

## **Clear Print**

Information is essential to all of us to help us make choices and to live our lives independently. Organisations now need to provide information in a way that all customers can read, including customers with sight problems.

RNIB run a “See It Right” campaign offering practical help and advice to help meet the needs of blind and partially sighted people.

## **How Do Blind And Partially Sighted People Read?**

Blind and partially sighted people read information in different ways. For some people well designed print information will be enough. Others will need information in different formats such as Large Print, Braille, computer disk or from the Internet. Different people have different preferences and one format does not suit everyone. The offering of information in a variety of formats is therefore essential.

## **Typeface**

The typeface, or font, is one of the two most important things to consider. The human eye reads by recognising the shapes of words. Text set in italics or capitals is usually more difficult to read since it is harder to recognise a word shape if the letters are all the same size or set at an angle.

Generally books and newspapers are in 8 or 10 point. The RNIB recommends 14 point and Clear Print documents use a 12 point typeface. Try to avoid highly stylised typefaces.

## **Design and Layout**

For someone with a sight problem user-friendly design is simple and uncluttered. The different elements of page layout – headings, photo, illustrations, text and captions – should be easily separated rather than competing with each other.

The RNIB recommends aligning text to the left margin. It is easy to find the start and finish of each line and even spaces exist between the words.

## **Contrast**

The contrast between text and the background on which it is printed or photocopied is extremely important. Research states that a significant proportion of partially sighted individuals also have a problem with colour perception. As a result two colours that

will contrast sharply to an individual with unaffected colour vision, such as red and green, appear far less distinguishable to someone with partial sight.

Contrast is affected by paper colour, printing inks, lighting and the size and weight of the type. The relationship between the colours is more important than the colours themselves. Generally dark print against a light background is the best and most easily readable.

## Clear Print Checklist

- Is the typeface at least 12 point or above?
- Does the text contrast clearly with the background?
- If the type is reversed does it contrast sufficiently with the background?
- Is it big enough?
- Is there enough space between the lines?
- Is the typeface either roman semi-bold or bold?
- Are whole sentences in capitals? (This should be avoided)
- Are the numerals clear?
- Are any words split between the lines?
- Is text unjustified and aligned to the left margin?
- Are there any uneven gaps between words or letters?
- Is any text centred? (Avoid central alignment except for titles)
- Are there 60 – 70 characters per line? (Unless you are using columns)
- Is there enough space between columns?
- Does text flow easily from column to column?
- Is the page layout clear and unfussy?
- Is there a contents list?
- Are page numbers and headings consistent and in the same place on each page?
- Is there a space between paragraphs?
- Is the text set horizontally?
- Have you set text around illustrations? (This can be confusing)
- If the reader needs to write on the page is there enough space?
- If there are images, are they clearly defined and easy to read?
- Are images clearly separated from the text?
- Is the page a size that is easy to handle?
- Do folds obscure the text?
- Can the document be flattened so it can be placed under a scanner or screen magnifier?

## **RNIB's Large Print Checklist**

- Is the typeface at least 16 points or above?
- Does the text contrast clearly with the background?
- If the type is reversed does it contrast sufficiently with the background?
- Is it big enough?
- Is there enough space between each line of type?
- Is the typeface either roman, bold or semi-bold?
- Are whole sentences written in capital letters? (This should be avoided)
- Are the numerals clear?
- Are any words split between two lines? (there shouldn't be)
- Is text unjustified, aligned to the left margin?
- Are there any uneven gaps between words or letters?
- Is any text centred? (Avoid central alignment except for titles)
- Is there enough space between columns?
- Does text flow easily from column to column?
- Is the page layout clear and unfussy?
- Are page numbers and headings clear and consistent and in the same place on each page?
- Is there a contents list?
- Is there a space between paragraphs?
- Is text set horizontally?
- Have you set text around pictures? (This can be confusing)
- If the reader needs to write on the page is there enough space?
- If there are images, are they clearly defined and easy to read?
- Is the paper matt? (Avoid very glossy papers)
- Is the page a size that's easy to handle?
- Do folds obscure the text?
- Can the document be flattened so it can be placed under a scanner or screen magnifier?

This information was taken from the RNIB's See It Right pack.

### **Further Information**

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