Checklist for making your literature accessible

Listed below are some suggestions about how to provide accessible written information. This guide is based on extracts from a document originally written by Rachael Litherland from Innovations in Dementia.

Style

- ☑ Present information logically, one piece at a time.
- ☑ Keep language simple without being patronising.
- ☑ Write concisely. Remove unnecessary words and keep to one subject in each sentence.
- ☑ Be consistent in the words that you use.
- ☑ Avoid jargon. Explain all terms and concepts clearly.
- ☑ Paragraphs should make sense on their own.
- ☑ Quotations and examples can help to put information in context.
- ☑ Use of colour helps with interest and concentration.

Format

- ☑ A booklet is better than looseleaf papers. It reduces the possibility of losing sections.
- ☑ Don't overwhelm with too much information: less is often more.

Use of pictures

- ☑ Diagrams and pictures alongside text are helpful. However, images should be relevant.
- ☑ Photographs are often preferable to illustrations which are sometimes difficult to interpret or can feel patronising.
- ☑ Photographs should clearly represent the image rather than being 'artistic'.
- ☑ Text should not overlay pictures of photographs.

Layout

- ☑ Two columns of text are difficult to read. One column is much easier for the eye to follow.
- ☑ Bigger type is easier to read. A font size of at least 14 is ideal.
- ☑ Avoid italics: it is more difficult to read.
- ☑ Choose an uncluttered font without 'curly bits'.
- ☑ Lots of white space around text is good. Too many words on a page can be overwhelming.
- ☑ Always finish a sentence on the same page that it starts on.

Making sense of content

- ☑ Colour can be used to distinguish between different sections of information.
- ☑ Use bullet points, bold text, titles and headings to separate information and present it in manageable 'chunks'.
- ☑ Put information that you want to stand out inside boxes. This can help people to return to information that they found useful.