

DEPARTMENT FOR INFRASTRUCTURE

Guide to Making Information Accessible 2017-2018

This document is available in a range of formats on request and you should contact us with your requirements.

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Quick Reference Guide For use by officials when producing documents.

<p>The Guide to Making Information Accessible can be found in full at: www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk Key issues for preparing all documents and relevant paragraphs in the Guide are detailed below:</p>	
	Para
Requests for information in alternative formats should be responded to within 20 working days.	1.6
Font size needs to be 14. Large print can be between size 16 - 20 font.	3.3
Number all pages and paragraphs using Arabic numbering, i.e. 1, 2, 3.	3.6
Numbers used in the text should be numeric rather than written, e.g. you should write '23' instead of 'twenty-three'.	3.6
The following information on contacts and alternative formats should be included on the first page of your document in large print (font size 16 – 20). Do not assume that all your customers will be able to use a telephone.	3.8
“This document is available in a range of formats please contact us with your requirements.	3.8/4.2
<p>Contact details are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Name of person responsible for the document.</i> ▪ <i>E-mail address.</i> ▪ <i>Telephone number (for Text Relay prefix number with 18001).</i> ▪ <i>Mobile number (optional).</i> ▪ <i>Fax number (optional).”</i> 	3.9
Alternative Formats	4
Different types of alternative formats are detailed below. Large prints should always be considered as a matter of course, especially as there is no cost. Large print can be between size 16 – 20 font.	4.2
<p>The NICS Translation Contract covers the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translation into ethnic minority languages; and • Braille. 	5.3
The NICS Translation Contract also covers the following	

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<p>services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face-to-face interpreting services for spoken languages; • Text to text translation services; • Interpreting services for British Sign Language and Irish Sign Language including Braille; • Sign Supported English; • Speech to Text Translation/Transcription; • Notetaking; • Finger Spelling; • Lipspeaking; and • Hearing/Visual Impairment communication. 	
<p>Range of alternative formats not in the NICS contract:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Computer disc, DVD and other digital formats, including Websites; ▪ Audio - CD-R and audio versions of documents on the internet; ▪ Video/DVD with either sign language inserts or subtitles; DAISY Digital disc; (http://www.daisy.org) ▪ Easy-Read format; (http://www.easy-read-online.co.uk): ▪ Tactile maps, plans or diagrams; ▪ Advertising or promotion in specialised publications, e.g. Disability Action Ezine, audio newsletters such as Sound Vision Ulster, community radio etc, for relevant services or public appointments. 	5.7
<p>When producing a document in an alternative format, outside those covered in the NICS contract, you should adhere to the Procurement Guidelines as contained in PGN 04/12 Procurement Control Limits and basis for contract awards.</p>	5.8
<p>Information on turnaround times for alternative formats.</p>	<u>Annex H</u>

**If you need any further information please contact:
Gabrielle Kerr 02890 540824 (Ext 40824).**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Department for Infrastructure (DfI) Equality Unit is responsible for driving forward and providing guidance on Section 75 obligations to all business areas throughout the Department. The Unit monitors the commitments in the Department's Equality Scheme, including the commitment to ensure that the information and services the Department disseminates and provides are made as accessible and equitable as possible.
- 1.2 The Department is responsible for a wide range of functions which include:
 - regional strategic planning and development policy;
 - transport strategy and sustainable transport policy;
 - provision and maintenance of all public roads;
 - public transport policy and performance;
 - certain policy and support work for air and sea ports;
 - policy on water and sewerage services and management of the Department's shareholder interest in Northern Ireland Water (NIW);
 - Rivers Agency;
 - Road Safety;
 - Driver & Vehicle Agency;
 - Vehicle Regulation;
 - Strategic Planning;
 - Inland Waterways;
 - Crumlin Road Gaol Programme-Project Management; and
 - St Lucia (Ex-Ministry of Defence Site).
- 1.3 The purpose of this Guide is to strive to achieve best practice in ensuring that the Department provides customers with accessible information as quickly and effectively as possible.
- 1.4 This guide is available, on request, in a range of alternative formats.
- 1.5 The Department liaises with representatives of young people, people with a disability and minority ethnic organisations and takes account of existing and developing good practice.
- 1.6 We respond to requests for information in alternative formats in a timely manner, usually within 20 working days
- 1.7 It should be noted that this guide relates only to the equality aspects of communication.
- 1.8 In drafting the Guide the following considerations have been taken into account:

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- Existing provision of information/services in accessible formats e.g. Braille, audio, large print, minority ethnic languages, digital and internet, etc;
- Feedback from Section 75 representative groups;
- Statutory requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (including subsequent amendments as a result of the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006);
- Need to consider specific outreach measures;
- Resource implications;
- Recommendations of the cross-departmental Promoting Social Inclusion (PSI) working group on disability and on minority ethnic people; and
- Likely demand for information in such formats.

1.9 The Department recognises that:

- Everyone has the **right to equal access to information**;
- People require information to be made available in **formats** and in **ways that suit their particular requirements**;
- When information is made available in a preferred format it should be done so **without undue delay or, if appropriate, without any charge**;
- The Department needs to be **proactive** in ensuring people know where and how to obtain the information they need; and also anticipatory in identifying any reasonable adjustments that may be needed.
- Where preferred formats are not appropriate, the Department needs to make **alternative arrangements**. These may include arranging face-to-face meetings to pass on information; giving an oral briefing; or providing additional staff time to help customers understand and complete forms etc.
- Some people may require the **assistance of a supporter**, for example a personal assistant, carer, interpreter etc, who would accompany them when information is being provided.

1.10 This is a living document that will be reviewed on an annual basis but may be subject to change within the yearly cycle where best practice is identified or changes are required. Officials will be advised should any amendments take place.

1.11 It should be noted that the provisions of this Guide in relation to equality of opportunity in accessing information are **without prejudice to any rights to information contained in the Department's Publication Scheme**. In particular, whilst most information can be accessed free of charge, certain

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publications and other categories of information (listed in the Scheme) will only be available on receipt of payment. In specific cases where Divisions have difficulty or uncertainty in reconciling the provisions of this Guide with those of the Publication Scheme they should consult with the Equality Unit, Room 413E, Clarence Court, Belfast. Telephone: 028905 40824 (text relay prefix 18001)

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2. IDENTIFYING CUSTOMER NEEDS

- 2.1 The Department recognises that there is a risk that some sections of the public will not enjoy equality of opportunity in accessing information from the Department.
- 2.2 These people have the right to expect a level of service consistent with that offered to the rest of the community from the Department in a tailored manner.
- 2.3 From the outset, even before a consultation document has been written, the Department should consider all appropriate forms of communications including consultation with representative groups, where appropriate.
- 2.4 Those that may require information in a variety of formats include:
- **People who have difficulty accessing information** because they:
 - Have a visual impairment which means they cannot see text, images or moving pictures;
 - Have a learning difficulty or disability and may need extra support to understand information e.g. people with dyslexia, or people who experience significant difficulties in learning, understanding or communicating information;
 - Have mental health difficulties;
 - Are profoundly deaf and use Sign Language as their primary means of communication, or are hard of hearing, and cannot use a voice telephone or access spoken information;
 - Have a low standard of literacy; or
 - Some combination of these.
 - **People who have a speech impairment** and therefore find it difficult to use a phone;
 - **People who have dexterity difficulties** which make it hard to hold or manipulate a printed document or use a keyboard.
- 2.5 These groups will also include a large number of older and younger people, and some people will have multiple disabilities.
- 2.6 The checklist at [Annex A](#) provides further advice on how to communicate with people with a disability. [Annex D](#) provides further information on providing accessible information for those with a learning disability. [Annex J](#)

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provides guidance on how to communicate/consult with children and young people.

- 2.7 Members of black and minority ethnic communities in Northern Ireland and local regional or minority language speakers are as likely as the rest of the population to have a disability which could affect their ability to access information in addition to possible language barriers. Although demand for alternative format documents in languages other than English is likely to be low, it should not be overlooked (see Section 4).
- 2.8 All officials should also be aware that, in addition to adopting a “good practice” approach to the provision of information, the Department must comply with the provisions of Part III of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 where it provides goods, facilities and services to the public. Annex I outlines in brief the provisions of the Part III of the Act.

