Accessible Information Policy

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Accessibility statement

The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) is committed to making information as accessible as possible and to promoting meaningful engagement with those who use our services.

This document can be made available on request and where reasonably practicable in an alternative format, Easy Read, Braille, audio formats (CD, mp3 or DAISY), large print or minority languages to meet the needs of those for whom English is not their first language.

We will respond to requests for information in alternative formats in a timely manner, usually within 20 working days (unless third party timescales dictate otherwise, for example, translation providers).

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1. Introduction

The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority’s (RQIA) equality scheme commits us to ensure we promote equality of opportunity and value the diversity of all people in our community. By this we believe that all members of society should have fair and equal access to our services, according to need and have opportunities to participate in our plans for how we deliver our services. Through ensuring that our information is equally accessible we will continue to demonstrate this commitment.

Information produced by RQIA exists in many forms, including information about services, policies, procedures, treatment, facilities, conditions, legislation, duties and entitlements. This means that both individuals and the public at large may be target groups of our information. By helping our staff to understand and think about how they provide information and communicate with others will help to improve standards in accessible information.

The purpose of this policy is to help RQIA meet the information and communication needs of individuals as effectively as possible. We want to make sure that our approach to the provision of written accessible information is clear, balanced, fair, transparent and accurate. The policy is aimed at managers and staff involved in, or who have any responsibility for, the provision of information. Whilst we acknowledge that there are particular issues about information for staff it is also important that the principles of accessible information apply when providing staff information. By adopting this approach we believe the public will benefit.

The policy offers the commitment as to the standards people can expect from health and social care and public safety organisations when they provide information.
2. Scope

The policy relates to all of the nine categories covered by Section 75 equality legislation including age, gender, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, political opinion, dependants, religion and martial status.

There are however specific needs in relation to sensory impairment, learning disability, sexual orientation, older people, younger people, translation and interpreting for minority ethnic groups and more general literacy levels that are of particular importance in relation to this policy.

The policy aims to raise awareness of the importance of developing and providing accessible information. Specifically it will:

- Highlight why accessible information is important
- Describe what is accessible information
- Outline priorities and criteria for producing accessible information
- Highlight funding issues
- Outline responsibilities of staff
- Provide links to guidance for providing and reviewing accessible information
- Provide guidance on review and monitoring

3. Why is accessible information important?

As a right

Information is a right not a privilege. Accessible information helps people to make decisions and choices. It allows the principle of informed consent to be put into practice. Effective information and communications are vital for the provision of high quality services and care. It is important to remove barriers so that people are not excluded from accessing our information and services. Information must be accessible, easy to understand, relevant and appropriate to target audiences. If people cannot get it, read it, hear it or understand it your information is of little value. What we produce needs to be of a quality that is fit for purpose and appropriate to the target audience. This does not mean simplifying the message too much, appearing patronising or reducing the quality of the content. What it does mean is taking information that is in a form...
that is not accessible to an individual, and changing it to a format that is more suitable for their needs.

**Legislative Context**

Health and Social Care organisations are bound by the “Quality Standards for Health and Social Care” (Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety 2006) to consider the diverse needs of the public, services users, carers and staff alike in any information and communication.

Also, one of the five standards introduced by the publication entitled “Improving the Patient & Client Experience” (Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council for Nursing and Midwifery, Royal College of Nursing 2008), the Communication Standard, is defined as: “all health and social care staff communicate in a way which is sensitive to the needs and preferences of patients and clients.”

There is also a legal requirement under the Human Rights Act 1998; Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998; Race Relations Order 1997; the Disability Discrimination Order 2006 and the Health and Social Services (Reform) Northern Ireland Act 2009 to ensure that we make our services, including information, accessible. The latter placed a duty on health and social care organisations to deliver Personal and Public involvement. Similarly the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child also relate to issues of accessibility.

RQIA’s equality scheme further commits us to promoting equality of opportunity through “ensuring that the information we disseminate and the services we provide are fully accessible to all parts of the community”.

In particular RQIA’s equality scheme includes the following commitment:

“To ensure equality of opportunity in accessing information, we provide information in alternative formats on request, where reasonably practicable. Where the exact request cannot be met we will ensure a reasonable alternative is provided.”
Alternative formats may include Easy Read, Braille, audio formats (CD, mp3 or DAISY), large print or minority languages to meet the needs of those for whom English is not their first language.

