Print and publication guidelines

There are various ways you can provide information to your audiences to meet their different communication needs: for example, print, websites, social media, video and emails. These guidelines provide information about plain English, accessible print and alternative formats.

What is plain English?
Plain English benefits everyone. It uses everyday language; short, straightforward sentences and paragraphs; and avoids jargon. A reader should be able to understand the content in a single reading. For more information and resources visit Plain English Power (www.plainenglish.org.nz).

Content and language
- All text should be written in clear, straightforward language.
- Short sentences are recommended.
- If text uses technical, complex language and cannot be rewritten, then a plain English version should be provided (i.e. without jargon).
- Information on access and services should be included in all publicity material.
- You may wish to develop a separate access and information guide for disabled people, specific to their requirements.
- Images and graphic material should be relevant to the text.
- Images and graphic material should include disabled people, who should be represented in the same way as any other community member.
- Language should be appropriate and non-offensive.
- Using international access symbols, as well as accompanying text captions, makes the information available to all your audience members. These symbols are available from Arts Access Aotearoa or for download at the Graphic Artists Guild Foundation website (graphicartistsguild.org).

Accessible design: general guidelines
- Text should be left justified.
- No hyphenation should be used at the end of lines.
- Colour contrast of type to background should be at least 70%. The recommended contrast is black on white or black on yellow.
- Maps or line drawings should be simple and bold.
- Images should have captions with relevant explanations.
- Paper should be matt or dull. Glossy paper is not recommended.
- Graphics should not be printed over or floated on other images, graphics or text.
- The paper weight should be dense enough to avoid show-through.
- Photos should be clear and have contrast to the background (at least 60% is recommended).

- Documents should have a flexible or spiral binding, or should be easy to open. It is ideal if documents can lie flat.

Accessible print guidelines
- The main body of the text should be in a minimum 12 point type.
- Text should be set in a sans serif font, or in 13 point if a serif font is used. Avoid simulated handwriting or highly stylised fonts. Keep it simple.
- Use bold sparingly. Only highlight a few words rather than a paragraph.
- Keep the text layout simple and consistent.
- Don't use blocks of capitalised letters.
- Avoid use of italics or underlining.
- Material presented as large print should be in a minimum of 18 point using a strong sans serif font (minimum of 20 point if using a simple serif font).
- If you do not provide printed material in a minimum of 12 point type, provide an accessible electronic copy of the document or web page.
- Large print documents should be easy to manage.
- Avoid printing over shading, watermarks and images.

Alternative formats
- At a minimum, printed material should be available as audio, in large print and electronically (on a website, podcast, via email or in an accessible Word format).
- The availability of alternative formats should be promoted clearly on all publicity material.
- Audio material should have clear, high-quality sound and if possible should be sound-indexed.
- Material on a website should follow website accessibility standards and best practices (see below).
- Material sent via email should be sent in a plain text format (not html).
- Avoid using PDFs as the only means of communication. Communicate in a variety of formats.

Accessible websites: basic guidelines
- Accessibility should be part of all design considerations and plans.
- Use "alt" text to provide meaningful descriptions of images/graphics.
- Documents available as PDF files should also be provided in a Word format. Use tagged files optimised for accessibility in Word and PDF.
- Ensure that information is laid out clearly, with properly structured headings, and that links are clearly identified.
- Provide captions or a text translation of any audio or audio-visual material.
- Ensure navigation through a site is consistent and does not change in structure from page to page.
- Ensure text and background contrast is high (recommended at least 70%).
- Ensure text is proof-read and uses proper punctuation.

- Do not use blinking text or throbbing, pulsing or flashing graphics or buttons.
- Information on the website should be in accessible html.
- Formats such as audio, NZSL videos and captioned video, or video with transcripts can be displayed on websites.
- Provide a site map for ease of navigation.

Websites: design resources
- It is highly recommended that all people designing or updating websites or webpages refer to the Web Accessibility Initiative's guidelines (w3.org/WAI/eval/). It is recommended that all sites meet its minimum standards.
- Engage with disabled people and accessibility experts when planning and designing your website.
- Free website testing is available online (wave.webaim.org).
- Information on the New Zealand Government's web standards is available online (webtoolkit.govt.nz).

Accessible emails: general guidelines
- The only way to ensure your emails are accessible to everyone is to send them in plaint text format. Emails sent in html or rich text format (rtf) may not be accessible.
- Keep emails concise and easy to follow.
- Send Word documents with additional information as clearly named attachments, and state that you are including an attachment in the body of your email.
- Ask your email recipients what they prefer and offer a plain text alternative if you send RTF or HTML emails.
- If you do use hyperlinks, include the full email or website address in brackets alongside it. For example, "Visit the Arts Access Aotearoa website (artsaccess.org.nz)" is more accessible than "click here".

Contact Arts Access Aotearoa:
T: 04 802 4349
E: info@artsaccess.org.nz
W: www.artsaccess.org.nz

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