3. IMPROVING OUR PRINTED DOCUMENTS

- 3.1 In considering the accessibility and equitable requirements of people, some basic steps can be taken to **improve** the **overall clarity** of documents currently produced by the Department. These steps also make it easier to provide information in accessible formats.
- 3.2 The use of **plain language** and **everyday words** improves comprehension and saves time and money. Documents that are produced in plain English are **easier to translate** into other languages and alternative formats. Try to use just one idea in each sentence. For advice see: <http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/free-guides.html>.
- 3.3 **Making text and images easier to see** helps everyone. For people who are visually impaired, the **clarity and size of the text** changes whether or not they are able to read a document. Use a clear, simple font such as Arial, preferably in size 14, as this will aid clarity. Size 12 should be the minimum size used. Large print can be between size 16 – 20 font.
- 3.4 If the line spacing is too narrow it makes text difficult to read. For example people with sight problems, lines of text can appear to merge with the text on the line above and below making it difficult to recognise word shapes.
- 3.5 A page of close-set type is difficult to read for many readers, so the **layout** of documents should be made **clear and easy to navigate**.
- 3.6 All pages and paragraphs should be **numbered using Arabic numbering, i.e. 1, 2, 3**. Numbers used in the text should be numeric rather than written, e.g you should write '23' instead of 'twenty-three'.
- 3.7 Use **bullet points and paragraphs** if you have a lot of things to say about something.
- 3.8 Documents produced for public distribution should include the following text in large print (size 16 – 20) on the front cover, along with contact details:
“This document is available in a range of formats, please contact us with your requirements”.
- 3.9 Contact details should include the following information:
- Name of person responsible for the document;
 - Email address;
 - Telephone number (for Text Relay prefix number with 18001);
 - Mobile number (optional); and

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- Fax number (optional).

3.10 To minimise the difficulties faced by those with defective colour vision the following rules should be applied:

- Ensure there is a good contrast between the text and its background;
- Avoid combining red and green; and
- Avoid combining yellow and blue.

3.11 Further information on improving the accessibility of documents is available at [Annex F](#).

4. USE OF ALTERNATIVE FORMATS

- 4.1 The **requirements of the target audience are paramount** in deciding how the information should be made available. Procedures should be in place to ensure that **accessible formats identified as necessary** are available at the same time as standard print and that access to these formats is given, if requested. The Department should endeavour to meet all requests for information in alternative formats.
- 4.2 The following formats should be **considered** when producing public information to meet the specific communication requirements of the groups identified at Section 2 above:
- Large print (16 - 20 point) in a clear font. If a request is received for large print check with the individual what size of print they would prefer. Large print version of a document should be considered as a matter of course;
 - Word version available on internet. Programmes used by those who have sight impairments are not always compatible with a PDF version of documents;
 - Computer disc, DVD and other digital formats, including Websites;
 - Audio - CD-R and audio versions of documents on the internet;
 - Video/DVD with either sign language inserts or subtitles;
 - Braille;
 - Easy-Read format;
 - DAISY Digital disc;
 - Tactile maps, plans or diagrams; and
 - Translation into ethnic minority languages - see 7.1.
 - Advertising or promotion in specialised publications, e.g. Disability Action Ezine, audio newsletters such as Sound Vision Ulster, community radio etc, for relevant services or public appointments.
- 4.3 Section 5 provides information on how to obtain alternative formats. Annex H shows the approximate timescales for obtaining alternative formats. Basic word processing, large print and computer disks are the **low cost alternative formats**. Sign Language videos, CD-Rom and Website formats are the most expensive.
- 4.4 Staff should consider the sources of material available to them to ensure that turnaround time for material is within expected timescales usually 20 days for standard correspondence.

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- 4.5 **Reasonable adjustment** is a requirement of the Disability Discrimination Act and must be considered in that light. Should a delay be encountered in producing time-sensitive documents in an accessible format, such as consultation documents, an extension should be granted to the individual to ensure they have an equal amount of time to make their reply.

5 PROCESS TO FOLLOW TO OBTAIN AN ALTERNATIVE FORMAT – VIA NICS CONTRACT OR PROCUREMENT

- 5.1 There is a NICS wide Face to Face Interpreting & Text Translation Service which is carried out by Flex Language Service Ltd, and Step Training & Learning Ltd. This contract can be used both for translations and arranging for interpreters. As the first ranked tenderer Flex will be requested to provide the service in accordance with the specification, and terms and conditions of contract. The first ranked tenderer (Flex) will carry out the majority, if not all, of the work required.

Services will be available during ‘normal working hours’. Out of hours services can be provided at a higher rate(s). See [Annex H](#) for information on turnaround times.

Please note that payable orders must be raised by the Business Area once the Equality Unit has provided the necessary information. The Equality Unit is not liable for the cost of these services but needs to monitor them.

Monitoring

- 5.2 The Equality Unit arranges and tracks all alternative formats provided by the Department. Officials should not independently arrange translations without liaising with the Unit. You should make allowance for the time taken to translate documents when planning consultations and events.

- 5.3 The NICS Translation Contract covers the following formats:

- Translation into ethnic minority languages; and
- Braille.

The list of languages that are covered by the NICS Translation Contract is available at [Annex L](#).

The Contract also covers the following services:

- Face-to-face interpreting services for spoken languages;
- Text to text translation services;
- Interpreting services for British Sign Language and Irish Sign Language including Braille;
- Sign Supported English;
- Speech to Text Translation/Transcription;
- Notetaking;
- Finger Spelling;
- Lipspeaking; and

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- Hearing/Visual Impairment communication.

Conference interpreting is included within the scope of this contract.

Face to Face Interpreting Services

- 5.4 An interpreter/translator should be booked through the provider (Flex Language Services) who will confirm within the hour if a suitable interpreter/translator is available and will advise of their name.

Speech to Text Transcription Operational Guidelines

- 5.5 The provider shall provide a suitable speech to text transcription interpreter within a maximum 48 hour period (i.e. in less than 2 days) and advise of the name of the interpreter as soon as they are booked.

Non Contract Requirements

- 5.6 In certain instances, it may not be possible to obtain a translation through the NICS contract.
- 5.7 Range of alternative formats not in the NICS contract:
- Computer disc, DVD and other digital formats, including Websites.
 - Audio - CD-R and audio versions of documents on the internet.
 - Video/DVD with either sign language inserts or subtitles.
 - DAISY Digital disc (<http://www.daisy.org>).
 - Easy read format (<http://www.easy-read-online.co.uk>).
 - Tactile maps, plans or diagrams.
 - Advertising or promotion in specialised publications, e.g. Disability Action E-zine, audio newsletters such as Sound Vision Ulster, community radio etc, for relevant services or public appointments.

Procurement Guidance

- 5.8 When producing a document in an alternative format, outside those covered in the NICS contract, actions must be taken in line with the procedures detailed in PGN 04/12 Procurement Control Limits and Basis for Contract Awards which include the requirement to seek three quotes. The quote that provides best value for money should be used. Equality Unit can provide contact details of providers for a particular format when required.

