

# THE EASY READ STANDARD

An Evidence-Based Framework for Accessible Information

**Version 1.0 • January 2026**

Developed by Photosymbols Ltd  
with evidence from the Newton Project research study  
*over 100 participants • over 20 organisations • Real voices*

## Foreword

Over the years, Easy Read has been created by many different people: speech and language therapists, self-advocacy groups, NHS trusts, social care teams, charities, and independent practitioners. Because of these diverse roots, there has never been clear agreement on what makes good Easy Read. This standard aims to change that.

Easy Read is always evolving. New ideas and new ways of presenting information emerge all the time, and trying them is encouraged. This standard is designed to be a grounding point and a launchpad - a foundation to build from, not a set of rigid rules that limit creativity.

This is a living document. We will continue to update it as new approaches prove effective and as our understanding of what works best for people with learning disabilities grows. The Newton Project research that underpins this standard involved over 100 participants across more than 20 self-advocacy organisations, and that work continues.

We hope this standard helps you create Easy Read that is clear, accessible, and genuinely useful for the people it is designed for.

Photosymbols Ltd

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## About This Standard

This standard sets out evidence-based principles for creating Easy Read information. It is grounded in over 30 years of practical experience and supported by research conducted directly with people with learning disabilities.

Easy Read is a specialist communication format that combines carefully written words, meaningful pictures, considered design, and the involvement of people with learning disabilities. It presents essential content using plain language, supportive images, and accessible layout.

Good Easy Read helps readers find what they need, understand what they find, and use that information. This standard addresses all three.

This standard applies the principles of ISO 24495-1:2023 Plain language, extending them to meet the specific needs of people with learning disabilities.

### Who is this for?

This standard is for anyone who creates, commissions, or evaluates Easy Read information, including NHS trusts, local authorities, charities, housing associations, and private organisations.

### The evidence base

The recommendations in this standard are informed by the Newton Project, a research study conducted in 2024-2025 with over 100 participants across over 20 self-advocacy organisations in the UK. Where recommendations are supported by this research, we cite the specific findings as percentages.

This standard is also informed by three decades of practice-based learning from creating thousands of Easy Read documents for the NHS, government, and third sector, as well as established best practice from plain language research and accessibility guidelines.

### Requirement levels

This standard uses three levels of requirement: **MUST** indicates essential requirements that define whether information meets the standard. **SHOULD** indicates strong recommendations based on evidence and best practice. **MAY** indicates options that can improve quality in specific contexts.

# Scope

## What this standard covers

This standard applies to Easy Read information created for people with learning disabilities. It covers written documents, whether printed or digital, that use the combination of words, pictures, and design that defines Easy Read.

While this standard focuses on documents (print and PDF), the principles can be applied to other formats including web pages, social media, audio, and video. The core requirements for clear words, meaningful pictures, accessible design, and involvement of people with learning disabilities apply across all formats.

## What this standard does not cover

Easy Read is one accessibility format among many. This standard does not replace the need for other formats, and organisations must still meet their legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 and, for NHS and adult social care providers in England, the Accessible Information Standard.

This standard does not cover: British Sign Language (BSL) video; Audio formats and podcasts; Braille; Translations into other languages; Plain English (which is related but distinct); Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) systems.

## Easy Read is not plain English

Plain English uses clear language but does not require images or specific layout. Easy Read is a more structured format with specific requirements for pictures, design, and presentation. A document can be written in plain English without being Easy Read.

Easy Read should feel easy. If you are worried your writing looks too plain or repetitive, that is often a sign you are doing it right. Clarity always wins over cleverness.

## People's needs vary

People with learning disabilities are not a single group with identical needs. Some people will find Easy Read helpful; others may prefer different formats. This standard describes best practice for Easy Read specifically, while recognising that the right format depends on the individual.

When gathering feedback, remember that one person's preference may directly contradict another's. This does not mean either is wrong. It reflects the diversity of the audience. Use research and testing with multiple people to identify what works for most readers, while remaining open to individual adaptations.

