Universal Design Toolkit for Customer Engagement

1 Written Communication

1.1 Introduction

Four reasons to use this Toolkit:

1. This Toolkit will help you assess your written communication to ensure the information is easy to read and understand for your target market.
2. This Toolkit will help you to better engage with your customers through written communication.
3. This Toolkit will help you to deliver a better customer experience.
4. This Toolkit will help you to develop new customer communications.

Universal Design aims to simplify life for everyone by making products, services and communications, more usable by as many people as possible.

The guidance provided is just good common sense, but sometimes it’s good to get a refresher on the small things that make a customer’s experience better.

There are two levels of changes that this Toolkit will deliver:

- **Incremental changes**: these are small changes that are easy to put in place, which will improve your customer's experience. The impact of this can range from providing a more personal customer experience to creating written communication that clearly and concisely communicates the benefits your business offers over your competitors.

- **Radical changes**: these are bigger changes that create tangible impacts. The impact of this can range from increasing repeat customers to targeting new customer segments with clearly defined benefits and tailored product or service packages.

Just think about it...

By providing a better customer experience for older customers, you will attract the over 55s who spent 42% more than under 35s on domestic overnight holidays in England in 2014. ¹

This Toolkit provides practical guidance that you can apply in your business at no extra cost. So here is the challenge - read the Toolkit, keep the checklists handy and start applying the learning – one step at a time.

¹. Great Britain Tourism Survey 2014.
1.2 Written Text Guidance

The way you communicate with your customers is very important; your tone, the words you use and the way you write. It is important to think about who you are writing for (your target market) and what they know about your business (particularly their familiarity with the technical terms you may use).

The following is some key pieces of guidance on how to communicate with your customers effectively:

**Think of the person you are writing for**
- What background information do they know about your business?
- Are they familiar with the technical terms your business uses?
- How will they read the document? Will they just skip to the section of interest to them?

**Be personal**
Use ‘I’, ‘we’ and ‘you’ in your documents.

**Use active verbs**
Try to put the person, group or thing doing the action at the start of the sentence as often as possible. This will help make your text more personal and clearer.

For example, write “We will send you a confirmation of your booking on Tuesday” instead of “A confirmation of your booking will be sent on Tuesday.”

**Make text easy to read and understand**
Always use the simplest and clearest language possible. Avoid technical language that your customer may not understand. If you must use technical language, clearly explain what it means in plain English.

The Plain English Campaign provides plain English guidelines in their ‘How to’ guide, available from their website: [http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/files/howto.pdf].
Think of the person you are writing for
What do your customers know about your business?

Avoid technical words that your customer may be unfamiliar with
If you must use technical words explain what they mean.
Avoid Latin and French expressions
There can be confusion around words such as: e.g., i.e. and etc.
Try to use the full English equivalents such as: ‘for example’, ‘that is’ and ‘and so on’.

Define unfamiliar abbreviations or acronyms
Where your customer may be unfamiliar with an acronym, spell it out the first time it is used followed by the acronym in brackets.
For example, the visitor information centre (VIC).
Try to keep unfamiliar abbreviations or acronyms to a minimum.

Keep sentences short
Aim to use no more than 15 to 20 words per sentence.
Break up sentences with full stops, rather than semi-colons. Use one space after a full stop to help with accessibility, particularly for your customers using text-to-speech software.

Be consistent with terms and formats
Use the same terms and formats for the same concept throughout your document. For example, make sure you write dates and numbers consistently; don’t change from using the word ‘seven’ to writing the number ‘7’.

Use questions and answers
Questions and answers help to get information across or emphasise certain facts.

Proofread your document
It is important to proofread your document. It is recommended that this is done at least an hour later, though preferably 24 hours later. This helps you see the document with fresh eyes, making you more likely to notice mistakes. If possible, ask someone else to proofread it as well.

Use a house style
Create a house style of terms, phrases and explanations of technical terms that everyone in your business uses repeatedly. This can also be applied to writing and layout standards for your written communication.

Do you have standard explanations for technical terms that you use for people outside your business? What standard explanations for technical terms may not be understood by all your customers?
Avoid Latin and French expressions
Try to use the full English equivalents instead.

