

## Accessibility

# Best practice

Designing accessible communications can present a real challenge. Accessible print needs to be visually interesting to draw a reader to it and legible for people with sight problems and learning difficulties. People with sight problems and learning difficulties are often marginalised by design with the production of bland and uninteresting designs.

In reality, it is impossible to design something that is accessible to everyone. However, we must aim to make our communications accessible to as many people as possible, whilst also being creative and visually stimulating.

### Type size

Our recommended minimum size for body copy is 11 point. However, if appropriate to the targeted audience, smaller typefaces are permissible. The RNIB See it Right guidelines recommend a minimum x-height of 2mm. (The x-height is the height of a lowercase 'x' in the typeface).

Large print documents should use a minimum x-height of 2.8mm.

For further information on accessibility please visit [www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk)

x-height



### Capital letters

Setting text in large amounts of capital letters can be harder to read than lowercase letters.

### Italics

These should be treated in a similar way to capital letters. Many partially sighted people can find them difficult to read so they should be used minimally. Using bold copy or a strong colour to add emphasis is a good alternative.

### Leading

Leading (or line feed) is the space between one line of type and the next, measured from baseline to baseline. If leading is too narrow or too wide, the text will be difficult to read. As a basic rule, the leading should be a minimum of 2 point sizes larger than the type size.

### Word spacing, letter spacing and horizontal scaling

Changing the spacing between letters or words and altering the proportion of the letters (horizontal scaling) are often used to fit more text onto a line. This should be avoided as too little or too much space can make text illegible.

### Alignment

Left aligned text with a 'ragged' right hand margin is the most legible as it is easier to find the start and finish of each line. The spaces between each word are also equal.

### Contrast

There should always be high tonal contrast between the text and the background it is printed on. Contrast is greatest when dark colours are combined with very pale colours.

### Reversing out copy

The background colour should be as dark as possible. White copy reversed out of a very dark colour or black are the most legible. Attention should be paid to typesize and very light weights of type to ensure copy is always legible.

### Copy on images

Setting text on an image can make it difficult to read. The background must always be even in tone with excellent contrast and should be digitally retouched, if necessary.

### Design

Accessible design is clean, simple and uncluttered with good visual navigation.