

Disclosure, employment rights and support



40-45 minute presentation
followed by time for questions

Delivered by Catherine Leggett



**Ambitious
about Autism**

Slide 1

CLO

Dyslexia friendly style guide

This Style Guide provides principles that can help ensure that written material considers the difficulties experienced by some dyslexic people and allows for the use of text to speech to facilitate ease of reading. Adopting these principles for dyslexic readers has the advantage of making all written communication easier on the eye for everyone.

When making changes consider all the ways that you use written communications, such as emails, presentations, web pages and printed materials.

Consider these principles in combination with other accessibility guidance such as the Web Accessibility Content Guidelines (WCAG).

Readable fonts

Use sans serif fonts, such as Arial and Comic Sans, as letters can appear less crowded. Alternatives include Verdana, Tahoma, Century Gothic, Trebuchet, Calibri, Open Sans.

Font size should be 12-14 point or equivalent (e.g. 1-1.2em / 16-19 px). Some dyslexic readers may request a larger font.

Larger inter-letter / character spacing (sometimes called tracking) improves readability, ideally around 35% of the average letter width. If letter spacing is excessive it can reduce readability.

Inter-word spacing should be at least 3.5 times the inter-letter spacing.

Some dyslexic people find that larger line spacing improves readability. It should be proportional to inter-word spacing; 1.5/150% is preferable.

Avoid underlining and italics as this can make the text appear to run together and cause crowding. Use bold for emphasis.

Avoid using all capital letters and uppercase letters for continuous text. Lower case letters are easier to read.

Headings and structure

Use headings and styles to create consistent structure to help people navigate through your content. In Word, you'll find these tools in the 'Home' tab:

For headings, use a font size that is at least 20% larger than the normal text. If further emphasis is required, then use bold.

Use formatting tools for text alignment, justification, indents, lists, line and paragraph spacing to support assistive technology users. In Word, you'll find these tools in the 'Layout' tab:

Add extra space around headings and between paragraphs.

Ensure hyperlinks look different from headings and normal text.

Colour

Use single colour backgrounds. Avoid background patterns or pictures and distracting surrounds.

Use sufficient contrast levels between background and text.

Use dark coloured text on a light (not white) background.

Slide 1 (Continued)

Avoid green and red/pink, as these colours are difficult for those who have colour vision deficiencies (colour blindness). Consider alternatives to white backgrounds for paper, computer and visual aids such as whiteboards. White can appear too dazzling. Use cream or a soft pastel colour. Some dyslexic people will have their own colour preference. When printing, use matt paper rather than gloss. Paper should be thick enough to prevent the other side showing through.

Layout

Left align text, without justification. This makes it easier to find the start and finish of each line and ensures even spacing between words.

Avoid multiple columns (as used in newspapers).

Write short simple sentences: 60 to 70 characters is optimal.

Use white space to remove clutter near text and group related content.

Break up the text with regular section headings in long documents and include a table of contents.

Writing Style

Use active rather than passive voice.

Be concise; avoid using long, dense paragraphs.

Write in simple clear language using every day words.

Use images to support text. Flow charts are ideal for explaining procedures. Pictograms and graphics can help to locate and support information in the text.

Consider using bullet points and numbering rather than continuous prose.

Give instructions clearly.

Avoid double negatives.

Avoid abbreviations where possible; always provide the expanded form when first used.

Provide a glossary of abbreviations and jargon.

The Dyslexia Style Guide 2023 is available as:

[Dyslexia Style Guide 2023 \(PDF\)](#)

Catherine Leggett, 2023-09-07T13:16:11.062

Disclosure (medical and legal term)

- Disclosure is a term generally used to describe when someone tells some information to someone else that they didn't previously know.
- Telling someone about your difference, condition or disability at work, so that you can be better supported



I prefer the term 'sharing information' as 'disclosure' sounds like I've done something wrong." (Autistic young person)

Do you need a formal diagnosis to be entitled to reasonable adjustments?

- **No** – but you do need to meet the definition of when a person is deemed disabled in the Equality Act 2010
- **An employer may request that you take part in a specialist assessment** to identify your areas of strength and challenge due to a disability

You're disabled under the Equality Act 2010 if you have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities.

Am I disabled?

- Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

~~YES / NO~~

“

I am not disabled, society, other people and environments, disable me.” (Autistic young person)

- **Employers will often have a supportive process in place if you indicate that you have a disability** – starting with an assessment to identify helpful adjustments

What the law says – The Equality Act 2010

- **At recruitment/interview stage**, an employer must only ask what ‘reasonable adjustments’ are needed:
 - for any part of the recruitment process and, once those are in place, whether they are suitable
 - to determine whether the applicant could carry out a role with the ‘reasonable adjustments’ in place.
- **Follow-up from being offered a job after a successful interview/application**, an employer should ask the successful applicant what adjustments they will need to do the job and progress at work.
- **If an employee discloses their disability there may be circumstances where the amount of confidentiality possible may be limited.** For example, a disabled employee may need support from colleagues, there may be health and safety reasons, or colleagues may need to be aware.