Be consistent with terms
Use the same term for the same concept throughout your document.
Additional Information

Writing dates
The following guidance should be applied when writing dates:

- Write dates in dd mm yyyy (date month year).
  For example, 12 July 2014.
- When referring to a range of dates, use a hyphen in the middle.
- Write decades in digits with just an ‘s’ at the end (no apostrophe).
  For example, the 1990s.

Writing numbers and amounts

- Write numbers one to nine in words and use digits for number 10 and upwards.
- If a sentence starts with a number, write the number in words, and if it’s a double digit over 20, insert a hyphen between the words.
  For example: Twenty-one.
- If writing digits, group them in threes from the right, inserting a comma to separate each group.
  For example:
  
  Four digit numbers: 2,345
  Five or more digits: 20,999 345,345 5,456,678
- The numbers 3, 5 and 8 can be misread and, with some fonts, 0 and 6 can be confused. Choose a font that has clear numbers, such as, Arial or Verdana.
- When using tables, make sure the numbers and borders are not too close together.
- Use decimal points only where necessary, as they can be difficult to see.

Writing percentages

- Write percentages with digits and use the percentage symbol (%).
  For example, 60%.
- Replace ‘rounded’ percentages with a fraction.
  For example, almost two-thirds (64%) of tourists visited London in 2014.
- Treat the percentage as a singular or plural according to the subject in the sentence.
### Writing dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poor example</th>
<th>Better example</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12/7/14</td>
<td>12 July 2014</td>
<td>Write dates in dd mm yyyy (date month year).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990’s</td>
<td>1990s</td>
<td>Write decades in digits with just an ‘s’ at the end (no apostrophe).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Writing numbers, amounts and percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poor example</th>
<th>Better example</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Three</td>
<td>Write numbers one to nine in words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twenty</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Use digits for number 10 and upwards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixty per cent</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>Write percentages with digits and use the percentage symbol (%).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Use decimal points only where necessary.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Writing phone numbers

- Write the area code in brackets before the local number.
  For example, (01452) 123 456.

- If the local number contains more than five digits, divide the digits into groups of two or three and leave a space between them.
  For example, 295 887.

- Divide the digits in Freefone or Premium rate numbers according to how easy it is to remember them.
  For example, 0800 11 12 13.

- Use +44 if writing an international access code for a United Kingdom telephone number.
  For example, write +44 207 578 1400 instead of 00 44 207 578 1400.

Writing addresses

- If space allows, write an address the way it would appear on an envelope.

- If the address appears in this way as part of a sentence, include a colon before the address and put a full stop after the last line.
  For example:

  For more information, write to:
  
  VisitEngland,
  20 Great Smith Street,
  London,
  SW1P 3BT.

- If space is tight, put the address on one line, with a comma after each part of the address and a full stop at the end of it.
  For example:

  For more information, write to: VisitEngland, 20 Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BT.
### Writing phone numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poor example</th>
<th>Better example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>020 7578 1400</td>
<td>(020) 7578 1400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>295887</td>
<td>295 887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0044</td>
<td>+44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Writing addresses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poor example</th>
<th>Better example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For more information, write to: VisitEngland, 20 Great Smith Street, SW1.</td>
<td>For more information, write to: VisitEngland, 20 Great Smith Street, London, SW1 3BT.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Written Text Checklist

**Written Text**
- Be personal (use ‘I’, ‘you’ and ‘we’) and use active verbs.
- Use plain English.
- Keep sentences short; 15 to 20 words in each sentence.
- Avoid technical words, unfamiliar abbreviations or acronyms; also avoid French and Latin expressions.
- Be consistent with terms throughout your document.
- Proofread your document to ensure correct spelling and punctuation.

**Dates, numbers and percentages**
- Write dates in dd mm yyyy (date month year).
- Write the numbers one to nine in words and use digits for the number 10 and upwards.
- Write percentages with digits and the percentage sign (for example, 60%).
- Write addresses the way they would appear on an envelope.
- If a local phone number contains more than five digits, divide the digits into groups of two or three and leave a space between them.
When designing and developing written communication, remember the importance of selecting an easy to read font size, good spacing and a clear font. This will make your written communication easier to read by all your customers. This helps cater for customers, whether they’ve forgotten to bring their glasses to your restaurant or if they just want to find the information they’re looking for quickly and easily.

