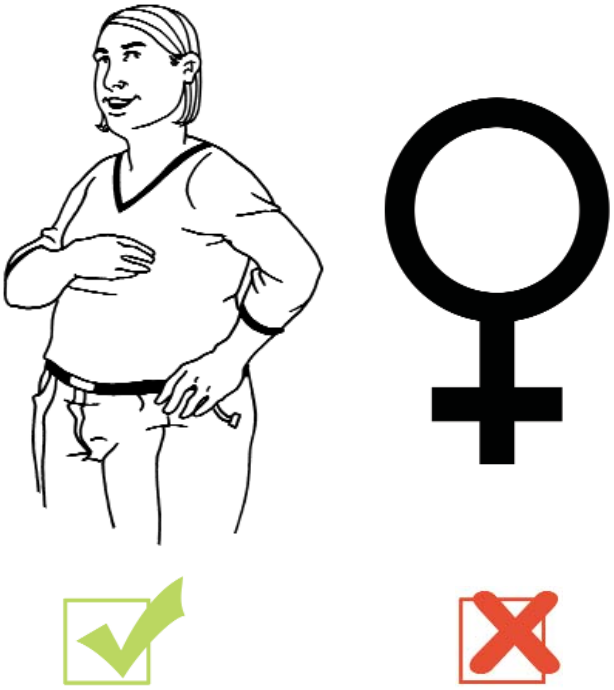
- Make sure the picture is placed close to the text to which it belongs and there can be no confusion. **Make sure the picture is not blurred or distorted or overlapped by other objects on the page.**



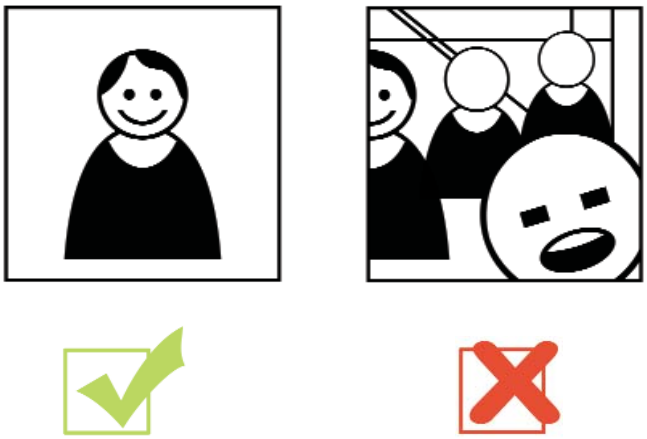
- If you decide to use colour pictures **be careful that the colours do not make the picture confusing to look at**. Think about how your readers will get the document. Will the pictures still be in colour when it reaches them, or will people have to look at a black and white photocopy?



- Be very careful about what picture you select to use with the text. **Does the picture reflect what the text is saying?** Have you used the same picture earlier in the text to say something different?

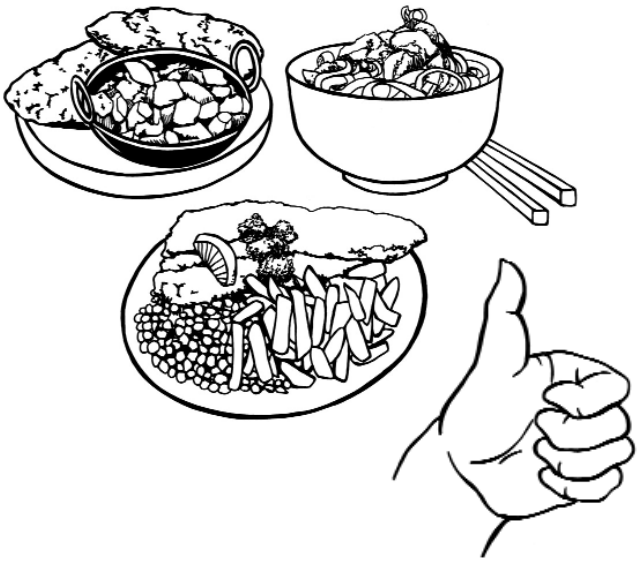


- **Be careful not to use symbols, symbolic pictures or abstract graphics.** These can confuse people because often their meaning has to be learned.