We will respond to requests for information in alternative formats in a timely manner, usually within 20 working days (unless third party timescales dictate otherwise, for example, translation providers).

This is the specific commitment within RQIA’s equality scheme.

The information needs of people with sensory, learning, communication and mobility disabilities, members of minority ethnic groups, whose first language is not English, and children and young people were specifically identified within our scheme.

4. What is accessible information?

A large number of people find it difficult to read the typical information available from our health and social care organisations, not least when it is lengthy or when jargon and abbreviations are used. In all of the above examples accessible information is about using plain language to make information easier to understand for everyone and thereby more effective.

Accessible information may be described in a number of ways according to different needs and experiences. A visually impaired person may need information in audio format. A deaf person may need a sign language interpreter. A learning disabled person may need it in an easy read version.

A person who does not speak English as a first language may need a translation or an interpreter. Some people may need a combination of these supports.

Information that is accessible may be provided in printed and electronic document, it can be through face to face and telephone communication. It covers a range of areas of access including:

- Alternative formats (commonly requested formats include for example, large print, Braille, audio visual formats (CD,
video, mp3 or DAISY), Easy Read, electronic format or email);

- Translations;
- Interpreters for minority ethnic languages, sign language and voice interpreters; and,
- Support for people at meetings.

What is produced needs to be of a quality that is fit for purpose and appropriate to the target audience. It needs to be delivered in a timely way within expected timescales.

The types of areas that it applies to includes for example:

- Letters
- Patient and client information provided in leaflet, booklet, brochure, poster or audio visual format, DVDs
- E-mails and text alerts
- Reports such as Corporate Plans, Business Plans and consultation documents
- Policies
- Job descriptions / job specifications
- Agendas, minutes of meetings including Board papers
- Newsletters
- Presentations

5. Priorities for producing information

In theory all information that is provided to the public should be made accessible. However given the quantity of information that is produced by RQIA on a daily basis and the fact that there are limited resources it is accepted that this is not possible or practical to do so.

It is therefore necessary to ensure a robust decision making process is in place, for prioritising information provision. This needs to be reasoned and evidence based. We will use the following criteria for making documentation available in alternative formats. This is based on the premise that within limited resources we need to decide priorities that have the most impact for service users. The priorities include:
Corporate

- Is the documentation about providing basic information on how individuals can make contact with the organisation, provide feedback or obtain details on how to make a complaint?

Service Related

- Is the documentation about providing details on what individuals can expect of the organisation and of staff who deliver the service? For example, the conduct of Inspections and Reviews.
- Does the service involve gaining informed consent from individuals?
- Is the documentation required as part of court reports / proceedings?
- Does access to the service require an application by individuals?

Target Audience

- Does the documentation target individuals who have language needs, sensory impairment needs or have a learning disability?
- Within the target audience is it likely that individuals with particular communication needs form a sizeable share?

Reasonable alternatives

Within the priority areas as identified in Section 5 where it is more effective, cost efficient or timely to do so we will ensure a reasonable alternative is provided. Examples could include:

- Providing information face to face;
- Providing information by telephone or email;
- Using an interpreter;
- Providing summaries.
6. Formats and languages

For those documents that are prioritised for production in accessible formats in accordance with the above criteria the following statement should be included at the start of the document in English.

“The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) is committed to making information as accessible as possible and to promoting meaningful engagement with those who use our services.

This document can be made available on request and where reasonably practicable in an alternative format, Easy Read, Braille, audio formats (CD, mp3 or DAISY), large print or minority languages to meet the needs of those for whom English is not their first language.

We will respond to requests for information in alternative formats in a timely manner, usually within 20 working days (unless third party timescales dictate otherwise, for example, translation providers).”

To accommodate language needs the following statement should also be included, translated into the most common minority ethnic languages as identified by the Northern Ireland Interpreting Service and the European Charter on Regional and Minority Languages.

“This document can be made available on request and where reasonably practical in an alternative language”

For documents that are automatically produced in alternative format any publicity material needs to indicate which formats this refers to including a translated version of the following statement

“This document is available in an alternative language”.

