



## Accessible Communications Guide

Redbridge Foodbank aims to make its communications as accessible as possible for our diverse audiences. Our communications should be clear and precise and designed to be accessible for people using assistive technologies.

We aim to improve the accessibility of our communications as we learn more about the requirements of our staff, volunteers, food bank users and others we work with.

### Guiding Principles

#### Language

- Use **clear, precise** language.
- **Avoid acronyms.** The same letters can be used in different contexts to abbreviate different names. Use the full name to avoid confusion.
- **Avoid formal language,** long words and jargon.
- **Don't use phrases that are ambiguous** and confuse the reader such as 'it's raining cats and dogs' when you mean 'it's raining heavily'.
- **Avoid long sentences;** if your sentence is longer than 25 words, can you split it to make it clearer?
- **Avoid language that can convey stigma.** Be careful how you describe people and events - for example 'dummy version' or 'master copy'. Over time, our understanding of inclusive language will develop and change. Necessarily, we will need to reflect this in the language we use in communications.
- **Utilise translation apps or translation services** to provide accessible communications for people who do not speak English as their first language.
- **Use the accessibility checker** before you send an Outlook email or share a Word document, Excel spreadsheet, PowerPoint presentation or OneNote notebook. This facility will show you how to make your document more accessible and point out areas needing changing. 'Check Accessibility' can be found under the 'Review' tab.

#### Disability inclusive communications

- **Include captions on videos.** Auto captions are available on most video platforms and built into meeting systems like Zoom and Teams. They can be prone to error and you will need to edit them for accuracy, spelling and punctuation. Be

watchful in Zoom and Team meetings that the text is accurate, correct if not. This is important for people who are hearing impaired.

- **Avoid special characters and symbols** when possible as these do not always translate for some assistive technology systems. They can also adversely affect accessibility for people with learning disabilities, dyslexia, ADHD, and non-English speakers.
- **Use alternate text (alt text) for images.** This is a written substitute for non-text content like images and is what the screen reader device will detect. Screen readers do not detect the image.
- **Take care using emojis.** Every emoji has a built-in alt text description assigned to it that can be read by many screen readers but may vary by platform, device, and browsers. If in doubt, keep it simple, don't use emojis.
- **When writing a link,** make it descriptive and include relevant terms instead of using 'click here' or 'more'. Generic links do not make sense of context or tell users where a link will take them. They also do not work for people using screen readers, who often scan through a list of links to navigate a page. Include the link within the relevant text and not at the bottom of the page or article.

## Design and presentation of communications

Be aware of colours, contrast, and font size.

- **Colour.** The most common form of colour vision deficiency (colour blindness) makes it difficult to differentiate between red and green. Less common is blue-yellow colour vision deficiency, which is affected by combinations of blue and green, yellow and red, yellow and pink or purple and red. Avoiding these combinations will help those who have this condition.
- **Newspaper style** – aim to have a light background with dark text – just like newspapers
- **Contrast** is a ratio between two colours. Generally higher contrasts provide better accessibility for people with colour blindness, as does solid coloured text, rather than graded.
- **Contrast and flashing images** can trigger epileptic episodes for certain people so should be avoided.
- **Font size.** Use a large enough font size for the body text so people can comfortably read it. Never use a font size of less than 12 points
- **Font type.** Use clean and simple fonts like Arial or Calibri. Fonts should have clean, straight lines that keep the letters distinct and are easier to read, especially for people with dyslexia. 12 point is best and it will help readers if your document can be enlarged.
- **Avoid underlining and italic** – this is difficult for dyslexic readers. Instead use bold to emphasis words and phrases
- **Use of capital letters.** Avoid writing text in capital letters. Long pieces of text in capital letters tend to slow the reading speed for everyone and is especially difficult for people with dyslexia.

- **Use bullet points for lists in preference to numbered lists.** Screen readers can find numbers difficult to read
- **Telephone numbers** can be read as numbers. For example 0752000000 can be read as Ohsevenhundredandfiftytwomillion. Using spaces to separate out sections helps the reader.

**Physical access and ability to use the internet and electronic devices**

Lack of money, access to resources/services and knowledge can limit an individual’s ability to access electronic communications. **Printed versions of important information** should be available in accessible locations.

Signed by:

Diane Gordon

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Signed by: \_\_\_\_\_

Position:

Chair

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

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