**Expert Adviser:** *"There are a wide range of disabilities and impairments. Consider different needs."*

## The Four Standards

The Easy Read Standard is built on four equal standards. Each is essential. Good Easy Read requires attention to all four.

| <b>WORDS</b>                                     | <b>PICTURES</b>                                      | <b>DESIGN</b>   | <b>PEOPLE</b>  |
|--|--|---|--|
| Clear, plain language that people can understand | Images that communicate meaning and support the text | Layout and typography that aids reading and comprehension | Involving people with learning disabilities at every stage |

## Standard 1: Words

The foundation of Easy Read is clear, plain language. This is not about dumbing down; it is about communicating with precision and respect. A useful approach is to imagine you are talking to someone as you write.

**Expert Adviser:** *"It needs to be very clear, very simple, and accessible. If it is not understandable, then it is not really Easy Read."*

### Writing Style

#### 1.1 Write short sentences **SHOULD**

Each sentence should contain one idea. Aim for sentences under 25 words. If a sentence is too long, split it into two shorter sentences rather than cramming information together.

**Research evidence:** *More than 4 in 5 participants (84%) agreed that short sentences are easier to read.*

#### 1.2 Keep the overall word count low **SHOULD**

Aim for under 1000 words in total. Even a longer document with multiple pages should not be text-heavy. Space is needed for images, headings, and white space.

#### 1.3 One concept per paragraph **SHOULD**

Each paragraph should focus on a single piece of information. This helps readers process information in manageable chunks. If you are making a new point, use a new sentence.

#### 1.4 Use everyday words **MUST**

Avoid jargon, technical terms, and complex vocabulary. When specialist terms are necessary, explain them clearly.

**Research evidence:** *Participants specifically mentioned disliking jargon and complex words. One said: "I hate jargon." Another: "Most times big jargon words confuse me."*

**Expert Adviser:** *"You can tell when it's just one person who's written it and they haven't checked it with anyone. That's when you get the difficult words left in."*

#### 1.5 Use consistent terminology **SHOULD**

Use the same word for the same thing throughout your document. If you call someone a "doctor" at the start, do not switch to "GP" or "physician" later. Consistency helps readers follow the content without confusion.

#### 1.6 Use preferred terminology **SHOULD**

Use "learning disability" rather than "learning difficulty" unless you know your audience prefers otherwise.

**Research evidence:** *Nearly half of participants (48%) preferred "learning disability"*

compared to about 1 in 7 (14%) who preferred "learning difficulty".

### 1.7 Be cautious with acronyms **SHOULD**

Some acronyms become so familiar that people know them better than the full words. Others are confusing, especially when the acronym does not obviously match the full term.

**Research evidence:** Participants found familiar acronyms helpful but were confused by less common ones, particularly where the letters do not obviously match the words.

Familiar acronyms that work well: BBC, NHS, TV - these are widely understood and often more familiar than the full words.

Acronyms that cause problems: LeDeR (does not clearly relate to "Learning from lives and deaths"), SEND, CQC - unfamiliar to many people.

When using an unfamiliar acronym, write the full term first: "The Care Quality Commission (CQC) checks hospitals and care homes."

### 1.8 Acknowledge alternative terms **SHOULD**

When something has different names or a common colloquial term, let readers know. For example: "This is the remote control. It is sometimes called a clicker." This helps readers connect what they are reading to words they may hear in everyday life.

### 1.9 Build on familiar concepts **SHOULD**

Introduce new ideas by connecting them to things readers are likely to already understand. Structure information so that each new point builds on what came before.