For other documents which have not been prioritised we will include the statement:

“We will give consideration to what is reasonably practicable or whether another appropriate format could be provided”.
This statement needs to be made available and translated into the common minority ethnic languages as identified by the Northern Ireland Health and Social Services Interpreting Service and the European Charter on Regional and Minority Languages.

7. Who funds accessible information?

It is the responsibility of RQIA to make information and communications accessible. The costs for doing so must be borne by our organisation.

The responsibility for meeting the cost of producing and disseminating accessible information lies with the service area producing the information. A key consideration is the level of overall budget available.

In establishing costs for the production of the information consider any additional costs associated with producing it in alternative formats and make sure that the product will be within the cost. Whilst in some instances the cost of producing information in accessible formats will be minimal the production in other formats can add considerably to costs.

Careful thought about appropriate circulation can increase access to information. Making contact with organisations or individuals who could help with dissemination can help reduce costs. Within your identified circulation costs include items such as postage, delivery, display, web and telecommunications costs, and magazine or newspaper advertising charges.

8. Practical advice on making information accessible

Section 2 of this policy highlighted the groups where there are particular needs in relation to the provision of written accessible information. These include sensory impairment, learning disability, sexual orientation, older people, younger people, translation and interpreting for minority ethnic groups and others with general literacy issues.

Practical guidance is available at Appendix 1. Health and Social Care Trusts have also produced guidance in 2012 relation to
people with a disability. You can access a copy of this guidance by contacting Alison.Irwin@northerntrust.hscni.net

9. Organisational commitments - roles and responsibilities

For implementation of this policy to be effective it is necessary that a structure and process is in place and that this is co-ordinated across the diverse areas of the organisation.

Each member of staff needs to be aware of the Accessible Information Policy. They need to ensure that they take individual responsibility for communicating and providing information in an accessible way that recognises that this is a right of people who need to access our services, not a privilege.

There are 7 levels of staff who carry responsibility in respect of the Accessible Information Policy:

- Chief Executive as accountable officer
- The Director of Corporate Services
- All Directors
- Board members
- Author of information to be communicated
- Communications staff
- Equality officer

Roles and responsibilities of each are outlined below.

Accountable officer is:

- Accountable for ensuring that the organisation meets its legislative requirements and promotes good practice in the area of accessible information.

The lead Director will ensure that:

- There is a clear structure and process in place for implementing, reviewing the policy and associated guidelines
- In the review and implementation of this policy there is appropriate involvement and engagement with those with
a particular expertise in the production or who use alternative formats

- Any equality or human rights issues emerging from the screening of the policy are examined in the context of implementation and review
- A method, including agreed criteria, for audit and quality assurance of information is in place
- The policy is monitored and reviewed in accordance with agreed timelines
- Any amendments are incorporated into the policy and guidelines in accordance with changes in legislation, policy or practice
- Reporting of progress in relation to implementation and compliance is undertaken.

All Directors will ensure that:

- Decisions taken on the production of information are reasoned, evidence based and based on the priorities in this policy
- Arrangements are in place within Directorates to implement the policy and guidance
- There is a process within Directorates for quality assuring and auditing information that is in accordance with agreed criteria
- Funding is available in accordance with the priority areas for the provision of accessible information
- Reporting on progress is provided as an integral part of Directorate reporting to the Equality Commission on equality scheme commitments
- Staff are made aware of the policy
- Directorate staff receive appropriate training
- A system for reviewing Directorate developed accessible information is in place and implemented in accordance with agreed timescales.

Board members will ensure that:

- As part of their role of approving and receiving progress reports in relation to the equality scheme commitments, human rights commitments and personal public
involvement commitments they oversee work in relation to accessible information.

Information Author will ensure that they:

- Get information produced in alternative formats in accordance with priority areas
- Follow the Accessible Information Policy and related guidance
- Make decisions on the basis of the criteria for producing accessible information and on the outcomes of equality screening exercises
- Ensure that patients and clients receive information in a timely manner in a format that suits their needs
- Ensure that information published follows agreed corporate house styles
- Where feedback from patients and clients suggests changes to information, where appropriate, that a system is put in place to review address these
- When working with community, voluntary and the independent sector ensure that these organisations follow the Accessible Information Policy and related guidance and that this is included in the contract conditions.