6.0 EVENTS/MEETINGS

- 6.1 In addition to the advice given at [Section 4](#), the following points should also be considered when officials are organising any meetings with members of the groups specified in [Section 2](#). Events involving members of the public such as exhibitions, press and other conferences, seminars etc should be organised to make sure that involvement of such groups is made accessible and equitable.
- 6.2 The organising department is responsible for making any reasonable adjustments, including booking sign language interpreters or speech to text operators etc for those people who require this aid to communication. It should not be assumed that people who require these communication aids will book their own. Before booking an interpreter, if possible, check what the deaf person wants e.g. Sign Language Interpreter or Lipspeaker etc.
- 6.3 The services need to be booked some weeks in advance as the event may have to be rescheduled if these services are not available. Providers should identify any reasonable adjustments needed well in advance. The service provider shall provide a suitable speech to text transcription interpreter within a maximum 48 hour period and advise of the name of the interpreter as soon as they are booked.
- All invitations to meetings and events to include a section requesting particular requirements, e.g. dietary requirements and distributions in accessible formats to people who cannot read standard print.
 - All invitations to clearly state that the venue is accessible and wheelchair friendly. This should include physical accessibility to the entrance and other parts of the building as required, such as ramps and handholds, clear signage, and access to catering, conference and toilet facilities. An audit may be required to ensure the suitability of venues.
 - A suitable time for the meeting, bearing in mind that early meetings may not be suitable for people who need longer to get ready in the morning, and evening meetings may not be suitable for those who rely on public transport or rely on others for transport.
 - Use of a Signer or Specialist in sign language modification should be pre-booked via the Equality Unit.
 - Use of an interpreter/translator (Face to Face) - An interpreter/translator should be booked via the Equality Unit.
 - Video conferencing.
 - Provision of a loop system - A loop system can be particularly useful in a reception area, meeting room or public office.

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- Exhibition material to reflect the communication requirements of people with a learning disability and people with visual impairment, (e.g. black ink on white or yellow paper to be used to meet the communication requirements of people with visual impairment).
- Requirements of the audience to be considered when preparing material for information packs.
- Introductions by officials and speakers should be conducted in turn, to allow people with a visual disability to be sure where people are seated in relation to themselves.
- Appropriate signage to be used for directions e.g. fire escape, toilets, etc.
- Audio / Visual aids e.g. use of microphone; and when using presentations ensure they can be easily read at the back of the room.
- Announcements of evacuation procedures to take account of the needs of disabled people.
- Dietary requirements.
- Designated car parking including disabled parking bays or blue badge parking near to the entrance and reached by an accessible route.
- Public Transport provision, such as distance and accessibility from public transport links, should be taken into consideration.
- Provision of childcare/respite for Carers.
- Provision of Guide Dog/Dog Assistant facilities, e.g. toilet facilities, water bowls, exercise area.

7. TRANSLATION, TRANSCRIPTION & INTERPRETATION

- 7.1 The frequency of requests to the Department for translations and alternative materials has historically been very low, although this could possibly change in the future depending on the nature of the document and more probably the increase in requests from people with a disability and those from ethnic minority communities.
- 7.2 Under the terms of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages, the Department has specific obligations regarding the use of the Irish language. Detailed guidance on the use of the Irish language in official business was issued by the Secretary of State in August 2005. The Equality Unit has also drawn up Language Policies for dealing with queries and correspondence in Irish and Ulster-Scots, both of which are available on the Department's website at: <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/accessible-and-alternative-formats>.
- 7.3 Enquiries on the use of Irish, Ulster Scots or ethnic minority languages should be passed in the first instance to the Equality Unit who organise any translations through the NICS Translation Contract. Officials should review the need for a translation on a case by case basis to assess if it is value for money.
- 7.4 Divisions and Agencies should also consider the requirements of people with specific learning difficulties, and particularly aphasia (loss of ability to communicate in speech). The effects of dyslexia vary from person to person, but are most commonly characterized by a difficulty in learning literacy skills. Organisations such as Speechmatters (for those with aphasia) or The British Dyslexia Association are useful contact points for information and advice (see [Annex J](#)).
- 7.5 Deaf organisations (see [Annex J](#)) provide a range of interpretation and transcription services for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. This includes BSL, ISL sign language interpreters, Lip speakers, Speed Text operators, Palantype (speech-to-text) operators, Note Takers, and Deaf-Blind interpreters. Before booking an interpreter check what the deaf person wants e.g. Sign Language Interpreter or Lipspeaker etc. A list of methods, which can be used to improve communication with people who are deaf or hard of hearing, is attached at [Annex B](#).
- 7.6 Another means of communication with those with a hearing disability is the use of Text Relay which we have referred to throughout this document. Text Relay is a free national telephone relay service that enables people who are deaf, hard of hearing or who have a speech impairment to communicate by using their textphone via specially trained operators simply by dialling 18001

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before the full telephone number. (To return the call add the prefix 18002). This service is currently being replaced by the Next Generation Text Service which uses unique Text numbers starting with 03 or 07. Additional information can be obtained via this link
http://ngts.org.uk/textrelay_index.php

- 7.7 Organisations for the visually impaired (see Annex J) can advise about the transcription of documents in both Braille and audio formats for accessing people who are blind or partially- sighted. They also have studios suitable for audio recordings, and can provide accredited speakers to produce audio copies of publications in languages other than English.
- 7.8 Mental health organisations (see Annex J) can advise about the transcription of documents for people with a learning disability into Easy-Read formats and some may be able to provide a translation service, for which there will be a charge. This may not be suitable for all types of document, particularly highly-level or technical documents. Business areas should consider on a case by case basis whether a meeting with the individual that requesting an Easy-Read document would be more effective.
- 7.9 Section 5 provides advice on how to obtain a document in an alternative format.

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8. CUSTOMER-FACING STAFF

- 8.1 The Department provides information to some customers through staff at the point of service delivery. The Department has therefore to consider how this “first contact”, often at a counter or advice desk, could be geared to meet the different requirements of people. All staff with a customer-facing role should attend the course, Disability Awareness for Frontline Staff (available in CAL Catalogue under Information and Communication).
- 8.2 This training should be agreed and reflected in staff’s Personal Development Plan.
- 8.3 The Executive Office’s (formerly OFMDFM) “Barriers to Access to Essential Services” research (December 2001)
<http://webarchive.proni.gov.uk/20141007012003/http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/barriers.pdf>
- “People with a learning disability believed that their access to services was closely linked to the level of support they received from statutory and voluntary agencies”;
 - “People with hearing difficulties indicated that the increasing use of the telephone as a route to accessing services created particular problems for them”;
 - and members of the Chinese community felt: “That interpreters were very necessary when members of the community had to interact with officials.”
- 8.4 These difficulties are not quick or easy to overcome, but the advice given at Annex G, on improving general communication, will be of use. This includes the provision of low-level counters, induction-loop systems and the text relay service, to ensure a high standard of service is provided to all customers, regardless of disability.
- 8.5 People with a **learning disability** will often need individual personal support to access information. Staff will need to be encouraged to show a willingness to help and will need to allow sufficient time to do so. In some instances people with a learning disability might wish to bring an advocate or supporter with them. For information and advice contact MENCAP (Contact details in [Annex J](#)).
- 8.6 [Best Practice guidance on providing public services to deaf people](#) recommends a facility for taking and exchanging written notes as a simple and effective aid for frontline staff who may need to provide a service to deaf and hard of hearing people at very short notice.

9 Dfi WEBSITE

- 9.1 It is the responsibility of the Information Management Unit (IMU) to ensure that the Department's web development work takes into account issues relating to accessibility. There are a number of practical issues which will be addressed centrally, for example:
- Availability of a text only version.
 - Facility to ensure all images uploaded are described properly (according to Guidelines for UK Government Websites).
 - To ensure all downloadable information is suitably sized to accommodate modem links by end users.
- 9.2 Accessibility issues and guidance relating to equality are covered in the Guidelines for UK Government Websites adopted by the NI Government.
- 9.3 All NICS websites are designed to meet agreed central government standards covering both accessibility and presentation. In accessibility terms, this translates to compliance with the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) guidelines and achieving Priority Checkpoint 2 (AA level) standard. This includes use of relevant font sizes, which enable users to change the size of text on the page, alternative text tags for all images, and the use of XHTML, which allows greater flexibility when used with accessibility programmes such as text readers.
- 9.4 As part of the development process, each site is audited centrally and independently by DoF staff. They produce a report on the site and, if priority remedial action is needed, this work is completed before the site goes "live".
- 9.5 Important issues which staff should take account of when preparing text content for the web include:
- **Structure of content.** This will be guided largely by the structure of the web itself. However, a pyramid structure is the accepted format for content so as users 'drill' down through the website they can access more detailed information. The "3 click" approach is recommended by web designers for people with a disability – most people will only use 3 clicks to get to the information they need, but this is also important for people who find navigating technology difficult or who have memory difficulties.
 - **Style of content.** It is important that the content posted on the web is succinct, clear and is self-contained as much as possible. It is usual to make use of short sentences; bullet points at the higher levels; and if a

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user needs more detail they can drill down further as required. PDFs should contain metadata to assist searches, and accessibility tags.

