

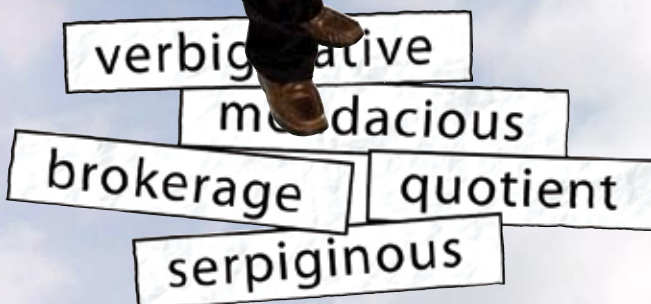
A guide to producing

EASYREAD INFORMATION

Version 2.1 - updated April 09

EASYREAD HAS BEEN DEVELOPED TO
MAKE INFORMATION EASIER
FOR PEOPLE WITH LEARNING
DISABILITIES.

MANY OTHER PEOPLE ALSO CHOOSE
EASYREAD INFORMATION



EVERYDAY WORDS

LARGE FONT

FRIENDLY DESIGN

CLEAR PICTURES

GOOD INFORMATION

Written by Mike Leat of The Clear Communication People Ltd

www.communicationpeople.co.uk mike@communicationpeople.co.uk

WHAT IS EASYREAD INFORMATION ?

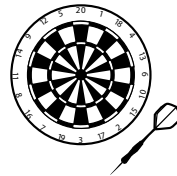
EasyRead information uses easy to understand words supported by pictures that explain their meaning.

EasyRead information is most commonly produced for people with learning disabilities but is also popular with many other people.

A simple picture can be used to illustrate a single word or idea.



eye test



darts

A more complex picture
can be used to illustrate
a more complicated
sentence or paragraph



The young person helps to run their person centred transition review. They can show people what they like doing

EasyRead makes information 'visual'

Many people with learning disabilities and people on the autistic spectrum find visual information easier to understand.

EasyRead information has developed from efforts to enable people with a learning disability to be more independent and make their own choices.



EasyRead information is now very common and is a design style used for very complex information including Government Reports.

People with a learning disability are a very diverse group



We cannot assume that EasyRead information will be accessible to everyone. Some people have good reading and understanding, others have a profound disability. The more complex the information is the fewer people will be able to access it easily or independently.

EasyRead information is designed to be used together. Going through information in a group or a one to one is what makes it truly accessible.



GETTING THE WORDS RIGHT

Using 'easy words' is about understanding that the person or people you are producing information for may have a smaller vocabulary than you. For example:

- **Don't use** - 'independent home living skills'
- **Do use** - 'cooking and cleaning'



Don't assume - explain



It's also very important that you don't assume people have background knowledge of the subject. For example if you are producing an EasyRead guide to 'Sensory Disability Services' don't assume people know what a sensory disability is. Explain that it can mean a visual impairment or a hearing loss.

Tell the story

If you are writing information from scratch use a storytelling style

If you are translating a complicated piece of information into EasyRead you need to be sure you fully understand the original information.

Translating into EasyRead is about writing a simplified summary of a piece of information highlighting the key points. The more you can structure Easy Read information as a story, illustrated with real people, the easier it will be for people to follow and understand.



The principles of easy words

The principles of easy words are similar to using Plain English, it just takes the idea further.

- Sentences should be 10 - 15 words long and contain just one main idea
- Use everyday words and avoid jargon and gobbledegook
- The writing should be direct and friendly, sounding as if someone is talking to you.
- Have a lot of space between paragraphs, and use bullet points to break up lists
- Use a clear font and large words - equivalent to 16pt Ariel minimum.

Also look for words you can take out. Many sentences make better sense with half the words taken out. For example :

' In essence the real reason the meeting didn't work as well as it might have was the transport arrangements.'

Involve your audience

It's very important to get people who the information is aimed at to read through the words with you. This is the only way to find out if there are hard words, and if people get the right meaning from the words.



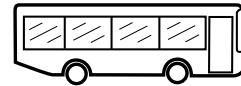
CHOOSING YOUR IMAGES

The pictures you use to illustrate your information should help to tell the story.

Different types of images are better for different things

- a photo is best to represent a specific place or person
- a simple line drawing can be best to represent the idea of something without being too specific.

It's a good idea to always have a camera with you to take any photos you may need for your EasyRead information. If you can draw, or know someone who does, then creating your own images can work well.



Choosing the right images

Getting the right images to illustrate your information is as important as getting the right ingredients to bake a cake.

If your images do not directly relate to the information and help to tell the story, then at best they are unhelpful, and at worst confusing and misleading. **It is better not to use an image than to use the wrong image.**



You can use free clipart images that come with Microsoft Word though the quality of images vary. **If you plan to regularly produce EasyRead information you may need to invest in some imagebanks.** Listed below are a few examples.