'Imputed' or 'Constructive' knowledge (EHRC)

- If an employer could be reasonably be expected to know that an employee has a disability, then the employee does not have to state that they are disabled before the employer becomes responsible for making reasonable adjustments for that employee
- An employee may 'broach the subject' with an employee to ascertain whether they have a disability, difference or condition that can be supported with reasonable adjustments



It was obvious to me that my employee was autistic, they were sensitive to noise, needed downtime from the busy social office, and visual, detailed and literal information when tasking. I just put adjustments in place as-if I knew they were autistic.” (Tech employer)

Identifying reasonable adjustments

- **Access to work** – depends on the assessor
- **General Occupational Health Providers** – inconsistent in the quality or level of specialism and person-centred approach
- **Specialist Occupational Health providers**
 - Lexxic - neurodivergence specialists
 - Exceptional Individuals – autism specialist
- **Independent specialist autism workplace assessors** – may or may not be able to consider other ND conditions, health conditions, mental health conditions etc.



My autistic colleague and I both had workplace assessments carried out by the organisations' occupational health provider. Both of our assessments recommended the exact same adjustments, but we are completely different autistic people and the adjustments we need are also completely different!." (Autistic charity worker)

Reasonable adjustments – what is ‘reasonable’? (EHRC Employer code 6.28)

“reasonable” depends on the **EMPLOYER’S** decisions about...

- are the adjustments practical (possible) for the employer to make?
- does the employer have the resources (people) or resources (finances) for them?
- will they be effective in overcoming or reducing the ‘disadvantage’ in the workplace?
- will they have an adverse impact on the health and safety of others or prevent the organisation from meeting business needs or targets?

alternatively...YOU are entitled to request adjustments that you feel will help you or would like to trial for effectiveness

- **Approach your line manager, or HR representative** if your line manager is not approachable
- **Submit your request in writing if a conversation is difficult for you**, and offer a follow up conversation to provide any more information that HR/Your line manager may need, for example, they will want to know in detail what challenge or barrier the adjustment overcomes
- **Check to see if your organisation has a reasonable adjustments request form** or template, or a reasonable adjustments process or policy in place, and follow/use that

When to disclose

At the recruitment/interview stage it can help to disclose even if you don't know if you need any adjustments, or think you don't need any adjustments.

A good recruiter or employer will be able to suggest helpful adjustments or alternative ways of demonstrating your aptitude for the role.

What to disclose

It may not be useful to share information about, for example, medications you may be taking to help manage any anxiety symptoms, but it may be helpful to your colleagues or interviewers to know that you need 5-minute breaks at regular intervals during meetings.

Who to disclose to (confidentiality)

It's important to consider telling those that you communicate regularly with, particularly those that you share an office with and work together on projects with, but it may not be important to tell your customers/clients if you have no face-to-face or telephone contact with them.

When you are disclosing during the recruitment process it will be helpful, if you are successful, for your line manager to know what you have disclosed and have a follow up supportive conversation with you about any other adjustments that can be identified to help you.

Make sure that if you don't want others to know, when you are disclosing to an individual, that you state clearly that you don't want others to be told the information OR you may request to be asked for your consent before information is passed on to others

Self-advocacy & Disclosure profiles

- **Start** developing these skills early
- **Get support** – to ask for adjustments etc. from a trusted friend or family member, or a professional
- **Contact** the employer, apprenticeship provider, university or college etc. early to find out what specific support is available to you
- **Develop** a written profile of ways that you can be well supported and also of your unique skills and talents, that can be shared when needed or used to support any verbal conversations
- **Ask** the organisation how they can support you, they should be able to suggest options for you to try/trial

Preferred terminology: ASC or on the spectrum

Name: A Student

Dissemination/sharing permission:

ask me before sharing

Date: 21.03.2023

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Skills and interests: spreadsheets, remembering written information, technology/ICT, problem solving when given the right amount of context, detail and information to get started, empathy and kindness for others, graphic design, gaming

It helps me when people

- ✓ Use short, clear sentences
- ✓ Are prepared to repeat / clarify / reword
- ✓ Are direct with any message / feedback
- ✓ Use positive / calm / gentle tone of voice
- ✓ Give me plenty of time to respond (5 seconds)
- ✓ Follow up important points via email
- ✓ Actively bring me into group conversations
- ✓ Arrange meetings in a quiet area
- ✓ Respond calmly if I appear to be getting anxious / agitated, and prompt me to take a break

I have difficulty when people

- × Shout or raise their voice
- × Speak too quickly
- × Dismiss something I have asked them to explain
- × Assume I can read between the lines
- × Interrupt
- × Rely on facial expressions or body language – either theirs or mine
- × Continue with a joke if I seem to have missed the point

Support at work: Access to work

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Access to Work can help you get or stay in work if you have a physical or mental health condition or disability.