- **Size of content.** Ensure there is an option of a single file download, as well as a number of smaller sectional files for each publication. This makes it easier for people using text-to-voice conversion software to access content.

9.6 Care should be taken to ensure that departmental websites contain information that is accurate and consistent and where possible presents a standard interface to the citizen. An inter-Departmental Editorial Board has been established under the leadership of the Executive Information Service to address this issue, operating under the aegis of the E-Government Board.

9.7 When considering promotional material, including website presence, staff should contact the Information Management Unit (IMU); and as appropriate, technical support from Information Systems Branch (ISB).

9.8 Sign Language Videos

The provision of sign language videos falls outside the remit of the NICS Translation contract. You should therefore follow procurement guidelines as contained in PGN04/12 Procurement Control Limits discussed at [para.5.8](#). As procurement guidelines are to be followed, the business area must take this forward in liaison with the Equality Unit.

It is recommended that sign language videos are provided in both British Sign Language (NI) and Irish Sign Language.

The following are some questions that should be asked when obtaining quotes for a sign language video:

- Confirm that the providers can provide BSL in Northern Irish style as this is different to English BSL.
- Some providers may charge a freelance fee for these versions so when obtaining quotes ensure you ask if freelance fees are included.
- Videos should be produced in as high a resolution as possible to maintain viewing quality.
- Ask for the costs of subtitling and/or a voice over to be included separately in the quote.
- File should be no bigger than 2GB in size and preferably be in DVD format, however it would also be useful to obtain it in electronic (file-share) format, if this does not add to the costs.

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- Check required format of information to be signed i.e. word, PDF. It is useful to provide the Departmental logo as this should be shown as part of the background.

On receipt of the DVD/electronic file, officials should liaise with IMU (ext 40270) to arrange to have it uploaded to the DfI segment of the NI Executive's YouTube area. A direct link may also be set up on the Department's website.

Please advise EEP of the final costs and turnaround time so this information can be recorded in our translation costs spreadsheet.

9.9 Audio content.

The provision of audio formats falls outside the remit of the NICS Translation contract. You should therefore follow procurement guidelines as contained in PGN04/12 Procurement Control Limits discussed at para 5.8.

You should liaise with the chosen provider to agree the format that the information needs to be in, and to request that it is provided on a CD in MP3 format.

If you wish an audio version of your document to appear on the DfI website you will need it to be re-produced on CD (in MP3 format). Once you have a CD version of the document a copy should be passed to Information Management Unit (IMU). This will be used by IT Assist to create a new web page with an embedded media player facility which allows web-users to listen to the document. IMU can arrange for this webpage to be included on the DfI website and/or NI Direct. Please note it can take up to seven days for the webpage to be activated

Please advise EEP of the final costs and turnaround times so this information can be recorded in our translation costs spreadsheet.

10 TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

- 10.1 The Department has an ongoing commitment to integrate equal opportunities knowledge, understanding and practice into the day-to-day working of the Department. All staff and their managers agree Personal Development Plans annually, identifying specific training requirements, including those in the area of equality and human rights.
- 10.2 Training in the requirements of Section 75 and Human Rights is available to all staff joining the Department. Management grades, from Executive Officer to Deputy Principal, should attend the half-day general awareness course addressing Human Rights and Section 75 responsibilities. In addition, training on the methodology of equality impact assessments and consultation is provided for all relevant staff (available in CAL Catalogue under Strategy & Policy). The NI Human Rights Commission's interactive guide to Human Rights is also a valuable resource.
- 10.3 All staff complete a mandatory online training course called Diversity Now. The course includes disability awareness and equality training. It is completed once every three years and staff last completed the training in October 2014. This course is available in a classroom based format for those who cannot access a computer, and for those who are new to the NICS. It is delivered over a half day (available in CAL Catalogue under Professional, Technical, Special Knowledge and Skills).
- 10.4 The Department's Equality Unit, in liaison with the Departmental Training Commissioner, will monitor and evaluate training to ensure that it is appropriate and effective.

11 MONITORING REVIEW AND CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

- 11.1 The intention of the Department is to establish arrangements, which ensure that **all** sections of the public enjoy equality of opportunity in accessing information provided by the Department. The Department will therefore conduct periodic evaluations to assess the effectiveness of this Guide.
- 11.2 The Equality Unit will monitor the implementation of this Guide by proactively requesting members of the Department's Equality Working Group to provide feedback from their Divisions and Agencies on the style, structure, available formats and means of access to Departmental information.
- 11.3 The Guide will also be discussed at the annual Section 75 Forum with representatives of the Voluntary and Community Sector, who will be proactively invited to contribute and comment on the content of the Guide.
- 11.4 This will include seeking comments from Forum members on the quality and accessibility of information. Divisions should themselves determine the best method to gather this data. To ensure good practice and consistency, members of the Department's Equality Working Group should exchange information on the methods used by their Division to gather data. Staff will also be consulted to gauge the benefits or otherwise that accrued from having access to the best practice and how it was used to facilitate better customer access to information.
- 11.5 The Department will review this best practice Guide to Making Information Accessible by end of November each year:
- Gauge the usefulness of the Guide to staff;
 - Assess customer feedback;
 - Research the ever-changing environment of communication methods and channels;
 - Exchange views and information with other Government Departments; and
 - Provide the basis for amending the Guide.
- 11.6 During the review, consultations will take place with Section 75 groups and other interested parties to ensure that the Department is aware of any change in information requirements in relation to accessible and equitable information. The Department will also monitor requests for accessible formats centrally to analyse uptake.

12 CONCLUSION

- 12.1 This guide offers advice on achieving best practice in communicating with those who may experience difficulties in accessing information provided in the usual formats. It also provides a good practice checklist. Much of the advice given is simply common sense, and it is just as important to learn from individual experience.
- 12.2 The most important message is to “keep it clear and easy to understand”. Use clear typefaces, design and language, and consult your customers about their requirements and preferences.
- 12.3 The Equality Unit, Room 413E, Clarence Court, Tel: 02890 540 824 (Ext 40824) can advise on all aspects of this guide.

EQUALITY UNIT

GOOD PRACTICE CHECKLIST

- **Consult** your audience and customers as to their needs;
- **Anticipate** the needs of your various audiences in advance of being asked and assess which, if any, accessible format versions are likely to be required. The Department has a translations contract which should be used where possible;
- **Budget** for producing information in accessible formats at the beginning of the financial year, or at the outset of each project/campaign;
- **Involve your publicity/information branch/unit** from the earliest planning stage;
- **Plan ahead.** If you are publicising the availability of accessible formats, it is good practice to make sure that they are available at the same time as the standard print;
- **Keep it easy to understand.** If your document is written in plain language, it will be accessible to a greater number of people and may reduce demand for alternative versions. Avoid the use of acronyms, and explain any technical terms used;
- **Think about type size and font.** 14 point is the minimum size recommended for people with a visual impairment and people with a learning disability and you should use a clear sans serif font such as MS Arial;
- **Consider using illustrations.** Photographs, illustrations and diagrams all aid comprehension and retention of information. When using these care should be taken to portray a positive image of disability rather than reinforcing stereotypes. People with a learning disability will benefit particularly from relevant illustrations and, in some cases, the use of symbols which help to explain the text. (This may also be true for many people for whom English is not their first language). However care should be taken to avoid a presentation becoming complicated for people with significant sight loss;
- **Be helpful.** If you cannot provide exactly what the customer has asked for, explore other possible solutions with the person concerned;
- **Inform customers** what to expect. If there is likely to be a delay in providing a service, explain why and apologise;
- **Provide a range of options;**
- **Publicise availability** of accessible format versions, in any general publicity material, in all standard and accessible versions and in publications and media appropriate for the particular audiences. Include directions for obtaining accessible formats prominently at the **beginning** of a document or form, so that people are immediately alerted to their availability, and consider an appropriate