Communications staff will:

- Provide general advice on accessible information and communication
- Ensure that advice is provided on corporate house styles.

Equality officer will:

- Provide support and advice generally on equality considerations of accessible information and communication
- Advise on compliance issues in relation with equality duties in respect of information and communications including commitments provided in equality schemes.
10. Review

This policy will be reviewed on a 3-year basis. If legislation changes or if there are major changes to policy or practice then the date for review may be brought forward.

11. Monitoring

Monitoring of this policy and associated guidance will take place on a yearly basis. This will capture information on the provision of information in alternative formats and the number of requests made and type of formats requested and costs. Reporting of progress will also be undertaken in accordance with commitments provided in our equality scheme.

12. Screening

This policy has been screened for equality and human rights implications. The key purpose of the policy is to ensure that those groups who face barriers in accessing our services and information, and who are often excluded from our decision making process, are included. This is to ensure they can have confidence in our organisation commitments for the promotion of equality of opportunity. Equality and human rights issues have been incorporated into the policy development and consultation process.
Appendix 1

Practical advice on making information accessible

In line with the Accessible Formats Policy, the purpose of this document is to provide practical advice on how to make written information accessible.

We have collated this information from existing guidance issued by voluntary sector groups. With regards to people with a disability, we have also drawn on new guidance produced by Health and Social Care Trusts in 2012. You can access a copy of this guidance by contacting: Alison.Irwin@northerntrust.hscni.net

Moreover, we took on board what service users and groups told us at a dedicated workshop in October 2010.

Part 1 of this document outlines general advice on making information accessible. Part 2 provides advice on making information accessible for and inclusive of particular equality groupings. These include: sensory impairment, learning disability, people with dyslexia or literacy difficulties, sexual orientation, older people, younger people, translation and interpreting for minority ethnic groups.

In addition, you need to check and record with service users any need for alternative formats, and if so, advise any other relevant professionals of these, whilst adhering to the provisions under the Data Protection Act. Likewise, you should also consider the use of appropriate channels for the dissemination of information (including, for example, voluntary and community groups or networks). These matters are not covered in detail in this guidance.
Part 1: General guidelines on making information accessible

Presenting information

- Use simple language and short sentences. This makes information easier to understand for everyone.
- Keep the layout of regular publications consistent for example, a monthly newsletter. But make sure that you are flexible and can give people the information in different ways.
- To address literacy difficulties use simple, clear text with short sentences, simple punctuation and no jargon, acronyms or abbreviations.
- Use 12 point Arial as minimum but ideally use size 14 point Arial.
- Avoid block capitals, italics or underlining. They all make text harder to read.
- Use a ragged right edge rather than fully justified text.
- Plan what you want to write. Cut out any unnecessary detail and present important ideas in a logical order.
- Use active and personal language. Using ‘you’ and ‘we’ makes your writing clearer and more direct.
- Avoid using slashes between words. It is better to say “and” or “or” rather than “and/or”.
- Finish a sentence at the end of a page. Do not run a sentence across two pages.
- Consider the range of alternative formats that include Easy Read, Braille, audio formats (CD, mp3 or DAISY), video formats (DVD, subtitled or signed), large print or minority languages to meet the needs of those for whom English is not their first language.
- Where you are using information that another organisation has produced (for example information about a venue) ask them for that information in different formats so that you can pass it on to anyone who needs it. If they are service providers, they will have duties under the Disability Discrimination Act NI (DDA) 1995 to provide information in this way.
- Having information that is targeted at people with a disability; lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people; children and
young people; older people; and people from black and ethnic minority backgrounds on display creates a welcoming atmosphere. This could include showing people from the diverse community in which we live.