Photosymbols

An imagebank of photos that contains simple photos representing a single idea, and more complex photos that illustrate more complicated ideas. www.photosymbols.com



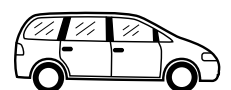
Change Picturebank

A selection of imagebanks with black and white line drawings covering subjects like health, pregnancy, parenting, employment, housing and equal rights. www.changepeople.co.uk



EasyPics

A set of modern black and white line drawings currently being developed by The Clear Communication People Ltd. Contact mike@communicationpeople.co.uk for more information



Stock Photography

There are many websites where you can search for and buy a specific photo. This can be expensive but useful at times. Do a google search for 'stock photography'

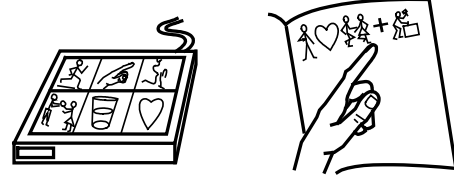


INFORMATION ABOUT SYMBOLS

A symbol is a simple black and white drawing that is designed to represent a single word or idea.

Symbols are used by many children and some adults with a learning disability. They are designed to be used to:

- help people communicate
- teach literacy



There are 3 main symbol sets in use across the UK and very little standardisation about their usage. The symbol sets are:

- Makaton Symbols
- Mayor Johnson Picture Communication Symbols (PCS)
- Widgit Literacy Symbols (WLS)



**Doctor
(Makaton)**



**Doctor
(PCS)**

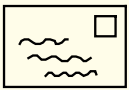


**Doctor
(WLS)**

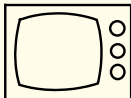
Many symbols are not suitable for EasyRead information

You can broadly break symbols into 3 categories

Iconic



letter



TV

Iconic symbols look like what they represent.

They are usually easy for people to recognise and can be good to use in EasyRead information

Abstract



the



have

Abstract symbols are not easy to recognise.

They are not suitable to use in EasyRead information. EasyRead is not about teaching literacy, but about making information easier to understand.

Complex



Independent



complaints
procedure

Complex symbols are not easy to recognise.

They are not suitable to use in EasyRead information. People need support to learn their meaning. Most of the audience for EasyRead will not be experienced symbol users.

We do not recommend using either abstract or complex symbols in EasyRead information. Even the symbols for 'Doctor' shown above could be too complex for many people to understand without support.

Instead of using the symbol for 'independent' you could use iconic symbols that represent activities to do with being independent such as 'cooking' 'bus' and 'money'.

Be wary of symbol copyrights

Widgit Literacy Symbols are subject to strict copyright which includes additional costs in using them in published information (on top of the money you have already paid for purchasing the licence to use them).

The Clear Communication People Ltd are slowly developing a database of simple iconic line drawings called EasyPics. These will be free to use. See previous page for more information.

TYPES OF EASYREAD INFORMATION

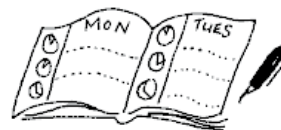
People need a wide range of information in their daily life

Most information is suitable to be translated into EasyRead but this is not always practical so people have to choose which information is most important.

Individually tailored information

This information is personal to the individual, for example a diary, letter or personal plan.

This kind of information can be developed with the person checking the words and images with them. This is a time consuming process. If a service offers individually tailored EasyRead information to people they need to be sure their staff have the time and resources to take on this amount of work.



Information produced for a wide audience

This information can include advisory information, information about services and information about policy and consultations

EasyRead information of this kind has been produced with people with a learning disability in mind.

As it has been widely distributed other people have come across it and chosen to read it instead of, or alongside, the main document it was translated from, including:

- people who have a learning difficulty such as dyslexia
- older people and children and young people
- busy staff and managers
- people for whom English is not their first language



It is important to be aware that the more abstract information becomes the less relevant it will be to many people. For example a Government consultation report about bus services in the UK will be less relevant to people than the bus timetable for their local town.

It is not possible to individually tailor this kind of information to every individual and the feedback is usually that it's too simple for some people and too complex for others.

The best we can do is to make as much information as accessible as possible to as many people as possible.

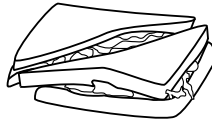
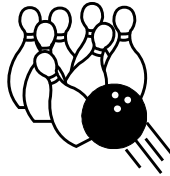
INFORMATION TAILORED TO INDIVIDUALS



Day to day information

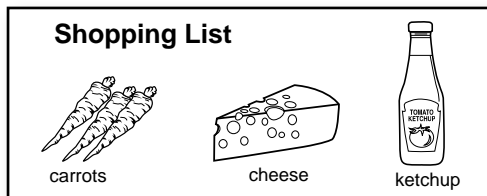
This is information that focuses on the basic questions of the day:

- who am I with?
- what are we doing?
- what shall we eat?