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communication strategy for informing hard to reach groups and/or mobile number

- **Provide a telephone; fax; or mobile number** to ensure members of the public can contact the Department by their preferred method;
- **Include the text relay prefix number (18001)** with all telephone numbers for use by people with hearing or speech impairments;
- **Provide e-mail, and website addresses** whenever possible. Put documents onto a website designed to be easily accessible and, where possible, allow for on-line feedback;
- **Encourage feedback** from your audience, and respond to it;
- **Keep records** of the demands made upon your service and what the uptake of accessible formats is, including the number of people accessing information on websites. This will help you when planning future projects;
- **Training.** Consider providing additional disability awareness and customer care training to staff who deal directly with the public;
- **Internal communications.** Ensure all customer-facing staff are aware of what materials are available in accessible formats, and on websites;
- **Share your experiences** and lessons learned with colleagues in your own and other departments;
- **Review** the strategy regularly and amend it in light of experience;
- **Publicity.** When planning publicity campaigns, producing information in alternative formats should be considered as an integral part of your campaign rather than as an afterthought;
- **Advertising.** When commissioning advertising, consider how you can make this information accessible. For example, television adverts can cater for people with impaired hearing and can include sub-titles or have someone actually signing on screen;
- **Accessible Signage.** Ensure all direction / information signs in government buildings are in locations that make them easy to follow by all customers and are compliant with design standards.

COMMUNICATING WITH DEAF OR HEARING IMPAIRED PEOPLE

Sign Language/ Spoken Language Interpreters: The interpreter signs what is spoken simultaneously to communicate what is said.

Lipspeakers: The interpreter repeats clearly what is being said without using sound, using facial expression, natural gesture and fingerspelling (if requested).

Induction loops: Hearing aid wearers often find listening at meetings or in public places very difficult due to the amplification of background noise. Most hearing aids have a “T” position on the on/off switch, which cuts out the integral microphone but enables the user to hear a speaker via a microphone and loop system.

An induction loop is a wire or cable, which encircles the audience area. The cable is fed from a loop amplifier. This, in turn, gets its signal from a microphone placed in front of the person speaking. The Department has a mobile induction loop for use at meetings etc. This loop can be obtained by contacting the Mobility and Inclusion Unit in Clarence Court.

SpeechText operator: is a Windows based text summary service specifically designed to meet the needs of deaf and hard of hearing people.

Palantype (speech-to-text) operators: speech is transcribed verbatim on a special phonetic keyboard, which then appears on a laptop computer, TV monitor or large screen.

Notetakers: May be used for people who are deaf or hard of hearing who are lipreading and watching a sign language interpreter, and therefore will find it difficult to take notes.

SMS Text Messaging: This is a simple and effective way of communicating with deaf or hard of hearing people, using standard mobile telephones.

Textdirect: is the national telephone relay service, which enables a deaf person and hearing people to communicate via the telephone network.

Textphones: A textphone is an electronic keyboard that enables people who are deaf or hard of hearing or people with speech impairments to communicate with each other and with hearing people.

http://ngts.org.uk/textrelay_index.php

TextNumber: this unique number is used by the Next Generation Text Service to which those with hearing difficulties can sign up to. TextNumbers will start with **03** for home or office phone, while those starting **07** would be used to call their mobiles. (This is to take the place of Textphones and Text

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Relay although these may still be used.)

Text Relay: Text Relay is a free national telephone relay service that enables people who are deaf or hard of hearing to communicate by using their textphone via specially trained operators with hearing people simply by dialling 18001 before the full telephone number. (To return a call use the prefix 18002). Additional information can be obtained via this link http://ngts.org.uk/textrelay_index.php .

Television/Video: If you are planning to produce a video, or an item for broadcast you should consider producing it with a sign language insert. You should at the very least incorporate subtitles in any piece of work. Catering for both during planning will reduce costs considerably.

GUIDING PEOPLE WITH A VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

Five top tips:

1. Introduce yourself, communicate clearly when offering help and listen to their response (they will confirm if they want assistance).
2. Ask where and how they would like to be guided and allow them to take your arm, rather than you holding or grabbing theirs.
3. Point out kerbs and/or steps as you approach them and say whether they go up or down. Identify any potential hazards that lie ahead and say what/where they are.
4. If you are guiding someone into a seat, place their hand on the back of the seat before they sit down, so they can orientate themselves.
5. Say when you have finished providing assistance and are leaving them - make sure they know where they are and which way they are facing.

General Guiding Advice:

- The standard method is for the person to be guided to hold your arm at your elbow. Others may prefer to put their hand on your shoulder, or follow closely behind you.
- Offer help, introduce yourself, and ask if they'd like to take your arm (usually left).
- Approach a person with a guide dog from the side opposite the dog.
- In narrow walkways – shops/stations/busy places/vehicles – move guiding arm to the small of your back so that the person being guided will step behind you.
- Keep your guiding arm still and relaxed. Don't start waving it about or pointing at things.
- Remember that older people or those with other disabilities may need extra consideration.
- Give instructions where necessary, but don't overdo it and be careful not to push or pull the person you're guiding.
- Match your pace to the person you're guiding.
- Give them time to hold your arm securely before you start walking.

Advice for Guiding on a Pavement:

- Remember to give the person being guided adequate room around obstacles.
- Watch out for hazards at head height, especially if the person is taller than you. It's very easy to walk someone into an overhanging tree or shop canopy.

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- Watch out for lamp posts and bollards too. You may find people you're guiding prefer to walk on the pavement edge to avoid such obstacles.
- Explain loud noises, such as road works or alarms.
- Explain changes in ground surface, for example if you're walking from a pavement onto grass or gravel, or if paving slabs, and road surfaces are particularly uneven.

Advice at Kerbs:

- Pause after saying "kerb down" / "kerb up", and guide the person across at a normal pace ensuring you allow plenty of time to cross.
- When parting company update the person as to where they are, and what direction they are facing.

[Do not assume that just because someone is standing by a kerb that they want to cross the road, so don't be offended if your offer of help is declined].

PROVIDING ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION TO PEOPLE WHO HAVE A LEARNING DISABILITY

A learning disability can affect someone's life in many ways, causing difficulties in learning, communicating or doing everyday things. Some people may have difficulty reading and may have difficulty grasping complicated concepts, with this in mind it is important to ensure that information for those with a learning disability is carefully designed and targeted.

There are a number of steps that can be taken to make information more accessible:

- **Printed material** – It is important to use plain language in all printed documentation. All text should be kept short and precise with no jargon. Using illustrations, cartoons and pictures can help aid comprehension however care should be taken when using symbols unless you know the people using the material are confident symbol users. The document should not look like it is aimed at children. You should not try to put too much information in your printed material. If possible, stick to one main point and use repetition to reinforce the message. Mental Health organisations can help to produce an approved Easy-Read version of publications.
- **Television/Video** – Television and Video do not require the viewer to be able to read. It is therefore a useful means of providing information for people who have a learning disability as they provide visual and audio cues that aid communication.
- **Audio CD** – Audio formats can be a useful form of communication for the same reasons as television and video. Audio CD must be targeted and developed with people with a learning disability in mind. For instance in longer recordings information should be broken up with jingles and sound.
- **Websites** – You should ensure that all web pages conform to international standards of accessibility. You can check this by contacting Information Management Unit or the Information Systems Branch who will ensure that all pages meet the latest agreed government standards.

CONSULTING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

From Equality Commission NI Publication 'Let's Talk Let's Listen'

Why is it important to consult children and young people?

- Public authorities have a duty under Section 75 to consult directly with children and young people.
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 12) gives children the right to express their views and for these to be given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.
- As children and young people comprise over 25% of the population in Northern Ireland, it makes good business sense to take their views into account. Public authorities should ensure they are providing services that are based on need, easy to use, available to everyone and offer value for money.