Key guidance in the design of documents includes:

**Use at least 12 point**
Use a minimum of 12 point font size for comfortable reading. A person's speed of reading increases as the size of text is increased.

**Tip**
Different fonts look bigger than others – the size of the ‘x’ is usually the best guide. If the size of the ‘x’ is small in the font you have chosen (such as Times New Roman), it is better to use a 14 point font.

For example:
- This is 12 point text in Arial.
- This is 12 point text in Verdana.
- This is 12 point text in Franklin Gothic.
- This is 14 point text in Times New Roman.
**Use a clear, easy to read font**

Use a clear and easy to read font that people are familiar with and recognise easily. It is best to use clear, easy to read sans serif fonts like Arial or Helvetica*. Font style and font size will make written communication easier to read for your customers.

* Without small lines or little feet at the end of characters.

**Tip**

Where possible, make your products and services usable by a wider market, by offering written communication in alternative formats, such as large print (16 point font or more), Braille or ‘easy to read’.

‘Easy to read’ is designed to be easier to both read and understand. It is of specific benefit for people with intellectual difficulties but may also benefit younger readers and people with very low literacy levels. Typically, ‘easy to read’ content is supported by images and graphics that help explain the text.

**Learn more**

Eureka! The National Children’s Museum provides a ‘Eureka Story’ guide for children with communication or sensory difficulties to familiarise themselves with what a visit may entail, available from their website: [www.eureka.org.uk/visit-us/disabledvisitors].
Comparisons between easy and more difficult to read fonts are illustrated below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Easy to read fonts</th>
<th>Difficult to read fonts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arial</td>
<td>Brush Script</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gills Sans MT</td>
<td>Impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ubuntu</td>
<td>Magneto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myriad Pro</td>
<td>Mistral</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Font style affects how easy it is to read
This example shows how much easier it is to read clear and simple font in bigger size compared to highly stylised or ornate fonts.
Make important points stand out

Customers often scan through documents, brochures and letters, so it is useful to emphasise important information, headings or paragraphs of text.

The general guidance in emphasising important information is to:

• Avoid using BLOCK CAPITALS.
• Avoid using *italics*.
• Avoid using underlining.

People recognise the shape of familiar words, rather than reading each individual letter. Setting a word in CAPITAL LETTERS, *italics* or underlining it distorts the shape of the word which makes it more difficult to read, particularly for people with visual impairment.

People recognise and read words by shape.

Use bold or bigger sized font to emphasise text

To show the importance of a word or parts of your text, use a **bolder type weight** or bigger sized text.

However, bold text should be used for emphasis rather than being used consistently in the main body of the text.

Text should be set horizontally

Text at an angle or following a curved line can be more difficult to read. People should not have to rotate your document to read it.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PEOPLE RECOGNISE THE SHAPE OF FAMILIAR WORDS, RATHER THAN READING EACH INDIVIDUAL LETTER.</th>
<th>Avoid using BLOCK CAPITALS to emphasise important information.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People recognise the shape of familiar words, rather than reading each individual letter.</td>
<td>Avoid using <em>italics</em> to emphasise important information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People recognise the shape of familiar words, rather than reading each individual letter.</td>
<td>Avoid using <em>underlining</em> to emphasise important information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People recognise the <strong>shape of familiar words</strong>, rather than reading each individual letter.</td>
<td><strong>Use bold</strong> to emphasise important information.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Make it easy to read

Text should be set horizontally
Text at an angle or following a curved line can be more difficult to read.
Avoid splitting a word between two lines
Avoid splitting a word between the end of one line and the beginning of another as it disrupts the flow of the text.

Tip
When using Microsoft Word, and similar programmes, this can be controlled by turning off the hyphenate function.