The support you get will depend on your needs. Through Access to Work, you can apply for:

- **a grant to help pay for practical support with your work**

- BSL interpreters, lip speakers or note takers
- adaptations to your vehicle so you can get to work
- taxi fares to work or a support worker if you cannot use public transport
- a support worker or job coach to help you in your workplace

- **support with managing your mental health at work**

- **money to pay for communication support at job interviews**

- **Access to work will NOT pay for REASONABLE Adjustments – Your employer must pay**

Support at work: Staff Networks

- peer support pre and post diagnosis, and decision making around whether to pursue a formal diagnosis
- Support with identifying and requesting reasonable adjustments
- career mentoring
- exploring identity and community in a safe space
- improved self-advocacy skills
- acting as steering group for your employer for the development and review of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) policies and processes - specifically relating to autism and ND employees etc.
- acting as an advisory board for initiatives on how to accommodate and support ND clients/customers
- acting as a unified voice to highlight issues to governors and senior leaders
- To raise the profile of neurodivergent staff that are comfortable being 'visible' within the organisation, with the aim of increasing acceptance and inclusion

Support at work: Workplace adjustment passport



Workplace Adjustments Passport

Dissemination permission: (insert or delete as appropriate)

Brief to team colleagues as needed
 Meet with employee and discuss before disseminating or briefing to any new people
 Disseminate only to HR and line manager

Condition(s)/Disability(ies)/Difference(s) (insert or delete as appropriate):

Asperger Syndrome/Autistic Spectrum Condition/Autism

Preferred language: (insert or delete as appropriate)

autistic person/person with autism
 person with autistic spectrum condition

Name:

Manager:

HR:

It helps me when people	I have difficulty when people
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Redirect me when I'm off topic ✓ Follow up important points via email ✓ Communicate in a clear, literal and direct way to avoid <u>misunderstandings</u> ✓ Give clear timelines for things to happen, and updates as soon as possible if things are going off track ✓ Give me extra personal space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> × Display 'high-arousal' communication, speaking very quickly and with quickly changing tone, volume and pitch of voice, fidgeting, lots of subtle micro-expressions × Have noisy backgrounds whilst meeting remotely × Mis-read me based on non-autistic communication and interaction

Strengths:

- Technology/Spreadsheets/Organisation/follow-up/admin
- Problem-solving/consultancy/reasonable adjustments for service users
- Detailed work
- Remembering written information
- Research (with strict time limits and purpose)



Challenges:

- Anxiety – specifically time anxiety, tendency to overthink past social interactions
- Travelling on public transport or with other people
- Personal boundary/touch – I find it especially uncomfortable if people touch me to comfort me when I am anxious or upset
- Noise sensitivity, especially 'human' noise
- Photo-sensitivity – prolonged strip/fluorescent lighting is painful
- Very sensitive to temperatures and am usually too hot

WORKPLACE ADJUSTMENTS	
Collaboration and tasking	Advance, written notice of meetings wherever possible, with a written agenda/structure supplied to allow for preparation – specifically catch-up meetings, and feedback meetings or work planning and tasking
Sensory (tactile)	Extended personal space and no touching when in-person
Team meetings	For in-person meetings, a seat near the door so I can step out or stand up and move when feeling overwhelmed, seating set back from crowded meeting tables
Travelling	Additional time to plan and prepare, able to choose own accommodation for overnight stays, travelling alone, and by car wherever possible
Working arrangements	Designated home worker – travelling to quarterly team away days and in-person meetings if energy levels allow

It may be useful to know:

- I need a greater level of detail and information to cope with the unfamiliar
- I'm very open and don't always filter topics that may not be expected
- I prefer written/visual communication wherever possible
- I often need to document to process important verbal information at a later [date](#)
- I'm chatty and can digress easily
- I try to join in with banter but don't always get it right

Thank you

Question time

Please complete the poll that launches when the webinar finishes

We are Ambitious about Autism

Ambitious about Autism is the national charity standing with autistic children and young people.

We believe every autistic child and young person has the right to be themselves and realise their ambitions.

We started as one school and have become a movement for change. We champion rights, campaign for change and create opportunities.

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