### 1.10 Use active voice **MUST**

Active voice is clearer and more direct. The reader knows immediately who is doing what.

| Preferred                    | Avoid                                       |
|------------------------------|---|
| The doctor will see you      | You will be seen by the doctor              |
| We will send you a letter    | A letter will be sent to you                |
| Your support worker can help | Help can be provided by your support worker |

### 1.11 Frame instructions positively **SHOULD**

Tell people what to do, not what not to do. Negative constructions require more mental processing.

| Preferred                 | Avoid                            |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Remember your appointment | Do not forget your appointment   |
| Keep your card safe       | Do not lose your card            |
| Ask if you need help      | Do not be afraid to ask for help |

## Content

### 1.12 Put the most important information first **SHOULD**

Start with what readers need to know most. Key message first, then supporting detail, then background. Do not make readers wade through context to find the point.

### 1.13 Write for your reader's logic, not yours **SHOULD**

Structure information in the order your reader needs it, not the order it occurs to you as the writer. Think about what questions they will have and answer them in that sequence. Structuring information well is a skill in itself.

### 1.14 Prioritise what most readers need **SHOULD**

Information that most readers need should come before information that only some readers need. If only a few people need certain details, consider putting them at the end or in a separate section.

### 1.15 Explain terms that cannot be simplified **SHOULD**

Some terms cannot be changed because readers will encounter them elsewhere - for example, "Annual Health Check", "LeDeR", or "Mental Capacity Act". Do not drop these terms in without explanation. Bold the term and provide a simple explanation where it is first mentioned.

## Punctuation and Contractions

### 1.16 Use punctuation carefully **SHOULD**

Some readers find unfamiliar punctuation confusing. Avoid colons and semicolons. Use commas sparingly. Exclamation marks may not convey excitement to all readers and can cause confusion. Question marks are more familiar but should still be used with care.

### 1.17 Be careful with contractions **SHOULD**

Some readers find contractions harder to read. Consider using "do not" instead of "don't", "cannot" instead of "can't". This is especially important for key instructions.

## Numbers, Dates and Times

### 1.18 Write numbers as numerals **MAY**

Numerals are easier to scan and recognise than written-out numbers.

| Preferred                 | Avoid                       |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| You will see 3 people     | You will see three people   |
| The meeting is in 2 weeks | The meeting is in two weeks |

### 1.19 Write dates in full **SHOULD**

Avoid ambiguous date formats. Use visual representations like calendar graphics where possible.

| Preferred                | Avoid    |
|--------------------------|----------|
| Monday 19th January 2026 | 19/01/26 |
| Friday 7th March         | 07/03    |

### 1.20 Use 12-hour clock **SHOULD**

The 24-hour clock is less familiar to many readers.

| Preferred | Avoid |
|-----------|-------|
| 2pm       | 14:00 |
| 10.30am   | 10:30 |

### 1.21 Avoid percentages **SHOULD**

Percentages are abstract. Concrete expressions are easier to understand.

| Preferred     | Avoid              |
|---------------|--------------------|
| 1 in 4 people | 25% of people      |
| About half    | Approximately 50%  |
| Most people   | 73% of respondents |

## What to Avoid

### 1.22 Avoid idioms and metaphors **SHOULD**

Phrases like "it's raining cats and dogs" or "kick the bucket" can be confusing, especially for people who think literally.

### 1.23 Avoid sarcasm and irony **SHOULD**

These rely on the reader understanding that you mean the opposite of what you have written. This is easily misunderstood.

### 1.24 Avoid rhetorical questions **SHOULD**

Questions you do not expect an answer to can be confusing. Say what you mean directly.

| Preferred            | Avoid                    |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| This is important    | Is this not important?   |
| You should apply now | Why would you not apply? |

### 1.25 Use AI tools thoughtfully **MAY**

AI writing tools can help simplify text, but always review and refine the output. AI can introduce errors, remove key detail, or change tone, so human judgement is essential.

## Standard 2: Pictures

Pictures are not decoration. In Easy Read, images carry meaning and must actively support comprehension.

### 2.1 Include images with body text **MUST**

Every paragraph of body text should have one or more accompanying images. This is the defining characteristic of Easy Read. The image and text work together to communicate meaning.