**Printing handouts of Powerpoint presentations**

- If you are producing handouts of a Powerpoint presentation avoid using the option offered by Powerpoint for printing handouts 3 slides per page. This is because it renders the font size completely inaccessible for your reader. Instead, keep the full page slide and use the option to print out 2 (or 4) pages per sheet in the Printer Properties. This will keep the font size accessible and still provide sufficient space for the reader to write down notes. In short.
  **Use:**
  Print – Settings – Full Page Slide then
  Printer – Properties – 2 pages per sheet
  **Do not use:**
  Print – Settings – Handouts – 3 slides per page

**Using images and photographs**

- Images, when used properly, make writing easier to understand and more attractive.
- Use images, like photographs, drawings or symbols to support your text. Aim to make your material clear at a glance, even to a person who does not have good reading skills.
- It is best to stick to one type of image and avoid mixing photographs, line drawings and images.
- Images should show people from different cultures, people with disabilities, people with different sexual orientation, different age groups, different genders. They can also show specific buildings or people. Be mindful of the relevance of the image being used and avoid the risk of stereotyping.
- Be consistent where you place pictures in relation to text – either to the left or to the right. Avoid alternating between the two.
- People prefer coloured pictures, rather than just black and white.
- Drawings must not be childish or patronising.
• The best drawings are often the simplest.
• Be careful about using humour to portray an idea. Humour can distract from or confuse the message and may also offend some people.
• Some people put a photograph of the writer at the end of a letter or article.
• Generally, photographs are the most popular kind of image with readers.
• A photograph can hold a lot of information and can easily be ‘read’.
• Photographs can help when talking about a certain person or building.
• Photographs have to be carefully taken to make sure they show one idea clearly. For example, a photograph of a person illustrating the idea that they are happy, should not have a busy background and distract from the main idea of the picture.
• You should be aware that photographs do not always photocopy well.
• You must always ask permission if you are taking or using photographs of people you are working with.
• When using images and photographs be mindful of copyright issues and that you need to adhere to the respective legislation. For example, if using images you should make sure you own the image or photograph or get written permission from the owner or photographer. Permission for use is also required from ‘models’ in the photo and all these need filed properly. Permission may also not transfer across publications or various media.

Using video and audio materials

• Consider making information available as videos (including signed content and subtitles) or audio recordings on CD or DVD or digitally on the internet, especially if you know your users are deaf, hard of hearing, blind or partially sighted.
• Put information on CD and DVDs.
• If using audiotapes, keep them short.
• When one side of the audiotape is at an end, say this so the user knows to turn the tape over.
• Be consistent when you say numbers. Say zero instead of ‘o’.
• When people see a video on CD or DVD it will often be in a small box on the screen. Big close up shots are therefore better than long shots or wide shots.

• It is especially important to make sure verbal communication, for example, as videos or audio recordings on CD or DVD or digitally on the internet, is simple and clear as people will probably be listening to it on small computer speakers.

• For computer-based information, you might want to offer an audio version of your text and a text version of your audio that can run at the same time.

**Using the internet to present information**

• In theory the internet makes information more accessible to a wider public and allows internet users to adjust certain formatting elements according to their needs, However, be aware that some groups are less likely to use the internet, above all older people and people with a disability.

• Provide text alternatives for any visual or audio content (including images) so that it can be changed into other formats people need, such as large print, braille, speech, symbols or simpler language. Equally, provide signed video alternatives for text or audio content.

• Create content that can be presented in different ways (for example simpler layout) without losing information or structure.

• Make it easier for users to see and hear content including separating foreground from background. If the information is conveyed through colour differences in an image (or other non-text format), the colour may not be seen by users with colour deficiencies.

• Provide users enough time to read and use content. People with disabilities such as blindness, low vision, dexterity impairments, and cognitive limitations may need more time to read content or to perform functions such as filling out on-line forms. If Web functions are time-dependent, it will be difficult for some users to perform the required action before the set time runs out. This may make the service inaccessible to them. Provide options to disable time limits,
• Do not design content in a way that is known to cause seizures. Ensure you do not include anything that flashes more than three times in any one second period.

• Moving, blinking, scrolling, or auto-updating information can distract users during their interaction with a Web page. Content that moves or auto-updates can be a barrier to anyone who has trouble reading stationary text quickly as well as anyone who has trouble tracking moving objects. It can also cause problems for screen readers. Include a mechanism for the user to pause, stop, or hide this information.

• Provide ways to help users navigate, find content, and determine where they are.

**Where to go for further support and advice on presenting information on the internet**

Practical guidelines have been developed on an international level. The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 cover a wide range of recommendations for making Web content more accessible. The above advice is taken from these guidelines. Following these guidelines will make content accessible to a wider range of people with disabilities, including blindness and low vision, deafness and hearing loss, learning disabilities, cognitive limitations, limited movement, speech disabilities, photosensitivity and combinations of these. It will also often make your Web content more accessible to users in general.