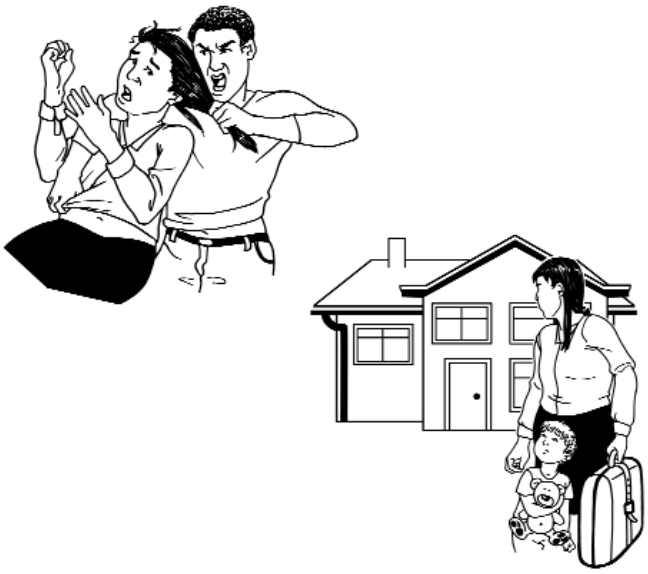
- **Sometimes it is easier to use a photo than a picture. Especially if you are trying to show a particular object, building or person.** There is nothing wrong with using a photo, just be extra careful that it is not too busy or confusing. Look out for things like bad lighting, cluttered backgrounds or blurred features. **Also make sure you apply the same rules you would to a picture.**

- If the picture does not quite say what you want it to, remember you can do things to adjust the meaning of a picture. **Try adding:**
  - Speech and thought balloons with extra pictures or photos in them.



You can also try adding:

- Ticks and crosses or thumbs up and thumbs down.



- Putting two pictures together to make a new meaning.

- Arrows and colours to point out important parts of your picture.

Checklist:

Ask yourself these questions when working on easy ready documents

1. Have you left enough space for your pictures (at least 8cm) and are they big enough and of good quality?

2. Have you arranged the pictures so it is easy to see which part of text they belong to?

3. Do the pictures reflect what the text is saying?

4. If you have used photos, are they of a good quality and easy to see? Will they look good in black and white if the document is photocopied?

5. Have you chosen a clear, easy to read font that is at least 14pt big? Could the text be made 16pt big?

6. Have you broken your text up into smaller chunks by using bullet points and sub-headings?

7. Have you added extra space between the lines of text?

8. Have you written your information in short, easy read sentences? Are there any hard words, jargon words, abbreviations or symbols left in the text?

9. Could you add a toned background behind the text to reduce glare from the whiteness of the paper and help people with dyslexia?

10. Have you chosen a suitable size and format for your document? Is the paper too reflective or too thin?

11. Do your pages look cramped, cluttered or too busy? Maybe the layout could be simplified.

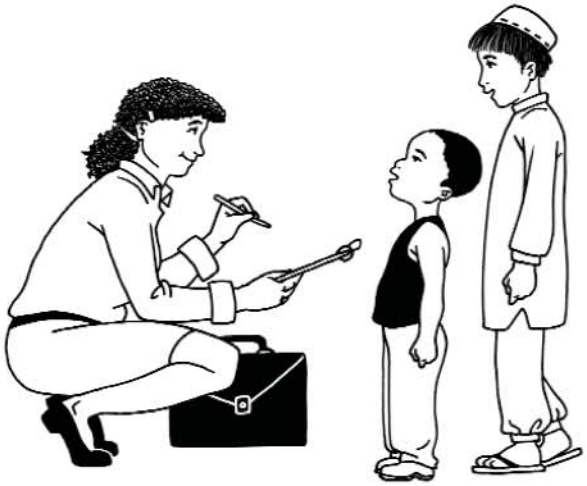
12. Has your work been checked by people with learning disabilities? Have you used their experience and knowledge to make sure your document is truly accessible?

Examples:

Example pages from **Supporting Parents with Learning Disabilities - Good Practice Guidance**. (Published by the Department of Health and the Department for Children, Schools and Families)

6. Meeting the needs of the child: Good Practice

Children should stay living with their parents if possible and get the support to do this.



Professionals and services should find out what the children want when they make decisions about their lives.

Children have a right to be involved in things that affect them, including meetings. They have a right to get accessible information about what is happening to them.

If professionals and services decide that a child is not being harmed, or likely to be harmed, they must make sure that the child will continue to be safe. This means they should support the parents to keep the child safe from harm in the future.