### 2.2 Use real photographs where possible **MAY**

Photographs of real people are strongly preferred over drawings or abstract symbols. Where photographs are not possible or appropriate, use high-quality illustrations that clearly match the meaning.

**Research evidence:** Nearly 3 in 5 participants (58%) preferred real photos, compared to fewer than 1 in 10 (8%) who preferred drawings and about 1 in 10 (11%) who preferred line symbols.

### 2.3 Match pictures to meaning **MUST**

Each image must communicate the core concept of the paragraph it accompanies. If an image does not add meaning, do not include it.

**Research evidence:** One participant said: "I don't like it when the pictures don't match the words."

### 2.4 Use images consistently **SHOULD**

When an image represents a particular concept, keep that meaning fixed throughout the document. Do not reuse the same image to mean something different. When the same concept appears again, use the same image.

### 2.5 Use composite images where needed **MAY**

When a single photograph cannot convey the concept, consider creating composite images that combine elements. Take care to avoid visual clutter.

### 2.6 Make images large enough **SHOULD**

Images should be at least 4cm × 4cm to be clearly visible. 4-5cm is the ideal range. Small images lose impact and meaning.

### 2.7 Include pictures with headings **SHOULD**

Headings should have associated images, not just body text. This is often overlooked but helps readers navigate.

## 2.8 Show diverse representation **SHOULD**

Images should include people of different ages, genders, ethnicities, and disabilities. Representation matters.

**Research evidence:** More than half of participants (55%) said it is important to see different types of people in pictures. More than half (53%) said they like pictures featuring people with learning disabilities.

## 2.9 Write the words first **SHOULD**

Write your text before selecting images. This ensures images are chosen to match the meaning of what you have written, rather than fitting words around available pictures.

## 2.10 Use one visual style consistently **SHOULD**

Choose one style of image and use it throughout your document. Do not mix photographs with clip art or line symbols. Mixing styles creates visual confusion and makes documents harder to follow.

## 2.11 Aim for 4-6 images per page **SHOULD**

Too many images can overwhelm readers. Aim for 4 to 6 images per page as a guide, adjusting for your layout and content. This works alongside the guidance on limiting text per page.

# Standard 3: Design

Good design is invisible. It guides the reader through the information without creating barriers or confusion.

## 3.1 Use minimum 16pt text **MUST**

Body text must be at least 16 points. 16 to 20 points is the ideal range.

**Research evidence:** About half preferred medium text size and half preferred large. Only 3% chose small text.

## 3.2 Place pictures on the left **SHOULD**

Position images to the left of the associated text. This supports natural reading flow.

**Research evidence:** About 2 in 3 participants (65%) preferred pictures on the left, compared to about 1 in 5 (19%) who preferred the right.

## 3.3 Limit text per page **SHOULD**

Aim for 50-100 words per page, with 150 words maximum. For complex information, use fewer. White space helps readers focus.

## 3.4 Keep documents concise **SHOULD**

The fewer pages the better. 4 or 8 pages makes content accessible to more people. 16 pages is a good general limit. Up to 24 pages maximum if you have a very good reason and use visual strategies to break up the content.

### **3.5 One topic per page where possible MAY**

Just as each paragraph should cover one concept, consider giving each topic its own page. If you are writing about running a home and you have covered bills, start a new page to talk about keeping it tidy.

### **3.6 Use generous line spacing SHOULD**

Line spacing of 1.5 or more helps readers track from line to line without losing their place.

### **3.7 Use left-aligned text MUST**

Text should be aligned to the left margin, not justified. Justified text creates uneven spacing between words which makes reading harder and can create distracting "rivers" of white space.

### **3.8 Choose accessible fonts SHOULD**

Use sans-serif fonts. Arial, Helvetica, Poppins and FS Me are good options. Arial and Helvetica are clean, accessible and readily available. Avoid serif fonts like Times and handwritten fonts that may not be clear to read. Avoid using all capital letters for body text.