Use clear formatting
For reports or documents that provide a lot of information, provide a structure for your document using:

- A table of contents: in a long document this helps people find the information they’re particularly interested in.
- Headings and sub-headings: this helps people to easily find information on a page.
- Bullet point lists: these are used to break complex text into lists.
- Introductory paragraphs: the introduction can give a summary of the section, if a section of a document is particularly long.

Use a consistent and logical layout
Use a consistent layout for each section to make information easier to find for the user. Use recurring features; such as positioning headings, logos and page numbers in the same place in each section. This acts as a navigational aid for users.

Use left aligned text
Avoid justified text as it can lead to large spaces of text between words. This can make sentences more difficult to read, particularly if your customer uses text-to-speech software.

Limit each paragraph to one idea
It is important that you don’t overload customers with information. Therefore, it is recommended that each paragraph is limited to one idea.

The following considerations are recommended for paragraph formatting:
- Leave a white space between paragraphs.
- Avoid indents at the start of paragraphs.
- Avoid continuing a paragraph over the page.
Clear and uncluttered formatting

Information should be easy for your customers to find. Use a consistent layout and clear formatting using headings.

Leave white space between paragraphs

Limit each paragraph to one idea, to make the content easier to read. Avoid indents at the start of paragraphs.
Use images and graphs that are relevant to the text

An image should either support the main body of text or be accompanied by a text caption explaining its significance. Images are particularly useful for customers who have literacy, numeracy or learning difficulties or where English is not their first language.

Some key guidance when using images includes:

- Place the images or graphs near relevant text.
- Make sure the graphs or images clarify or add something to your content.
- Avoid using background images behind text. This makes text harder to read. However, where the image is even in tone, for example a blue sky, text can then be placed on the image. The key deciding factor is whether it is easy to read. Ensure good contrast between the image and the text in this scenario.
- Use images and graphs with clear edges and good colour contrast.
- Do not overlay one image over another.
- Avoid images or graphs with too much detail.
- Remember your customers. Some people may not be familiar with bar or pie charts and how they work.
- Emphasise the important facts and figures in graphs.
- Place explanatory text close by but separate to the image.

Use spacing to make your text easier to read

Good use of white space instead of a cluttered page makes your text much easier to read.

Ensure your paragraphs have enough space between them. This measurement is controlled by the “Spacing - After” option in the “Paragraph” feature in Microsoft Word - 12 point spacing between paragraphs is generally a good choice.

Ensure that lines of text within a paragraph also have sufficient spacing. This measurement is controlled by the “Line spacing” option in the “Paragraph” feature in Microsoft Word. Single line spacing between one line and the next should be the minimum in the body of your text. However, avoid line spacing of one and a half lines or more, as it is harder to read successive lines as a coherent text when they are too far apart.
Leading: Graphic designers and printers typically refer to the space between one line and the next as leading. Generally, the space between one line and the next should be at least 1.5 to 2 times the space between words on a line.

This is not the same as increasing the leading to 1.5 times the point size. This translates into something like 14 point set on 17 point leading, which is equivalent to the space of 2mm between each word and a spacing of 3.75mm between each line. Another example is 12 point set on 15 point leading.

Create a clear space separating columns

If you are using columns, make sure the space between the columns (the gutter) clearly separates them. Where the gutter is too narrow between columns, a person with visual impairment may read straight across from one column to the adjacent one.

Use clear space to separate columns

If you are using columns, make sure the margin between the columns (the gutter) clearly separates them.
Images should not break text flow

For text wrapped around an image, you should place the image on the right side of the page rather than the left. By placing the image at the right side of the page it does not disrupt the flow of the text when the customer is reading.

Do not convey information just through images

All images should either support the main body of text, or should be accompanied by a text caption explaining its significance.

Ensure good contrast between text and background colour

For all documents, from letters and menus to brochures and reports, it is important that you consider the colours used; specifically the colour of the text and the background. The selected colours will impact how easy it is to read the information being communicated.