What we mean by consultation

'Consultation' means asking children and young people who are affected by a policy for their views on how that policy could more effectively promote equality of opportunity.

Consultation is a vital part of the Section 75 duties and allows public authorities to assess the views of the people who are affected by policy decisions or design of services. It should be timely and open, and should include everyone. The guidance suggests that best practice requires public authorities to go beyond consultation by engaging with children and young people and encouraging active participation.

'Engagement' means when public authorities not only ask children and young people for their views, but also aim to form a longer-term relationship with them.

'Active participation' means not only engaging with children and young people when developing and planning policies, but also giving them the opportunity to take part in decision making.

Identifying the effects of policies on children and young people

There is a wide range of policy issues which directly and indirectly affect children and young people. Screening identifies those policies that are likely to have a significant effect on equality of opportunity, so that public authorities can target most of their resources at improving these policies. It is vital to not only identify the negative effects of policies on children and young people, but also the opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations.

The Equality Commission's Monitoring Guidance for use by Public Authorities can help authorities decide what level of detail is useful when collecting information on how their services are used.

Effective consultation with children and young people

The guidance identifies problems public authorities may meet which prevent them consulting effectively with children and young people. It also highlights practical issues which must be considered.

The Guidance suggests a range of age appropriate consultation methods. It also highlights the need to develop the skills and knowledge of children and young people in order to enable them to effectively influence policy development.

Strategic planning

It is important that public authorities build consultation, engagement and active participation practices into the strategic planning process. Corporate plans should include arrangements for planning and carrying out consultation with children and young people to ensure these practices become embedded and mainstreamed into the organisational culture.

Legal and ethical issues

Children and young people taking part in a consultation should always be able to choose whether to take part and be given the information they need to make this decision. Public authorities must consider the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Children and young people must be told what their personal information will be used for, and when, and in what circumstances that information will be made available or passed on to other people. There may be circumstances when confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. This will usually arise if there is a child-protection issue or a risk to the young person. There may be exceptional circumstances where this confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

As a general rule, if the child is under 14 years old, informed permission from the child or young person **and** their parent or carer should be sought.

Evaluation and monitoring

An evaluation should be carried out immediately after a consultation event and should consider whether the event met the expectations of the children and young people.

Under Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, equality schemes must show how public authorities plan to carry out monitoring of any adverse effects of policies on the promotion of equality of opportunity.

Public authorities should monitor which of their services children and young people use and do not use. Effective monitoring systems can help authorities review and

improve the way in which services are designed and provided for children and young people. Child friendly complaints systems should be developed.

Feedback

It is important to provide feedback to children and young people as soon as possible following consultation. This should include an explanation of how any views expressed have been taken into account, either to develop an alternative policy or put measures in place to limit the adverse effects of a policy. If the suggestions from children and young people have not been taken on board, authorities should explain fully and sensitively why this is so. Feedback should be presented in a language and format appropriate to the age, maturity and needs of the young person.

Other formats

You should consider how to best communicate information to young people and those with a learning disability, including the use of child friendly formats.

Training for staff

Specific training should be provided for all relevant staff carrying out consultation with children and young people to ensure they have the necessary skills. Additional training on a range of relevant issues affecting young people including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults and Data Protection is recommended.

A full copy of the guidance is available from the Equality Commission website at:

<http://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Employers%20and%20Service%20Providers/LetsTalkLetsListenGuideforPAsconsultingchildren2008.pdf?ext=.pdf>

IMPROVING DOCUMENT ACCESSIBILITY

- Use **Plain English**, make text clear and easy to see and understand;
- Use short uncomplicated sentences;
- Do not use unnecessary technical detail or jargon. If technical words are unavoidable then include an explanation;
- Use a clear design and layout;
- The larger the minimum type size, the more people you will reach. The better the contrast between the background and text, the more legible the text will be. Care should also be taken to avoid light type weights and underlining or setting text in italics as this makes text more difficult to read.
- Stick to even spacing and leave adequate space between letters, text and columns. Do not use columns unless absolutely necessary, since it is easier to read across the full width of the page when using text viewers. Do not stretch or condense text to fit, i.e. do not justify text as it makes it harder to read.
- Consider using images for material intended largely for people with a learning disability, for those whom English is not their first language, or young children. Avoid images which reinforce stereotypes e.g. showing people with a disability as victims;
- Consider producing an easy to read summary that can meet a variety of needs, including being translated into minority ethnic languages or recorded onto CD-R;
- Be aware that too much written information can be a turn off to many people, avoid text that is vague, use a design which is attractive and catches the attention, give examples when and where possible and to show why the information is relevant to them.
- Always detail **at the front** of your document the availability of other accessible formats, and how these can be obtained;
- Always provide details of an accessible Telephone number by including the 18001 prefix, and also be aware of the Typetalk service, both of which allow contact with a deaf person via an operator using an ordinary telephone;
- Consider accepting feedback in formats other than purely written submissions, e.g. by telephone or using online forms. Some individuals

may be unable to express themselves clearly using the written word, or find it easier to fill in forms available in formats other than paper.

- Always provide a named contact person whom customers can contact if they need further help.
- If you are changing documents into audio format and have images on document, it is important to insure that you have a description of the image.
- If you are producing technical information for a non-technical audience consider producing a non-technical summary of this information. More technical information could be included in annexes or provide a glossary of terms for obscure, foreign or technical words.
- Do not cram too many questions on to an application form or too much information into a leaflet.
- Partially sighted people tend to have handwriting that is larger than average, so allow extra space on forms. This will also benefit those who have conditions that affect the use of their hands e.g. arthritis.
- Avoid glossy paper because glare makes it difficult to read. Choose uncoated paper that weighs over 90gsm. If the text is showing through from the reverse side then the paper is too thin.
- Use dark print on a light background, with good contrast. Reversed-out text (white letters on a dark background) can be hard for some people to read.
- Use **bold lettering** to highlight key points.
- For PowerPoint presentations, use a good contrast colour for example white on a blue background, don't use backgrounds that are not solid. Ensure that the size of the font is big enough, for example 36 pt for headings and 28pt for text. Spacing should also be considered and there should be no more than five bullet points per page.

GENERAL TIPS FOR IMPROVING COMMUNICATIONS

- Consider the requirement for translation, interpretation and transcription services, and/or the requirement for person-to-person communication support;
- Do not make assumptions about the existence or absence of a disability;
- Change the content and level at which information is pitched to suit the audience;
- If a customer has difficulty understanding – re-phrase your message;
- Give your customer time to respond;
- Contact your audience well in advance of an event to establish what arrangements they may require;
- When talking to a wheelchair user place yourself at their eye level;
- Meet with customers who have particular requirements to explain and guide them through materials and organisational layout;
- Low-level counters should be installed in areas with a customer interface;
- Choose a suitable venue without background noise;
- Encourage participants to speak one at a time;
- Ensure that the faces of speakers, translators or sign interpreters can be clearly seen by all;
- You can make it easier for people who are deaf or hard of hearing to lip-read by providing adequate lighting conditions. It is preferable to have light shining onto your face rather than using lighting from behind;
- Do not cover your mouth when talking in case your customer is lip-reading;
- Always speak directly to a deaf person and not the sign language interpreter who may be with them;
- Use plain language and don't use jargon. Always explain any necessary abbreviations;
- Speak clearly and slowly and don't exaggerate your lip movements. Use natural facial expressions and gestures;
- Provision for deaf or hard of hearing customers should be made with the

installation of induction loops, infrared systems or sound insulation. Technical advice on this can be provided by Deaf or hearing loss organisations;

- Consider locating front-line staff help desks away from noisy areas to assist with privacy for customers, particularly for people who are hard of hearing;
- Do not shout;
- “Within organisations, those taking calls from the public should make greater use of the system of “caller responsibility”, where the first person the caller makes contact with becomes responsible for ensuring that the caller’s query is answered, regardless of which department or branch within the organisation the query is relevant to”¹;
- Include the Text Relay prefix, 18001, with all standard telephone numbers to improve your communication with people who are deaf, hearing impaired, or speech impaired;
- Consider training front line staff and at least one other staff member from each unit in British Sign Language or Irish Sign Language; and
- Consider how the use of clear, easily visible signs can be used to save time and improve access to services.