The law says that when children's social care give children a place to stay away from their parents, they have the right to an independent advocate if they have a complaint to make. The advocate should work for the child.

It is good practice to give the child a key worker who is responsible for the child's welfare. The key worker should know about learning disabilities or be able to get information about what a learning disability is.

Routines

Potty training

Out and about

Going out can mess with your potty training routine. To make going out less stressfull you could:

Take a potty with you.

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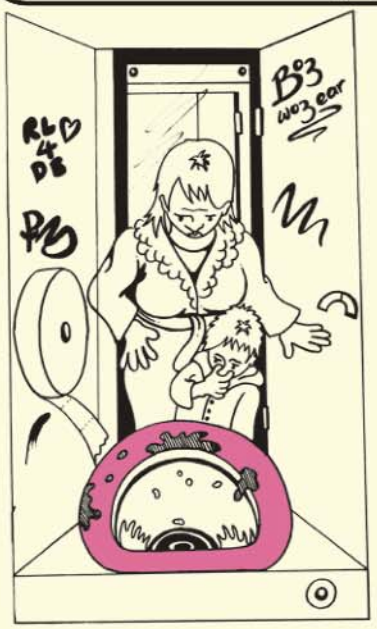
Example pages from **You and Your Little Child 1 - 5**, an easy read book on parenting. (Available from CHANGE, www.changepeople.co.uk)

Routines

Out and about

Think about where the loos are and encourage your child to use them when you see them.



Sometimes public loos are dirty.

Take some wet wipes so you can clean the seat first.