Key guidance on colour contrast is as follows:

- Make sure there is strong contrast between the text and the background colour.
- If using white text, make sure the background colour is dark enough to provide sufficient contrast. Contrast is best when using very dark colours together with very pale colours.
- White or cream paper makes text easier to read.
- Use a light coloured paper or a solid background colour to make a document more colourful.
- Avoid combining yellow & blue, and green & red as these are difficult for people with colour blindness to distinguish.
- White text on a black background typically makes text look smaller, so you may need to increase the size and weight of the text.
- Avoid placing text in front of an image or patterned background, as this makes it more difficult to read.
Images should not break text flow
For text wrapped around an image, place the image on the right side of the page so that it does not disrupt the flow of the text when the customer is reading.

Ensure good contrast between text and background colours.
Avoid using low contrast or text on a patterned background, as this makes it harder for the customer to read.
Paper and Binding

Use good quality, uncoated paper
There are many types of paper used for printing and each one reacts differently to ink. One consideration when choosing paper is how much light the paper reflects (glare).

The best quality paper is uncoated or matt, as it is the best way to avoid glare. Additionally, the surface takes ink well which improves legibility.

Avoid shadowing by using heavier paper
Make sure your paper is heavy enough to avoid ‘shadowing’. Shadowing is where text and images printed on one side of a page can be seen through the paper.

It is recommended that paper should weigh over 90 grams (slightly heavier than standard photocopy paper). You should ask your printer or supplier for advice when choosing paper, as some paper is more transparent than others.

Bind documents so they can be opened out flat
Use binding that allows the document to open out flat for ease of reading. This will make the document easier to hold while reading or to set flat on a surface. This is particularly useful for customers with dexterity difficulties or customers using text-to-speech readers.
# Document Design Checklist

## Font and paragraphs

- Use at least 12 point font size and a clear, easy to read font.
- Use bold or bigger size font to make important points stand out.
- Avoid using features such as underlining, *italics* and **BLOCK CAPITALS** to emphasise information.
- Use left aligned text only, do not justify text.
- Avoid splitting a word between two lines.
- Limit each paragraph to one idea.
Document Design Checklist

Formatting and layout

☐ Use clear formatting to make information easy to find. For example, use headings, sub-headings and a table of contents.

☐ Use a consistent layout for recurring features (such as page numbers and headings).

☐ Make good use of white space to make your message stand out.

☐ Use clear spacing:
  • Text should be a minimum of single spaced.
  • White space should separate paragraphs.
  • There should be a wide, clear space separating text columns.
## Document Design Checklist

### Colours, images, graphs and visuals

- Use images, visuals and graphs that are relevant to the text.
- Images should not break text flow.
- Do not convey information just through images.
- Ensure good contrast between text and background colour.

### Paper and binding

- Use good quality, uncoated or matt paper.
- Avoid shadowing by using heavier paper (over 90gram).
- Bind documents so they can be opened out flat.
1.4 Form Design

In the tourism sector, forms are used as part of the customer engagement process. This ranges from enquiry forms to booking forms. Increasingly, the option for customers to access and complete forms is provided online. However, the Universal Design guidance for both print and online forms is similar.

Forms should be easy to read and complete without the assistance of your employees. To do this it is important to consider that all your customers have different needs and skills, from literacy levels to visual difficulties. Therefore, by better designing forms to meet the needs of customers with specific difficulties, you will be better meeting the needs of all your customers.

Guidelines for the design of forms is as follows:

• Give the form a clear title.

• Identify who the form is for and its purpose at the start.

• Give instructions in bullet points on the first page.
  
  • If users need reference numbers or documentation to complete the form, ensure that they know this before starting. Awareness can be raised with an obvious “Before you begin, you will need...” message at the top of the form.

• Use a larger font for section headings.

• Place ‘official use only’ sections near the end of the form.

• Divide the form into clear and logical sections with informative headings and clear numbering.

• Avoid unnecessary or repeated questions.

• Position questions directly across from the space for giving answers.

• Make sure users have enough space for providing answers.

• Where possible, use boxes rather than lines for answers.

• Make sure ‘tick boxes’ are clearly linked to the answer.

• Ensure that tick-box borders and answer lines are solid and at least one point wide.