¹ Barriers to access to essential services, Executive Office, Dec 2001

² Best Practice Guidance on providing public services to deaf people who use British Sign Language or Irish Sign Language, DCAL, 2005

TURNAROUND TIMES

Format	Turn-around time	Notes/comments
Easy-Read Version for people with a learning disability	2-4 weeks, dependant on length	<p>Text for people with a learning disability must be short, in very plain English, and have plenty of illustrations to help explain the text.</p> <p>The time taken to prepare the text and illustrations means that it is difficult to produce such versions quickly.</p> <p>Not suitable for all types of document. High-level or technical documents may best be explained in a face-to-face meeting with the individual concerned.</p>
Format	Turn-around time	Notes/comments
Audio CD: professional quality	About 3 weeks	<p>Where possible, professional scripting and voices are preferable, as low quality recordings are not easy to listen to.</p> <p>Digital recording gives superior quality and can be amended more easily. Cassettes are not now normally used.</p>
Audio CD: budget version	Varies – dependent on supplier	<p>Only suitable for one-offs or short runs.</p> <p>Not recommended for long or complicated documents or ones likely to need updating.</p>
Braille	About 1 week	<p>May be supplied by larger suppliers or by small suppliers such as prison Braille units or individuals.</p>
Face to Face Interpreting Services	48 hour period	<p>Face to Face Interpreting can be booked by DfI Equality Unit. The Interpreter/translator will be booked through the provider</p>

		(Flex Language Services / Step Training & Learning) who will confirm within the hour if a suitable interpreter/translator is available and will advise of their name.
Speech to text Translation/Transcription	48 hour period	Dfl Equality Unit can book the provider (Flex Language Services/ Step Training & Learning) who will confirm within the hour if a suitable interpreter/translator is available and will advise of their name.
Text to Text	48 hour period	Dfl Equality Unit can book the provider (Flex Language Services/ Step Training & Learning) who will confirm within the hour if a suitable interpreter/translator is available and will advise of their name.
Video	6-12 weeks	Useful medium for people with low levels of literacy. However, should include subtitles for people with a hearing impairment.
British Sign Language (NI) / Irish Sign Language Videos	10-14 weeks	Takes a while to assemble necessary contributors. Should also include subtitles and clear, simple voice-over when possible.
Format	Turn-around time	Notes/comments
DAISY Digital (Digital Accessible Information System)	6-12 weeks dependant on complexity of information being presented	Specialised audio disc requiring a special player or PC software, which stores information in easily accessed levels. This enables people with sight-impairment or dyslexia to access audio recordings by going straight to the section they wish to listen to. Ideal for presenting more complex information.

THE DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT

Don't make assumptions

You will meet disabled people in all aspects of life. Be careful not to make assumptions about their requirements or capabilities based simply on your own preconceptions. It is important to consult your audiences.

Provisions in Part III mean that it is unlawful to discriminate against people with a disability by refusing them service, providing service on worse terms or providing a lower standard of service. Part III also requires service providers to make **reasonable adjustments** to the way they provide their goods, facilities and services to make them accessible to people with a disability.

Under the Act, where reasonable, a service provider may have to:

- Change a policy, practice or procedure which makes it impossible or unreasonably difficult for people with a disability to make use of services;
- Provide a reasonable alternative method of making services available where a physical feature makes it impossible or unreasonably difficult for people with a disability to make use of services;
- Provide an auxiliary aid or service if it would enable (or make it easier for) people with a disability to make use of services.

This duty affects information and advice about services. As such, service providers should examine the provision of information in alternative formats and communication support, such as the use of sign language interpreters.

There are limited grounds for justifying failure to make a reasonable adjustment, such as on health and safety grounds.

It is important for service providers to note that their duty to make reasonable adjustments is owed to people with a disability at large and not simply a duty of weighing up each individual request. The reasonable adjustment duty is anticipatory. Service providers should not wait until a person with a disability wants to use a service they provide before they give consideration to reasonable adjustments.

Guidance and examples on how to comply with the duties imposed by Part III are available in a **Code of Practice** (see 'Useful sources of advice - Publications' [Annex F](#)).

As a matter of good practice, and irrespective of whether the duties in Part III apply or not, Divisions and Agencies should always adopt a positive approach to providing alternative formats of publications in order to ensure information is accessible to as wide an audience as possible.

Be reasonable

Service providers who fail to make 'reasonable adjustments' to their services could risk legal challenge.

Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006

Under Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006), the Department is required when carrying out its functions to have due regard to the need to:

- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and
- Encourage participation by disabled people in public life (“the disability duties”)

The Department has submitted a Disability Action Plan to the Equality Commission underlining how it intends to meet these duties.

USEFUL SOURCES OF ADVICE

Organisations:

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, Equality House, 7-9 Shaftesbury Square, Belfast BT2 7DP. Tel: 028 9050 0600, Fax: 028 9033 1544, Text phone: 028 9050 0589 Email: information@equalityni.org, website: www.equalityni.org

Disability:

Aspergers Network:

10 Ashgrove Park, Old Road, Maghaberry, Moira BT67 0QQ, Tel: 028 9261 1851, Email: Sharon.Doherty9@btinternet.com

Signature, Harvester House, 4-8 Adelaide Street, Belfast, BT2 8GA, Tel 028 9043 8161 (phone and text), Fax 028 9043 8161, Email: enquiries@signature.org.uk

British Deaf Association Northern Ireland, Unit 19C, Weaver's Court, Linfield Road, Belfast, BT12 5GH. Tel 028 9043 7480, Fax 028 9043 7487, Textphone 028 9043 7486, Email: bda@bda.org.uk

Disability Action (Headquarters), Portside Business Park, 189 Airport Road West, Belfast BT3 8ED. Tel 028 9029 7880, Fax 028 9029 7881, Text phone: 028 9029 7882, Email hq@disabilityaction.org, Website: www.disabilityaction.org.

Downs Syndrome Association: Unit 2, Marlborough House, 348 Lisburn Road, Belfast, BT9 6GH, Tel: 028 9066 5260, Fax: 028 9066 7674, Email: enquiriesni@downs-syndrome.org.uk

Employers Forum on Disability Northern Ireland (NI), Banbridge Enterprise Centre, Scarva Road Industrial Estate, Banbridge, Co Down BT32 3QD. Tel/Text phone: 028 4062 4526; Fax: 028 4066 2325; Email: info@efdni.org.

Inclusive Mobility Transport Advisory Committee (IMTAC), Enterprise House, 55-59 Adelaide Street, Belfast BT2 8FE, Telephone/Textphone: 028 72 6020, Fax: 028 90 245500 Email: info@imtac.org.uk, Website: <https://www.communityni.org/organisation/imtac>

Mencap Information Service, 416 Ormeau Road, Belfast BT7 3HY. Tel 028 9049 2666, Fax 028 9049 3373. Helpline freephone from landlines 0808 808 1111 (Provides information on the needs of adults and children with a learning disability). Email: helpline.ni@mencap.org.uk, Website: www.mencap.org.uk

Northern Ireland Association for Mental Health, 80 University Street, Belfast, BT7 1HE. Tel: 028 9032 8474, Email: info@niamhwellbeing.org , Website: <https://www.communityni.org/organisation/northern-ireland-association-mental-health-niamh>

Northern Ireland Dyslexia Association, 17A Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast, BT4 3HT Tel: 028 9065 9212. Email: help@nida.org.uk Website: www.nida.org.uk

Autism NI (PAPA: Parents and Professionals & Autism), Donard House, Knockbracken Healthcare Park, Saintfield Road, Belfast, Tel: 028 90401729, Fax: 028 90403467, Email: info@autismni.org, Website: www.autismni.org

RNIB (NI) Accessible Media, 159 Durham Street, Belfast, BT12 4GB Tel: 028 9050 1888, Fax: 028 9065 0001, Email: accessiblemedianni@rnib.org.uk Website: www.rnib.org.uk. (The Blind Centre NI merged with RNIB in April 2007)