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines

[www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20](http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20)
Part 2: Guidelines on making information accessible for and inclusive of particular equality groupings

Making information accessible for black and ethnic minority people

- People who are black or who identify themselves as ethnic minorities have very varied needs. Try to avoid making assumptions.
- Work with people from black and minority ethnic communities to ask them how they want their information presented.
- Find out as much as you can about the black or minority ethnic community group or groups your information is for, so you can make sure it meets their needs.
- Do not just translate information into another language as direct translation from English into another language doesn’t always make sense. Translations need to take account of culture.
- Use translators and interpreters who have proper training and who understand cultural differences. The translator may use words and pictures to help people feel the information is right for them.
- Produce leaflets in different languages if required.

Arrangements for producing materials in alternative formats

(a) Translations

All Health and Social Care organisations have access to a regional contract. Currently, four approved suppliers can provide translation services under the contract. If you procure a translation you will need to meet the cost.

You can access contact details for the suppliers and further guidance on how to get a translation done through: www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/1834.htm
(b) Interpreting

If you require an interpreter face-to-face, for a service that you provide to patients and clients, contact the Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Interpreting Service on (028) 9056 3794 or email: interpreting@belfasttrust.hscni.net in the first place.

If the Interpreting Service is unable to meet your request for an interpreter or you require an interpreter in a different context (for instance, for a conference) you can draw on a regional contract. Currently, two suppliers have been approved under the contract. If you procure interpreting services through the contract you will need to meet the cost.

You can access contact details for the suppliers through: www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/1834.htm

If you require an interpreter on the telephone, you can access a regional contract for telephone interpreting. Currently, one supplier is approved to do so under the contract.

You can access contact details for the supplier through: www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/1834.htm

Using video and audio materials for black and minority ethnic groups

- Think about the voices and music you use – make sure they are appropriate.
- Videos can be a good way of getting information about health to people from black and minority ethnic communities.

Using images for black and minority ethnic groups

- Make sure people from black and minority ethnic groups are portrayed in the pictures you use. Use positive images of different people and different cultures.
- The way people use and understand pictures varies from one culture to another. Think about who is shown in the picture, the expression on their face, what they are wearing, their body language and the scene around them.
• Pictures can be used to show which community a person belongs to. Decoration, jewellery, dress and colours can all mean something to people. Small details can help people feel the information is right for their community. At the same time, be cautious about not stereotyping.

Translations and Interpreting for Irish and Ulster Scots under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages

Under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages Health and Social Care organisations have an obligation to receive requests and applications in Irish and Ulster Scots, but have no such obligation to respond in kind if it is not possible.

If a caller begins a telephone call in Irish or Ulster Scots one option to offer the caller is to be transferred to voicemail where a message can be left in Irish or Ulster Scot. The voicemail facilities can be accessed by calling 028 90515252 (Irish) and 028 90515251 (Ulster Scots). These facilities are maintained centrally by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure. Any messages will be translated as soon as possible and passed on to the relevant organisation.

(a) Translations

Translations for Irish are covered under the HSC Interpreting and Translations contract. Further details on how to procure a translation for Irish can be accessed from the Business Services Organisation's Equality Unit website: [www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/1834.htm](http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/1834.htm)

Translations for Ulster Scots can be procured through the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure. Please contact the Department's Translations inbox (translations@dcalni.gov.uk) with Ulster-Scots translation requests who will endeavour to provide a contact.

(b) Interpreting

Interpreting for Irish is covered under the HSC Interpreting and Translations contract. Further details on how to procure an interpreter for Irish can be accessed from the Business Services
Interpreting for Ulster Scots can be procured through the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure. Please contact the Department’s Linguistic Operations Branch on 028 90515058 or email translations@dcalni.gov.uk with Ulster-Scots interpreting requests who will endeavour to provide a contact.

For further information on obligations under the Charter please refer to your organisation’s Code of Courtesy.