• Make it clear which fields are mandatory and must be completed.
A well-structured layout makes a form easier to read and complete. It is easier for customers to complete forms without assistance by providing a logical, well-structured format, which clearly identifies where information should be filled in and which fields are mandatory.
Scannable forms, which allow one letter per square, are increasingly being used. Where these forms are used, provide boxes that are large enough and leave adequate space between the squares.

For example:

Name: □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Learn more

For guidance on designing online forms see page 24 in Section 3: Electronic and Web Based Communication Systems.
## Form Design Checklist

- The form should have a clear title. It should also identify who it is for and what its purpose is at the start of the form.
- Provide clear instructions at the start.
- Place ‘official use only’ sections near the end of the form.
- Group similar questions under useful headings.
- Use informative headings and clear numbering.
- Avoid unnecessary or repeated questions.
- Make sure people have enough space for providing answers.
- Where possible, use boxes rather than lines for answers.
- Use as many ‘tick box’ questions as possible.
- Make sure ‘tick boxes’ are clearly linked to the answer and that the borders and answer lines are solid and at least one point wide.
- Clearly identify mandatory fields that must be answered.
1.5 Signage Design

All tourism businesses will typically have signage inside or outside their establishments. This may range from signs for the toilets to health and safety signs. The following guidance is based on the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design's (CEUD) ‘Building for everyone: A Universal Design approach’ publication.

The guidance below is provided for sign design in indoor and outdoor areas.

Content

- Make sure the text on your sign is easy to read. Avoid fonts that are highly decorative, very bold, condensed or in italics, as these can be difficult to understand and make the sign more difficult to read. Examples of easy to read sans serif fonts for signage include, Helvetica, Arial and Futura.
- Wording on signs should be as simple as possible.
- The use of unfamiliar abbreviations should be avoided.
- Information on signs should be listed alphabetically or grouped logically. For example, by floor level.
- Use Arabic numbers (1, 2, 3), not Roman numerals (i, ii, iii).
- A mixture of upper and lower case letters should be used. Avoid using BLOCK CAPITALS.
- Align wording to the left.
- Wording, font and images should be consistent throughout the building.
- The size of letters on signs should be related to the type of sign and viewing distance.
Avoid using BLOCK CAPITALS
A mixture of upper and lower case letters should be used.

The table below provides recommended letter height for a range of viewing distances.

### Recommended letter heights in signs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Viewing distances (mm)</th>
<th>Recommended letter height (mm)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>000</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4600</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2500</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2300</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1500</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>750</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Symbols and arrows

- Use symbols in place of text where the symbol is universally recognised. For example, public information symbols.
- Use symbols to accompany text where possible. This is particularly relevant for dual-language signs, as they help your customer to quickly recognise the information being provided.
- Use arrows to indicate directions.

Design

- There should be good contrast between the sign board and any mounting or background surface. This helps draw attention to the sign itself.
- There should be good contrast between the text / symbols and background sign colour. This helps draw attention to the content of the sign.
- Where colour coding is used, use colours that are easy to differentiate.
- Signs should have a matt or satin finish. Avoid shiny and reflective surfaces to prevent glare.
- Signs should be evenly illuminated, with a lighting level of 200 lux.

Tactile signs

- Embossed signs enable your customers to read by touch.
- Embossed letters should be raised above the surface of the sign by 1 - 1.5mm, and have a stroke width of 1.5 – 2mm.
- Embossed letters should be between 16mm and 50mm in height.
- Where Braille is provided, it should be positioned below the related text.
- Engraved and indented letters and symbols should be avoided as they are difficult to read by touch.
Signage with good contrast between the text and background colour makes it easier to read.

Use symbols in place of text where the symbol is universally recognised.
Positioning

- Signs should be positioned at important points along a route, such as wherever routes intersect or diverge.
- Tactile and Braille signage should be positioned within easy reach.
- Position signs where people reading them will not cause an obstruction.
- Make sure that directional signs help people to retrace their steps and identify alternative locations within a building, without having to return to the main entrance.

The Sign Design Society and The Royal National Institute of Bind People’s (RNIB) Sign Design Guide: [http://www.signdesignsociety.co.uk/].