***Research evidence:** Just under half of participants (44%) preferred normal letters over capitals (about 1 in 4, 26%). Sans-serif fonts were the most popular category (about 2 in 5, 41%).*

### **3.9 Use bold for difficult words and explain them SHOULD**

Bold text signals words or concepts that may be unfamiliar to readers. Bold the first mention of a difficult word, and support it with an explanation - either immediately in the text, or in a glossary the reader can refer to. Subsequent mentions do not need to be bolded. Use bold purposefully, not excessively.

***Research evidence:** More than 4 in 5 participants (83%) agreed that bold words help pick out hard words. Almost nobody disagreed (1%).*

### **3.10 Avoid underlining SHOULD**

Do not underline text for emphasis. Underlining makes text harder to read and is easily confused with hyperlinks. Use bold instead if emphasis is needed.

### **3.11 Avoid italics in body text SHOULD**

Italic text is harder to read than regular text, particularly for people with visual processing difficulties or dyslexia. Use bold for emphasis instead. Italics may be acceptable for short references like book titles.

### **3.12 Include page numbers SHOULD**

Page numbers help readers navigate and reference specific sections.

**Research evidence:** About 7 in 10 participants (71%) said they like page numbers.

### **3.13 Use a cover page for longer documents SHOULD**

For documents over 4 pages, include a front page with a large, relevant image that signals what the document is about.

**Research evidence:** More than 4 in 5 participants (85%) said they like a front page with a big photo for long information.

### **3.14 Include a contents page for longer documents SHOULD**

For documents over 8 pages, include a contents page listing sections with page numbers so readers can find what they need.

### **3.15 Include a summary for longer documents MAY**

For documents over 8 pages, consider including a brief summary or key points section at the start. This helps readers quickly understand what the document is about and decide if it is relevant to them.

### **3.16 Use clear, descriptive headings SHOULD**

Headings help readers navigate and find information. They should describe what the section is about, not be clever or cryptic.

### **3.17 Keep related content together SHOULD**

Never start a point at the bottom of one page and continue it on the next. If text and its image cannot fit together on the same page, move both to the next page. Readers should not have to turn the page mid-thought.

### **3.18 Meet digital accessibility requirements SHOULD**

For digital documents: aim to meet WCAG 2.2 Level AA requirements, including colour contrast of at least 4.5:1, meaningful alt text on all images, logical reading order, and proper heading structure. Where full compliance is not achievable, prioritise the requirements that most affect readability.

### **3.19 Never use colour alone to convey meaning SHOULD**

If colour indicates something important (like a warning), also use text, symbols, or icons. Around 8% of men have some form of colour blindness.

### **3.20 Avoid red/green colour combinations SHOULD**

Red-green colour blindness is the most common form. Do not rely on red for "bad" and green for "good".

### **3.21 Consider light tinted backgrounds MAY**

Some readers find off-white, cream, light blue, or light yellow backgrounds easier than pure white. If you know your audience, ask them.

**Research evidence:** Newton Project participants expressed various preferences for background colours including light blue and light yellow.

### **3.22 Turn off hyphenation SHOULD**

Text should not be hyphenated. Words split across lines are difficult to read. Turn off automatic hyphenation in your page layout software.

**3.23 Use box-outs for key information MAY**

Important information that readers may need to refer back to can be highlighted using boxes or callouts. These are easier to spot when scanning a document.

**3.24 Make hyperlinks clear and descriptive SHOULD**

For digital documents, hyperlinks should clearly describe where they lead. Avoid "click here" - instead use meaningful link text like "Read our complaints policy". Ensure links are visually distinct and work correctly.

**3.25 Consider how you share web addresses MAY**

QR codes work well for people who are familiar with them but may confuse others. Writing the full web address is clearer but can look intimidating if it is long. Where possible, offer both, or know your audience's preference.

**3.26 Keep tables simple SHOULD**

If you must use tables, keep them simple with clear headers and minimal columns. Complex data may be better presented as separate statements with images. Avoid merged cells and nested tables.