RNIB Helpline: 0303 123 9999 Website: <http://www.rnib-business.org.uk/>
Visual Access NI Ltd, North City Business Centre, 2 Duncairn Gardens, Belfast, BT15 2GG Tel: 02890 755005 E-mail address:- info@visualaccessni.co.uk
Website: <http://www.rnib.org.uk/>

Action on Hearing Loss - NI (formerly RNID), Harvester House, 4-8 Adelaide Street, Belfast, BT2 8GA. Tel: 028 9023 9619, Fax: 028 9031 2032, Text phone: 028 9024 9462. Email: information.nireland@hearingloss.org.uk Website: www.actionhearingloss.org.uk

Sense NI, Manor House, 51 Mallusk Road, Mallusk, Newtownabbey, BT36 4RU. Tel: 028 9083 3430, Fax: 028 9084 4232, Email: nienquiries@sense.org.uk, Website: www.sense.org.uk

Stroke Association NI, Knockbracken Healthcare Park, Belfast, BT8 8BH, Tel: 028 9050 8020 Email: northernireland@stroke.org.uk Website: www.stroke.org.uk
Address – Rushmere House, 46 Cadogan Park, Belfast, BT9 6HH

Age:

Age Sector Platform: Merrion Business Centre, 58 Howard Street, Belfast, BT1 6PJ. Contact Alison McKenna, Tel: 028 90312089, E-mail: alison.mckenna@agesectorplatform.org

Age NI, 3 Lower Crescent, Belfast, BT7 1NR. Tel: 028 9024 5729, Fax: 028 9023 5497, Email: info@ageni.org Website: www.ageni.org

Children's Law Centre, 3rd Floor, Phillip House, 123/127 York Street, Belfast BT5 1AB. Contact – Ms Paddy Kelly, Tel 02890 245704, E-mail: info@childrenslawcentre.org

The Participation Network: Children in Northern Ireland (CiNI), Unit 9, 40 Montgomery Road, Belfast, BT6 9HL, Tel 028 9040 1290, Fax 028 9070 9418, E-mail: info@ci-ni.org.uk, Web: <http://www.ci-ni.org.uk/participation>

Save The Children, Popper House, 15 Richmond Park, Belfast BT10 0HB. Contact – Peter Bryson, Tel 028 9043 1123, Fax 028 9043 1314, E-mail p.bryson@savethechildren.org.uk

Youth Council for NI, Forestview, Purdy's Lane, Belfast BT8 7AR. Contact – Mr David Guilfoyle, Tel 028 9064 3882, Fax 028 9064 3874, E-mail info@ycni.org.uk

Race:

Chinese Welfare Association, 1 Stranmillis Embankment, Belfast, BT7 1GB Tel: 028 9028 8277 Fax: 028 9028 8278 E-mail: contact@cwa-ni.org

Languages Branch, DfC, Causeway Exchange, 1-7 Bedford Street Belfast, BT2 7FB, Contact – Alan Cochrane, Tel 028 9051 5015, e-mail: languages.branch@communities-ni.gov.uk

Bryson Intercultural, 34 Donegall Road, Belfast BT7 1NR Tel: 03 4561 4177, Fax:03 4561 3147, E-mail: info@mcrc-ni.org, Website: www.mcrc-ni.org

NI Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM);127-129 Ormeau Road, Belfast BT7 1SH, Tel 028 9023 8645/9031 9666, Fax 028 9031 9485; e-mail: info@nicem.org.uk Website: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/contacts-az/northern-ireland-council-ethnic-minorities-nicem>

PUBLICATIONS

Let's make it accessible – Improving Government Information for Disabled People – by Wendy Gregory (COI Communications) February 2001. MISC J006133.

Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as modified by Schedule 8 for application in Northern Ireland) – NI Disability Council Code of Practice: Rights of Access – Goods, Facilities, Services and Premises. Published by the Stationery Office (1999) ISBN 0-337-08453-X. £12.95. For mail, telephone and fax orders only contact: PO Box 276, London SW8 5DT. General enquiries 020 873 0011; Tel: 020 873 9090; Fax: 020 873 8200.

Open for Business: a best practice guide on access by David Bonnett and Patrick Tolfree. Available from Employers' Forum on Disability, Tel/Text phone 020 7403 3020. £13.00 (£10.00 members).

Sign Design Guide, RNIB Customer Services. Tel: 0845 702 3153; e-mail cservices@rnib.org.uk.

“Access First: a guide on how to give written information for people with learning difficulties” by People First.

“Make it Simple: European Easy-to-Read Guidelines”, ILSMH European Association.

“Let's Talk Let's Listen”, Equality Commission NI guidance on consulting with children and young people, 2008, available at:
<http://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Employers%20and%20Service%20Providers/LetsTalkLetsListenGuideforPAsconsultingchildren2008.pdf?ext=.pdf>

“Plain English Guide” by Martin Cutts, Oxford £3.99.

“Make it Clear” – a MENCAP guide to making information clear and easy to read for people with a learning disability. <https://www.mencap.org.uk/web-accessibility-statement>

“Communicating with people with a learning disability” – a MENCAP guide designed to provide a brief introduction to communication, and the problems faced by someone with a learning disability. It also contains tips on how you can be a better communicator, and how you can help someone with a learning disability to get their message across

Communicating with people with a learning disability on this webpage: <https://www.mencap.org.uk/learning-disability-explained/communicating-people-learning-disability>

As well as a downloadable version in this

PDF: https://www.mencap.org.uk/sites/default/files/2016-12/Communicating%20with%20people_updated%20%281%29.pdf

“Guidelines for Effective Consultation with Older People and Disabled People” – Imtac guidelines on making printed information more accessible.

Copies available at: <https://www.imtac.org.uk/publications/guidelines-effective-consultation-older-people-and-disabled-people>

“Eight Easy Steps to Inclusive Marketing” – Imtac checklist on developing information about transport services. Copies available at:

<http://www.imtac.org.uk/publications/eight-easy-steps-inclusive-marketing>

Local Talking Newspapers, Association of Talking Newspapers (ATNNI) - contact local libraries or <http://www.tnf.org.uk/local-tn.aspx>

Disability Action Ezine, Imtac, Enterprise House, 55-59 Adelaide Street, Belfast, BT2 8FE Telephone: 028 9072 6020/ 028 9072 6005, Textphone: 028 9072 6016, Fax: 028 9024 5500, Email: info@imtac.org.uk or Cathy@imtac.org.uk

List of Non-English Languages Provided for in the NICS Contract

Afrikaans	Khmer (Cambodian)	Twi
Albanian	Kosovan	Ukrainian
Amharic	Krio	Vietnamese
Arabic	Kurdish	Urdu
Armenian	Kurmanji	Welsh
Assyrian	Laotian	Wolof
Bambara	Latvian	Yiddish
Basque	Lingala	Yoruba
Behdini	Lithuanian	
Bengali	Lugandan	
Berber	Macedonian	
Bhojpuri	Malay	
Bosnian	Malayalam	
Bulgarian	Mandarin	
Burmese	Mandingo	
Cantonese	Mien	
Catalan	Mirpuri	
Chaochow	Mongolian	
Chinese	Navajo	
Nepalese	Norwegian	
Croatian	Korean	
Czech	Oorama	
Danish	Pashto	
Dari	Polish	
Dutch	Portuguese	
Estonian	Portuguese Creole	
Farsi	Punjabi	
Finnish	Romanian	
French	Russian	
Fukienese	Serbian	
Georgian	Sinhalese	
German	Slovak	
Greek	Slovenian	
Gujarati	Shanghai	
Haitian Creole	Shona	
Hakka	Somali	
Hausa	Sorani	
Hebrew	Spanish	
Hindi	Sylhetti	
Hmong	Sudanese	
Hungarian	Swahili	
Ibo	Swedish	
Icelandic	Taiwanese	
Indonesian	Tamil	
Irish	Thai	
Italian	Tigrinya	
Japanese	Turkish	