For further information on colour contrast, see page 22.
## Signage Design Checklist

- Use an easy to read font.
- Wording on signs should be as simple as possible.
- The use of unfamiliar abbreviations should be avoided.
- Use Arabic numbers (1,2,3) not Roman numerals (i, ii, iii).
- Capitalise the first letter of names and messages with all other letters lower case.
- List names and messages alphabetically or group them logically, for example, by floor level.
- Align wording to the left.
- Wording and font should be used consistently in signs throughout a building.
- Select a letter size to suit viewing distance.
Use symbols in place of text or to supplement text where possible.

Use arrows to indicate direction.

There should be good contrast between the sign board and any mounting or background surface. There should also be good contrast between the text and background colour of the sign itself so that it is easy to read.

Use colours that are easy to differentiate where colour coding is used.

The surface of the sign should not be reflective.

Embossed lettering should be raised 1 – 1.5mm above the surface of the sign. Avoid engraved lettering.

Embossed letters should be between 16mm and 50mm in height.

Position tactile and Braille signs within reach.

Position signs where people reading them will not cause an obstruction.
Test your Knowledge

1. What is the minimum size font you should use when providing information to your customers?
   a. 10 point.
   b. 12 point.
   c. 14 point.

2. How many words should you use in an average sentence?
   a. 12-14 words.
   b. 15-20 words.
   c. 21-30 words.

3. If you need to use technical words what should you do?
   a. Assume your customers understand the term.
   b. Explain what the technical word means in plain English.

4. What is the best way to align your text to make it easy to read?
   a. Justified text.
   b. Right aligned text.
   c. Left aligned text.

5. When using white text on a black background, to make the information easier to read, you should...
   a. Increase the size of your text.
   b. Increase the weight of your text.
   c. Make your text smaller.

6. ‘Official use only’ sections should be positioned at the ....................... of the form.
   a. Top.
   b. End.
   c. Centre.

1.7 Tourism Communication Design

All communication should be easy to access, use and understand to the greatest extent possible by all customers.

Development of face-to-face, telephone and video communication should be guided by the following four steps that are common to how we all process information:

- Step A: Perceive
- Step B: Discover
- Step C: Understand
- Step D: Use

These four steps are based on the process that customers typically go through to successfully use a product or service. Each of these steps are aligned with four of the seven Universal Design Principles.

Based on these four steps, questions are posed around how key Universal Design Principles are included in your products and services. Answering these questions will help you to evaluate how well you are integrating Universal Design into your products and services.

Irish Standard 373:2013 ‘Universal design for customer engagement in tourism services’ provides further information on the four steps listed above in Annex E.

Centre for excellence in Universal Design (CEUD) provides information on the seven principles and 29 guidelines of Universal Design, available on their website: [http://www.universaldesign.ie/exploreampdisco/the7principles].
Tourism Communication Design Question Set

The following questions are designed to support you in the development of new written communication for your customers:

1. Do you present important information in different ways? (For example, using audio, touch or images)
2. Is important information easy to find?
3. Is important information easy to read?
4. Is important information easy to understand?
5. Is the information written in plain English?
6. Is the information clear and concise?
7. Is the information accessible to customers using assistive technologies (such as screen readers)?
8. Is information presented in order of importance?
9. Is information presented in a logical order? For example, is similar information grouped together?
10. Have you written for your target audience?
11. Is information structured in a way so that it is easy to find? (Using table of contents, headings, sub-headings and so on).
12. Is the layout consistent? Are recurring features presented in the same location? (For example, page numbers and logos).
13. Is the important information presented in a way which is clear, concise and easy to understand the first time it is read?
14. Where applicable, is the information available in other languages?
15. Have you avoided using terms, abbreviations or acronyms that the reader may not be familiar with?
16. Where you must use technical words, have you explained, in plain English, what it means?
17. Are the symbols and words used familiar to the reader?
The Universal Design Toolkit for Customer Engagement was developed by the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design at the National Disability Authority, in partnership with Fáilte Ireland. It was developed in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders involved in the tourism industry.

The Toolkit is based on the specifications contained in the Irish Standard (I.S.) 373:2013 ‘Universal Design for customer engagement in tourism services’, published by the National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI).

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