**Making information accessible for older people**

- Avoid using blue as it is often harder for older people to read.
- Use matt paper to avoid brightness and glare which make it hard for older people to read.
- Use a minimum font size of 14 point and 20 point for people with visual impairments.
- Consider using an A3 format (as an A4 booklet) as you can use larger print and images which are easier for people to see.

**Where to go for further support and advice**

If you are developing materials and you want to engage with older people to make sure they are accessible for them, you can check out contact details for organisations representing older people in the following resource:

‘Signpost to Support Networks in the Community’

[www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/1801.htm](http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/1801.htm)

**Making information accessible for children and young people**

- Consider using coloured fonts, but make sure you use colours that are clearly visible.
- Do not use the font Comic Sans as this is difficult to read.
- Consider using cartoons and photographs. This may be more appropriate for younger children.
- Use simple language.
**Arrangements for producing materials in alternative formats**

Individual Health and Social Care organisations should ensure that organisations or individuals selected to produce materials in alternative formats for children and young people are selected in accordance with HSC Procurement requirements.

For further information on how to procure such formats, contact RQIA’s Communications Manager.

**Where to go for further support and advice**

If you are developing materials and you want to engage with children and young people to make sure they are accessible for them, you can contact:

The Participation Network
Unit 9, 40 Montgomery Road
Belfast BT6 9HL
Email: participation@ci-ni.org.uk
Tel: 028 9040 1290
Fax: 028 9070 9418

Also, check out contact details for organisations representing children and young people in the following resource:
‘Signpost to Support Networks in the Community’
[www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/1801.htm](http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/1801.htm)

**Making information accessible to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people**

- Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people are often grouped together because they are all targets of similar forms of discrimination. Within these communities, however, there is a tremendous diversity of experience. Materials that are produced and the images used for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities need to recognise the wide range of backgrounds that people come from.

- Many languages use terms to describe lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people which may be derogatory. If you are translating material, be aware of the cultural context of the terms you are using.

- As a general rule avoid using the label ‘homosexual’ as it is still viewed negatively. Most people are happy with lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender but if in doubt - ask!
Use neutral language such as ‘partners’, ‘parents’ and ‘he or she’. Avoid using the term ‘spouse’ and exclusive pronouns (referring to ‘he’ only or ‘she’ only) as those assume that all couples are heterosexual.

Use images and photographs of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people – such as same-sex couples – in a wide range of your publicity materials, not just in documents which are specifically aimed at lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. This sends out a clear message that you recognise the positive contribution that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people can make to our society and that your entire organisation is welcoming to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. At the same time, be cautious about not stereotyping.

Where to go for further support and advice

Check out contact details for organisations representing LGB&T people in the following resource:
‘Signpost to Support Networks in the Community’
www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/1801.htm

You may also find the following resource useful:
www.stonewall.org.uk/at_work/research_and_guides/4907.asp
Making information accessible to people with a disability

As mentioned at the start, the HSC Trusts recently produced new guidance focusing on communicating with people with a disability, which looks at various ways of communicating. The focus of this document is advice relating to the provision of written information (and alternative formats).

Following the advice provided in Part 1 (General guidelines on making information accessible) will ensure that you meet many of the specific needs of people with a disability. Over and above these, the following guidelines apply to specific types of disabilities.

Making information accessible to people with a learning disability

- Use 16 point Arial or bigger.
- Avoid using green as colour for paper.
- Avoid words in white on a coloured background – they can be harder to read.
- Avoid shiny paper.
- Avoid punctuation other than full stops.
- Use bullet points for examples and instructions.
- Use numerals for numbers not words (10 instead of ten).
- Use just 1 idea in every sentence.
- Use words and concepts consistently throughout a document.
- Consider including a glossary to explain any terms that you are using.
- Consider using symbols and pictures to convey messages.
- Use pictures of places rather than maps.
- Avoid using charts.
- Avoid splitting sentences over 2 pages.
- Avoid using columns.
- Consider using alternative formats such as Easy Read or Makaton.

Arrangements for producing materials in alternative formats

Individual Health and Social Care organisations should ensure that organisations or individuals selected to produce materials in
alternative formats for people with a learning disability, such as Easy Read or Makaton, are selected in accordance with HSC Procurement requirements.

For further information on how to procure such formats, contact RQIA’s Communications Manager.