**3.27 Accessibility comes before brand guidelines SHOULD**

Sometimes brand colours, fonts, or layouts do not work for Easy Read. A splash of corporate colour is fine, but know when to push back. Accessibility is not optional.

**3.28 Consider print requirements SHOULD**

For printed documents: use good quality paper that is thick enough to prevent text showing through from the other side. Consider spiral or comb binding for longer documents so pages lie flat. Avoid printing on both sides if the paper is thin or if this would separate an image from its text.

## Standard 4: People

Easy Read exists to serve people with learning disabilities. Their involvement is not optional, but it must also be practical. The principle of "Nothing About Us Without Us" is central to this standard.

### 4.1 Understand your audience **SHOULD**

Know who you are creating for. People with learning disabilities are not a homogenous group. Needs, preferences, and abilities vary.

### 4.2 Build co-production into your systems **SHOULD**

Co-production is most valuable when embedded at the resource level, not required for every individual document. Work with people with learning disabilities to develop your templates, image libraries, and style guides.

### 4.3 Be realistic about timescales and capacity **SHOULD**

Not every piece of Easy Read can go through full co-production. Someone receiving a diagnosis needs the information that day, not after weeks of planning. Good systems and resources mean individual documents can be produced quickly while still meeting the standard.

Do not assume that self-advocacy groups have the time or capacity to work on Easy Read. Producing and reviewing documents can be tiring and time-consuming, and may take people away from important day-to-day support work. Respect people's time and energy.

### 4.4 Choose appropriate images **SHOULD**

Select images that are relevant, respectful, and appropriate for your audience. Avoid images that stereotype or misrepresent people with learning disabilities.

### 4.5 Prioritise checking what matters most **SHOULD**

When time is limited, prioritise checking the most important or complex information with people with learning disabilities, rather than routine content.

### 4.6 Listen to individual preferences **MAY**

Where you know your readers personally, listen to their specific preferences for fonts, colours, or layout.

**Research evidence:** Several participants noted specific preferences, including different background colours (pink, yellow, light blue) and specific fonts.

### 4.7 Set a review date **MAY**

Easy Read documents should include a review date. Information goes out of date, and documents should be checked and updated regularly to remain accurate and useful.

## **How to Use This Standard**

This standard can be used in several ways depending on your role and needs.

### **For creators**

Use the Four Standards as a framework when planning Easy Read. Check your work against the Quick Reference table. Focus on the MUST requirements first, then address SHOULD requirements where possible.

### **For commissioners**

Reference this standard in procurement specifications. Use the Quick Reference as a checklist when reviewing deliverables. Ask suppliers how they address each of the Four Standards. Suppliers should be evaluated against both MUST and SHOULD requirements.

### **For compliance review**

Use the Compliance Checklist when reviewing Easy Read documents. Record any requirements that cannot be met, along with the reason and any alternative approach taken.

### **When you cannot meet a requirement**

Real-world constraints sometimes prevent full compliance. When this happens, record which requirement could not be met, why, and what alternative approach was taken. This maintains accountability while allowing practical flexibility.

# Compliance Checklist

Use this checklist to review Easy Read documents against the standard. This checklist includes both MUST and SHOULD requirements. MUST items define compliance with the standard. SHOULD items represent best practice and should normally be met. Where a requirement cannot be met, record why and what alternative approach was taken.

