

# Mencap's Make it clear



A guide to making easy read information

People with a learning disability have helped Mencap make this guide.



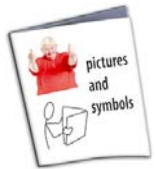
# What is in this guide?



The words you use 3



Where to put words on the page 4



How to use pictures 5



Choosing the type of writing and the paper 6



Making it easier for everyone to understand 7



Contact us 8



Ask people with a learning disability to look at your information. They are the experts. Listen to what they say and make the changes they suggest.

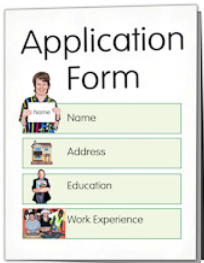
# The words you use

**Good easy read tells you what you really need to know.**



Use words that we use all the time.

Use numerals for numbers not words. 23 instead of twenty three.



Write in short, clear sentences. Just have 1 idea in every sentence.

Use **active verbs**. Verbs are doing words. They describe what someone does.

For example

John **loves** Mary

not

Mary **is loved by** John

Use full stops. Try not to use other punctuation.



Use bullet points for examples and instructions.

Do not use abbreviations.

Use **for example** and **do not**, not **e.g.** and **don't**.

# Where to put words on the page



Keep everything about a subject on the same page. If you have to use more than 1 page for a subject, start each new page with **more about** then whatever the subject is.

Do not split words over 2 lines.

Do not split sentences over 2 pages. If you can not finish a sentence on a page move the whole sentence to the next page.

Use page numbers.

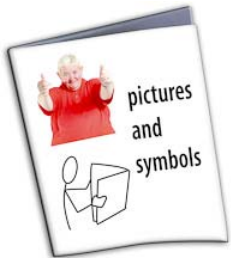
Avoid columns they are confusing. It is easier to read straight across the page.



On forms leave a lot of room for people to fill in their name, address and so on. It often helps people to have a box to write in rather than lines to write on.

# How to use pictures

Be consistent. Use the same picture to mean the same thing in your document.



Pictures on the left, words on the right because we read English from left to right. It could be different if you are writing in another language.

Do not float text on top of or across a picture.



Show times with clocks. Times should be in 12 hour format.

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.

Charts are often difficult to understand. Try not to use them.



Using a pretty picture on a poster or leaflet will not help if it does not make it clear what the information is about.

# Choosing the type of writing and the paper

Use a typeface that is clear like Arial or FS Mencap.



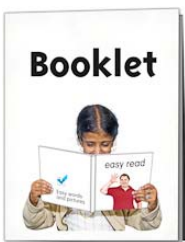
Text should be at least 16 point or bigger.

Make sure headings are clear.

Make sure the writing stands out against the colour of the paper.

Green is not a good colour for paper.

Words in white (reversed out text) on a coloured background can be harder to read.



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



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 like CD or DVD.

Use **bold** to highlight important words. Italics and block capitals change the shape of words and can make them harder to read for some people.



What would you rather read? Something that is full of jargon, jumps about from 1 topic to another and makes you work hard to find out what you really need to know?

**Or**

Something that is clear, well structured with all the key points and information?

Easy read information works for **everyone**.

# Contact Mencap's accessibility unit

Contact us to find out about



- our easy read writing service
- communication training



[accessibility@mencap.org.uk](mailto:accessibility@mencap.org.uk)



0207 696 5551

If you want to reproduce all or part of this guide please talk to us first.