Where to go for further support and advice

If you are developing materials and you want to engage with people with a learning disability to make sure they are accessible for them, you can check out contact details for organisations representing people with a learning disability in the following resource:

‘Signpost to Support Networks in the Community’
www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/1801.htm

You may also find the following resource useful:
www.mencap.org.uk/node/5905

Making information accessible to people who are blind or partially sighted

Make sure you adhere to the General Guidelines presented in Part 1. In addition, the following is important to address the needs of those who are partially sighted:

- Use line spacing that provides for at least 1.5 to 2 times the space between words within a line.
- Make sure that your text clearly contrasts with your background. Use dark against light rather than the other way round.
- Avoid setting text vertically.
- Avoid columns. If you need to use them, make sure there is a sufficient gap between them.
- Don’t put text on top of images.
- Don’t use glossy paper.
- Some people who are blind or partially sighted find it difficult to read numbers. Use words instead.
- You can easily produce documents in large print. These use a larger type size, between 16 and 22 points. If you are unsure, ask the individual what size they prefer.
For those who have no useful sight for reading print, consider producing materials in alternative formats, such as Braille, signage, tactile images or audio and DAISY.

DAISY stands for Digital Accessible Information System - a digital reading format that can combine audio, text and graphical information in one production. People can access the format through a standalone DAISY player, or by using a DAISY software player on a computer.

Arrangements for producing materials in alternative formats

Individual Health and Social Care organisations should ensure that organisations or individuals selected to produce materials in alternative formats for people who are blind or partially sighted, such as Braille, signage, tactile images or audio and DAISY are selected in accordance with HSC Procurement requirements.

For further information on how to procure such formats, contact RQIA’s Communications Manager.

Where to go for further support and advice

If you are developing materials and you want to engage with people who are blind or partially sighted you can check out contact details for organisations representing people who are blind or partially sighted in the following resource:

‘Signpost to Support Networks in the Community'
www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/1801.htm

You may also find the following resource useful:

Making information accessible to people who are deaf or hard of hearing

People who are deaf or hard of hearing and are sign-language users communicate in a different language. This means that English is not their first language. Their needs are not automatically met by providing written information; some will have a level of literacy in English that is below average. To address low literacy levels consider providing written information in an easier to understand language and in Easy Read format.
It is important that you consider providing written information as visual alternatives. This includes creating signed content on websites or British or Irish Sign language DVDs. It is important that you check if it is British or Irish Sign Language that is required.

Consider the use of SMS text message facility for provision of short pieces of information.

**Arrangements for producing materials in alternative formats**

Individual Health and Social Care organisations should ensure that organisations or individuals selected to produce materials in alternative formats for people who are deaf or hard of hearing, such as British or Irish sign language DVDs, are selected in accordance with HSC Procurement requirements.

For further information on how to procure such formats, contact RQIA’s Communications Manager.

**Where to go for further support and advice**

If you are developing materials and you want to engage with people who are deaf or hard of hearing you can check out contact details for organisations representing people who are deaf or hard of hearing in the following resource:

‘Signpost to Support Networks in the Community’
[www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/1801.htm](http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/1801.htm)

**Making information accessible to people with dyslexia or literacy difficulties**

Make sure you adhere to the General Guidelines presented in Part 1. In addition, the following is important:

- Make sure you structure your text into short chunks of text. Clearly separate these.
- Consider including a glossary to explain any terms that you are using.
- Use words and concepts consistently throughout a document.
- If you are using illustrations, place them at the end of a paragraph. Don’t put them in the middle of them.
- Avoid letting text run over illustrations.
- Avoid dark colours as background, especially blue and purple. They make reading harder.
- Some people with dyslexia find it easier to read if text is presented against a cream background or a pale pastel colour.
- When using difficult words, repetition can be very helpful.

Check the readability of your text. You can use the following website to calculate its so-called ‘SMOG’ index (Simple Measure of Gobbledegook):
www.niace.org.uk/misc/SMOG-calculator/smogcalc.php
In interpreting the results, a rough indication is:
index of 9-10: National Adult Literacy Standard Entry Level 3
index of 11-12: National Adult Literacy Standard Level 1
index of 14-15: National Adult Literacy Standard Level 2
Sources


Scottish Accessible Information Forum http://www.saifscotland.org.uk/