Examples of day to day information include:

- timetables and diaries
- menus and shopping lists



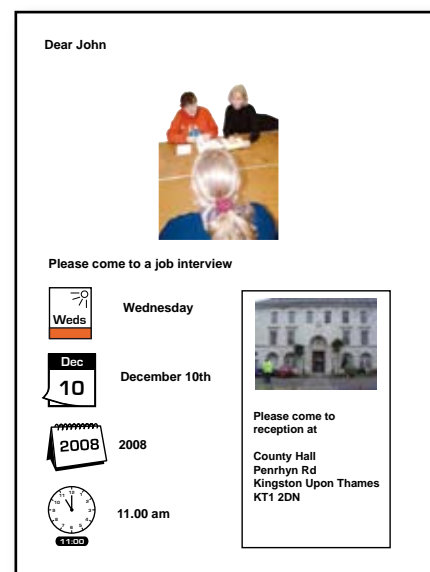
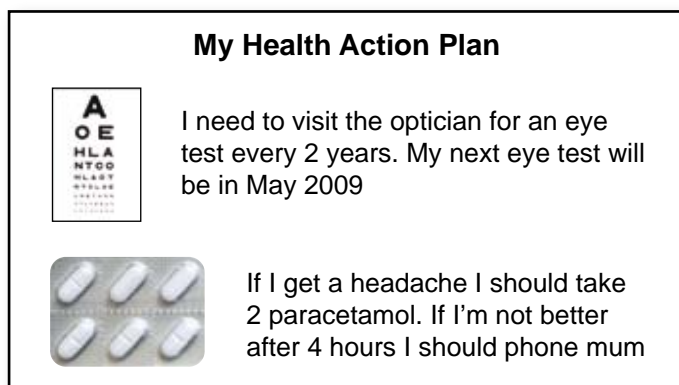
| Mon | Tues | Weds | Thurs | Fri |
|-----|--------|-------|-------|-----------------|
| | coffee | sport | | www computer |

Personal information

This information is more complex than day to day information. It is information that is personal to the individual about an aspect of their life.

Examples of personal information include:

- person centred plans
- letters
- health action plans



INFORMATION FOR A WIDE AUDIENCE



Advisory and guidance information

This is information on a specific subject. The aim is to make the important advice or guidance accessible to as many people as possible.

A very good example is the booklet produced by the Home Office on Keeping Safe.



To view this go to:

<http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/keepsafe.pdf>

Service Information

This is information that tells people about a service that may be available to them.

This could include:

- Safeguarding services
- Housing and support services
- Advocacy services
- Health Services - see breast screening example shown

This also includes information like complaints leaflets, meeting minutes and agendas.



Reports, policy and consultation information

This is information that usually informs people about future plans. This kind of EasyRead information is the most commonly produced, because policies and consultation have funding attached.

Often a consultation will come up with the need for the service to develop Easyread versions of a lot of its other information like complaints leaflets, and information about accessing its services !



Example shown - Office For Disability Issues - Independent Living Strategy

OTHER WAYS TO USE EASYREAD

Checklists and questionnaires

These are very good to use for getting the views of people with a learning disability, and also helping people to think about important issues and make choices.

EasyRead questionnaires can be a really useful tool to use when consulting with people about changes to services.



Presentations

EasyRead principles can be used when designing presentations for meetings and other events.

Many people use PowerPoint presentations and often fill a slide with small text. A presentation with a few large easy words illustrated with images are often more effective for any audience.



Websites

Websites can be designed in an EasyRead style.

You can have easy words in a large font illustrated with images. Also on websites you can have audio and video which helps make information more real for people.

Another feature that works well on websites is rolling slideshows. See The Learning Disability Partnership Board in Surrey website www.surreypb.org.uk



DVD's

DVD's can also use an EasyRead style. Many people find film a really good way of understanding information. You can also have words to go with the film, and even an EasyRead booklet to accompany the DVD.



EASYREAD DESIGN TIPS

Always use an image on the front page that relates to the subject

This helps people who have limited or no reading skills to identify whether information is relevant to them.



A suitable image for the front of a leaflet about health checks



A suitable image for the front of a leaflet about transport

Plenty of white space on a page

This helps the reader to take in the information and not be overwhelmed

Involve your audience at all stages

People can help choose images, edit text, and create designs. The best EasyRead information is designed with people with learning disabilities.



Clear headings and contents

Using bright colourful headings with a large font to separate sections helps people to find their way around information.

Using bold lettering is a good way of highlighting important sentences or words.

It's also important to clearly show who to contact for more information, or for more copies of the information.

| Contents | | |
|---|--|-------|
|  | How to keep safe at home | 2-5 |
|  | How to keep your home safe | 6-7 |
|  | How to keep safe when out and about | 8-11 |
|  | How to keep safe on buses | 12-13 |
|  | How to keep safe on trains | 14-15 |
|  | How to keep safe in taxis | 16-17 |
|  | How to keep safe at the cash machine | 18-19 |
|  | How to keep safe on the phone | 20-21 |
|  | What to do if you are in trouble | 22-24 |
|  | Who can you talk to about your safety? | 25 |
|  | Useful telephone numbers | 26 |