## Words

- Sentences are short (under 25 words where possible)
- Total word count is under 1000 words
- Each paragraph covers one concept only
- Everyday language is used throughout
- Consistent terminology throughout (same word for same thing)
- Jargon and technical terms are explained
- Required terms are bolded and explained on first use
- Acronyms are familiar or explained on first use
- Alternative terms acknowledged where helpful
- Active voice is used throughout
- Instructions framed positively
- Most important information comes first
- Content structured for reader's logic
- Punctuation used carefully (no colons/semicolons)
- Contractions avoided for key instructions
- Dates written in full
- Times use 12-hour clock
- Percentages avoided or explained
- No idioms, metaphors, or sarcasm

## Pictures

- Every paragraph has one or more associated images
- Every heading has an associated image
- Each image clearly matches the meaning of the text
- Images used consistently (same image = same meaning)
- Images are at least 4cm × 4cm
- Images show diverse representation
- Words written before images selected

- One visual style used throughout (no mixing photos/clip art/symbols)
- 4-6 images per page (as a guide)

## Design

- Text is at least 16pt
- Text is left-aligned (not justified)
- Images are positioned to the left of text
- 50-100 words per page (150 maximum)
- Line spacing is 1.5 or greater
- Sans-serif font used (Arial, Helvetica, Poppins, FS Me)
- Bold words are explained (inline or in glossary)
- No underlining (except hyperlinks)
- No italics in body text
- Page numbers are included
- Cover page with image (for documents over 4 pages)
- Contents page (for documents over 8 pages)
- Related content kept together (no page break mid-thought)
- No text in ALL CAPITALS
- Colour contrast is at least 4.5:1
- Colour not used alone to convey meaning
- No red/green colour coding for meaning
- Alt text added to all images (digital documents)
- Reading order is logical (digital documents)
- Heading structure is correct (digital documents)
- Hyperlinks are clear and descriptive (digital documents)
- Tables are simple with clear headers (if used)
- Hyphenation is turned off
- Print quality appropriate (if printed)

## People

- Target audience is clearly understood
- People with learning disabilities involved in development or checking
- Images are appropriate and do not stereotype
- Content checked for accuracy against source
- Review date is set (where appropriate)

## Overall

- Reading flow works (left to right, picture to text)
- Consistent style throughout (terms, layout, formatting)
- Document length is appropriate (4-8 ideal, 16 good limit, 24 maximum)

## Quick Reference

A summary of key specifications for Easy Read documents:

| Element          | Recommendation                                       |
|------------------|--|
| Total word count | Under 1000 words                                     |
| Sentence length  | Under 25 words (SHOULD)                              |
| Font size        | 16-20pt (MUST be at least 16pt)                      |
| Font style       | Sans-serif (Arial, Helvetica, Poppins, FS Me)        |
| Text alignment   | Left-aligned (MUST - not justified)                  |
| Line spacing     | 1.5 or greater                                       |
| Words per page   | 50-100 ideal, 150 maximum                            |
| Document length  | 4-8 pages ideal, 16 good limit, 24 maximum           |
| Image size       | At least 4cm × 4cm (4-5cm ideal)                     |
| Image position   | Left of associated text                              |
| Images per page  | 4-6 as a guide                                       |
| Image style      | One style throughout (don't mix)                     |
| Capitals         | Avoid ALL CAPS                                       |
| Underlining      | Avoid (except for hyperlinks)                        |
| Italics          | Avoid in body text                                   |
| Hyphenation      | Should be turned off                                 |
| Bold             | Use for difficult words (explain inline or glossary) |
| Page numbers     | Include on all pages                                 |
| Cover page       | Include for documents over 4 pages                   |
| Contents page    | Include for documents over 8 pages                   |
| Colour contrast  | At least 4.5:1 (WCAG 2.2)                            |
| Numbers          | May write as numerals (3 not three)                  |
| Dates            | Write in full (Monday 19th January)                  |
| Times            | Use 12-hour clock (2pm not 14:00)                    |
| Contractions     | Avoid for key instructions (do not vs don't)         |
| Punctuation      | Avoid colons/semicolons, use commas sparingly        |

## Contact

For more information about this standard, or to discuss Easy Read services and training:

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**Find out more at [easyreadstandard.org](http://easyreadstandard.org)**

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## Expert Advisers

With thanks to our Expert Advisers who contributed their knowledge and lived experience:

*Matt Stabb • Michaela Mamara • Hayley Burwood • Grace Wilks*

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