7.0 Commissioning alternative language and reading formats

Commissioning alternative language and reading formats

Islington is proud to be a diverse borough and home to people from a wide variety of backgrounds and cultures.

To assist our customers, where sensible the council offers to translate printed material in alternative languages to meet the needs of residents who require information in another language.

When selecting the alternative languages in which you will provide your materials, it is important that you consider the needs of the audiences you are trying to reach.

If the document could be translated in alternative languages, this should be explained in the corresponding languages on the back panel on the back page of the publication.

If a publication is specifically aimed at an audience who speaks a different language to English then it may be necessary to translate the information from the outset.

The languages most commonly spoken in Islington are:
Turkish, Bengali, Somali, Arabic, Spanish, Albanian, Tigrigna, French, Chinese, Greek, Italian, Polish, Yoruba, Urdu, Gujarati, Punjabi and Portuguese.

A generic translation statement in each of these languages is available from the Communications team.

There is no central budget for translation services and it is the responsibility of the team producing the materials to manage their own budget for this.

Always seek advice before you organise a written translation as in some cases it may be more cost effective to recruit an interpreter. An Easy Read English version may be another option (see section 7.1 for more information).

It is important that we meet the needs of our customers by providing them with information and materials that are accessible and that they can understand.

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The council has a set list of approved suppliers for translation and/or interpretation services. They all have an accredited qualification and are committed to a code of ethics which includes maintaining confidentiality and impartiality.

Contacts for language translations
A list of contact details is available on the intranet at http://izzi/alfresco/web/izzi/councilwide/comms/langservices/translation/

Please note that certain languages – such as Arabic – will require both translation **and** specialist typesetting from right to left, in Cyrillic font. This could mean changing the way your document is designed. Please always speak to Communications for advice on getting a language translation laid out.

Alternative reading formats

Islington has made a commitment to ensuring that any information that enables someone to live their life with dignity will be accessible to disabled people in a format that they can understand.

- A visually impaired person may require us to communicate with them in large print (16 point or above), Braille or audio (CD).

- A Deaf person may prefer us to communicate with them through British Sign Language (BSL) DVDs/ web clips or SMS. The council's Sign Language Service produces a BSL newsletter 'Signpost' and has a Facebook page, which are useful ways of promoting services to Deaf people.

- A person with learning difficulties may need 'Easy Read' information. Easy Read uses only the most common words that most people would use in everyday speech. Any difficult words, abbreviations or jargon have to be explained. Easy Read can also be an option for customers who don't have English as a first language.

  There are also special 'photosymbol' illustrations for Easy Read documents to support text. They can be downloaded from www.photosymbols.com. (Examples shown below. Please note that usage fees can apply.)

The council's policy is to:

- provide essential information in an accessible way without having to be asked. So if we know a resident reads 16 point large print, we aim to send them letters and other documents in 16 point

- reactively provide accessible information on request. For more details, see the accessible information policy on izzi at: http://izzi/alfresco/web/izzi/ staff/equalities/accessible/

Suppliers of alternative formats

The council's Islington Learning Disabilities Partnership can provide help with producing Easy Read information. They can be contacted at:

T 020 7527 6600
E learning.disabilities@islington.gov.uk

The Equalities team publishes a list of local suppliers on the intranet at: http://izzi/alfresco/web/izzi/staff/ equalities/accessible/show/

Greenspace has produced some useful guidelines on making events more accessible. See izzi or contact Communications for more information.

Other useful external contacts:

Royal National Institute of Blind and Partially Sighted People: www.rnib.org.uk

Action on Hearing Loss (formally RNID) www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk

Making PDF and Word documents more accessible

PDFs

PDFs can be made more accessible through the use of heading levels, tags, bookmarks and alt text (like websites).

This enables people using screen reader software to understand the structure of the document and navigate through it. The alt text facility provides information about the purpose of images and graphics. The tagging allows the creator of the PDF to give guidance on the order in which the information should be read.

You should also set the PDF up using 'page per view' rather than spread per view.

More guidance is available at www.adobe.com/accessibility or from the following resources:

Advice on creating accessible content for persons with disabilities using InDesign and Acrobat Professional:
www.tv.adobe.com/watch/ accessibility-adobe/preparing- indesign-files-for-accessibility/

Advice on accessibility best practice using Adobe Acrobat 9 Pro:
www.adobe.com/accessibility/ products/acrobat/pdf/A9-access- best-practices.pdf

Advice on creating accessible PDFs from Microsoft Word:
www.adobe.com/accessibility/ products/acrobat/pdf/ A9-accessible-pdf-from-word.pdf

Word documents

You can also make Word documents more accessible for people who use screen readers by styling them up using the 'styles and formatting' function under 'format'.

This means that you assign pre-set heading styles and hierarchies to your document.

The recommended format for black and white documents is:

- Arial, bold, 16pt for 'heading 1'
- Arial 'heading 14'
- Arial, 12, regular for body copy (normal)

You can amend the pre-set formats in your system by selecting elements and selecting 'modify' from the drop down menu to the right and then 'automatically update'.

Once all the styles have been applied, you can view an overview of the document structure by going to 'view' and 'document map'. This will, in turn, generate a kind of contents listing under all the headings.