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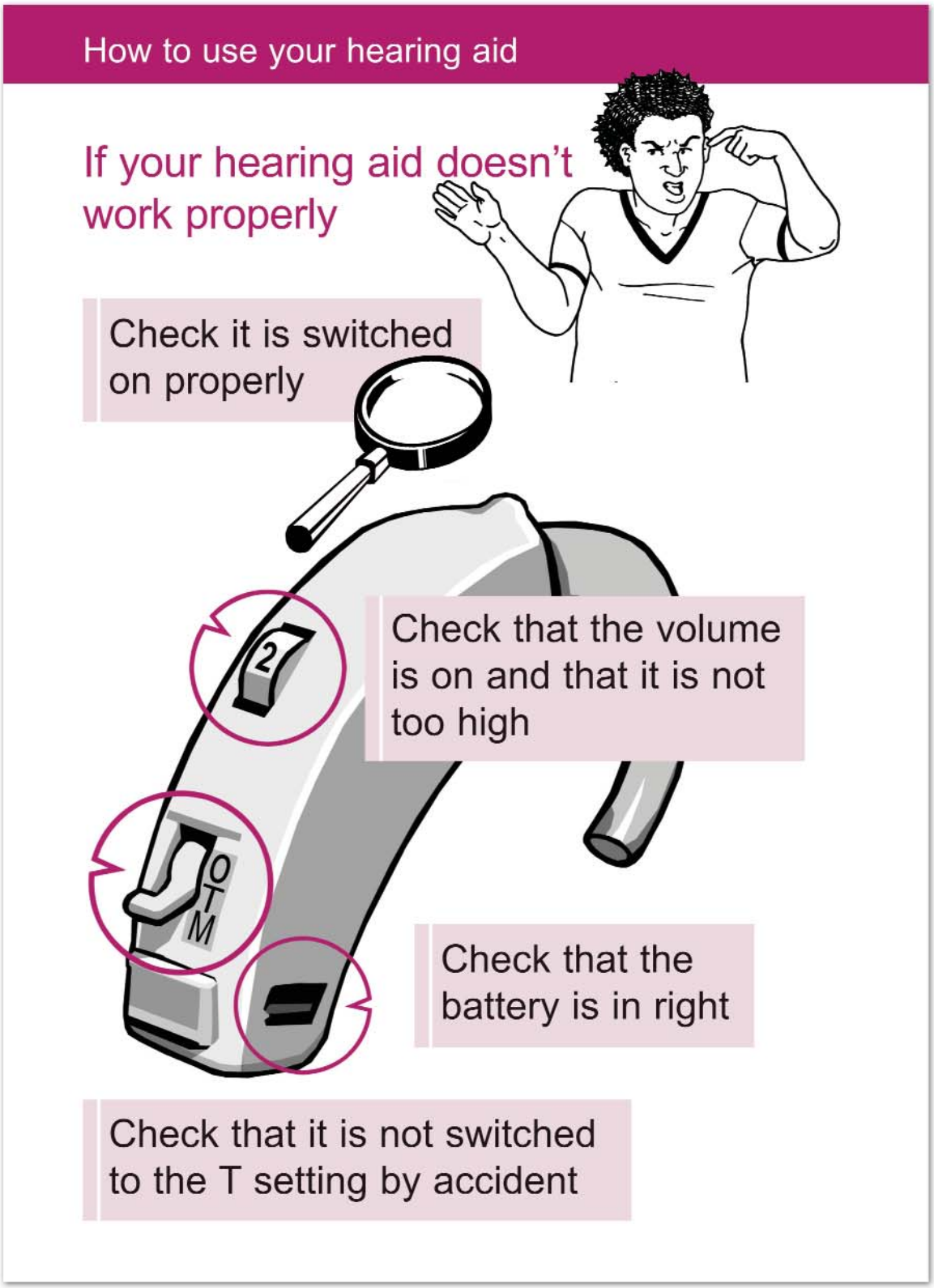
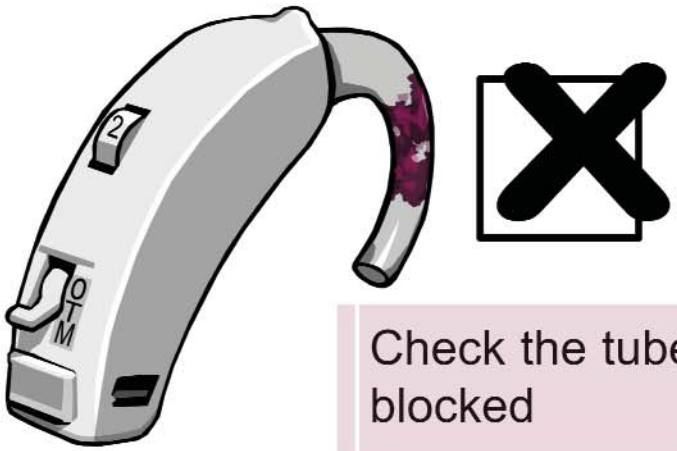
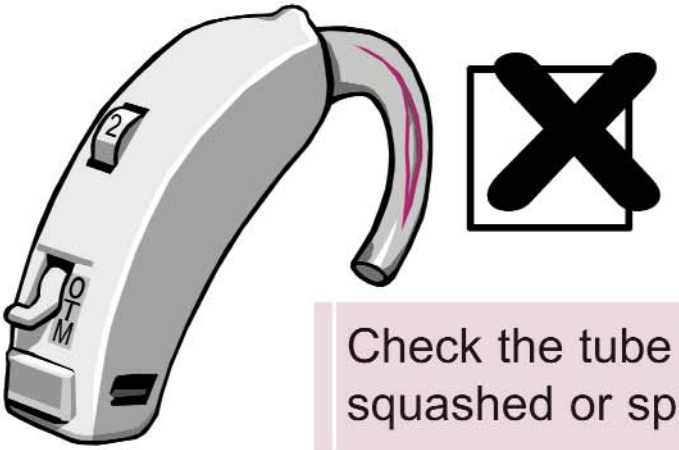


Example pages from **How to use your Hearing Aid**, an easy read booklet. (Published by the Royal National Institute for Deaf People, RNID)

Some hearing aids have tubes



Check the tube is not blocked



Check the tube is not squashed or split

Notes:

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We are CHANGE!

CHANGE is a leading national organisation led by Disabled People. We work for equal rights for all people with learning disabilities.

CHANGE employs people with learning disabilities as project workers. People with learning disabilities work alongside co-workers without learning disabilities as equal members of staff. They are paid the same wage and given the same level of responsibility.

CHANGE campaigns and delivers training around:

- Parenting
- Employment
- Better access to health care
- Relationships and sexual health
- Making services and information more accessible
- Empowerment of people with learning disabilities

Who would benefit from our training?

- Health and social care students and practitioners
- Organisations wanting to improve their accessibility
- People with learning disabilities who want to be empowered

We also produce a wide range of Picture Banks and accessible publications!

Contact us or check our website for more information.

CHANGE Unit 41, Shine, Harehills Road, Leeds, LS8 5HS

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People with learning disabilities working for equal rights

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www.improvingsupport.org.uk/equalityanddiversity

Your gateway to third sector support, information and resources.