Guidance on Presenting Material

1. General guidelines

- Keep writing style in short simple sentences.
- Avoid dense blocks of text by using short paragraphs.
- Make documents available in electronic format whenever possible.
- Publicise the availability of different formats.
- Flow charts can be ideal for explaining procedures but may be problematic for screen-reading software. Linear charts may overcome this problem.
- Clear diagrams, charts and graphics are generally helpful for dyslexic learners but may be problematic for screen-reading software.
- Provide a glossary of new terminology and relevant abbreviations.
- Include a contents page at the beginning and index at end, where appropriate.

2. Fonts and type.

- Always use sans serif fonts such as Arial or Comic Sans.
- Keep the font size at 12pt or more for dyslexic readers and 14pt or more for people with visual impairments.
- Expand the spacing between lines where possible.
- Highlight with Bold rather than Italics or Underlining.
- Avoid underlining titles or key words as it can make the words 'run together'.

3. Layout of text.

- Keep text, including titles, left justified with a ragged right edge.
- Use blank spacing between paragraphs to break up text.
- Use bullets or numbers rather than continuous prose where possible.
- Avoid beginning sentences at the end of a line.
- Use wide margins and headings.
- Avoid using columns because text-reading software may jumble the order of text.

4. **Presentation of information.**

- Avoid using glossy paper.
- Use coloured paper instead of white – cream is a generally good choice.
- Keep the design of leaflets simple.
- Avoid background graphics as they can make text impossible to read.
- Do not use a variety of fonts.
- On leaflets or posters about events, keep essential information about time and place grouped together and in Bold type, where possible.

5. **Display boards.**

- Ensure that colours used on white boards are appropriate for all participants.
- Use print rather than joined writing on boards but avoid capitalising whole words.
- Position notice boards at eye-level wherever possible.
- Keep important information free from clutter on notice boards.

6. **Text-reading software.**

For documents that are scanned into a computer and web pages that are read with screen-reading software:

- Insert full stops after headings and bullet points, to make the voice pause and drop in tone.
- Number menu items to aid navigation.
- Do not capitalise whole words, as they may be read as single letters.
- Avoid excessive use of 'signs', such as asterisks and slashes, as the name of each will be spoken.

8. **Web site design.**

- Navigation should be easy. A site map is essential and should be located at the beginning of the site.
- Accessibility information, such as a Text Only button and choice of background colour, should be clearly located at the top of the page.
- It is helpful if downloaded web pages can be read off-line.

- Moving text creates problems for people with visual difficulties and often prevents text-reading software working.

- Graphics and tables may take a long time to download.

- Contents links should show which pages have been accessed.

References:

www.bda-dyslexia.org.uk/d07xtra/x09frend.htm