**Style Guidelines**

**Produced by Disabled Student Support**

**Producing Accessible Documents**

**General**

* Font size of at least 12 or 14.
* Use a pastel background colour, or white if people are using overlays. Do not lay text over images.
* Line spacing of at least 1.5.
* Do not use a serif font. Do not use light type weights.
* Avoid blocks of capitals and italicised words.
* Avoid using white or very light type. If absolutely necessary use a background that can distinguish.
* If using images, set explanatory captions or 'alt' tags.
* Set text horizontally, as vertical text is very difficult for a visually impaired user to follow.
* On larger publications insert a contents page, use headings and page numbers, which should appear in the same place.
* Align to the left to ensure that all words are equally spaced.
* Never use colour, bold, or italics as a singular method of conveying meaning.

**Style**

* Try to use bullet points and lists to break down information.
* Use [Plain English](http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/) and uncomplicated language - this will be of benefit to dyslexic and British Sign Language (BSL) users.
* Dyslexic users will appreciate the use of images and diagrams alongside text.
* Use matt paper - gloss paper reflects light and can cause problems.
* Avoid text boxes - this can cause problems for visually impaired users when enlarged or using a screen reader.
* Do not print over images - this can obscure the text.

**Large Print**

* Agree an appropriate font and size beforehand.
* Don't just increase font size of the main body of text, increase **all** text incrementally.
* Use indexes for page numbers if it is a large document, e.g. page 1a, 1b, 1c etc.
* Try to avoid two-sided paper, as the text may 'bleed' from one side to the other. Alternately use thicker paper.
* Be sure to leave plenty of room in the margins - whitespace is useful for tracking.
* Use capitals and underlining where appropriate to highlight information.
* If bullet points or numbers are used please leave a line space between points.
* It is helpful to put quotes on a separate line.
* Header at top left. If it is from a book include title, author, and chapter. It is very important to use a header to identify the material, whatever it is.
* Header should be in appropriate size and font and underlined.
* Page numbers at top right-hand corner.
* Use single line spacing generally but double spacing between paragraphs.
* Double space between books on a book list etc.
* Most importantly, ask the user about their requirements!.

**PDFs / MS Word**

* Ensure that PDFs are not locked for highlighting and copying text.
* Never give out PDFs that are just scanned images.
* Tag images with meaningful alternative text values.
* Within PDFs, use tags to give the correct reading order.
* Use headings to create a navigable structure in larger documents.
* Put a full stop after each bullet point, this makes it easier for screen readers to know there's a pause.
* Avoid using tables, but if necessary give the table meaning for screen reader users by identifying table headings.

**Web Resources**

<https://www.abilitynet.org.uk/quality/documents/StandardofAccessibility.pdf>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inclusive-communication/accessible-communication-formats>

<http://www.sensorytrust.org.uk/resources/connect/infosheet_clearlargeprint.pdf>