



**Northern Ireland  
Fire & Rescue Service**

# **Reasonable Adjustments Policy**

**in support of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995**

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## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service (NIFRS) seeks to consider making reasonable adjustments for employees with a disability, impairment or health condition which has impact on their ability to carry out their role. NIFRS is obligated to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (the DDA).
- 1.2 The DDA requires consideration of 'reasonable adjustments' where a provision, criterion, function, practice, or a physical feature of the workplace puts a person with a disability at a substantial disadvantage, when compared with people who are not disabled.
- 1.3 NIFRS has stated its commitment to disability equality by conducting a Corporate Review on Reasonable Adjustments and via the:-
  - NIFRS Code of Procedures in Recruitment and Selection
  - NIFRS Equality and Diversity Strategy
  - NIFRS Disability Action Plan
- 1.4 The purpose of this policy is to outline the process by which reasonable adjustments will be considered in NIFRS.

## 2 Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (the DDA)

- 2.1 It is unlawful to discriminate against employees or job applicants because of a physical or mental disability or by failing to consider making **reasonable** adjustments to accommodate an employee's disability. Further information on the DDA can be found in **Appendix 1**.
- 2.2 In NIFRS a reasonable adjustment is an alteration that can be implemented to enable an employee with a disability, impairment or health condition to continue in employment without being at a disadvantage compared to others.

## 3 Scope

- 3.1 This policy covers all employees who are or become disabled, or have an impairment or a health condition which impacts on their ability to carry out their role during the course of their employment. This includes circumstances where an employee may be temporarily impaired.
- 3.2 Reasonable adjustments for employees with dyslexia or other conditions recognised as Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLDs).

- 3.3 Reasonable adjustments for job applicants for vacancies in NIFRS are also covered by this policy.

## 4 Workplace reasonable adjustments

### Process for reasonable adjustments for employees to carry out their day-to-day work

- 4.1 There are a number of ways in which NIFRS may become aware that an employee may require consideration of reasonable adjustments including:
- An employee may declare their disability and the impact on their role;
  - it may become known as a result of the attendance management process and/or a medical assessment;
  - It may arise through referral to the NIFRS Medical Case Conference.
- 4.2 NIFRS Medical Case Conferences are used to consider cases in which medical opinion is required. These normally involve the Occupational Health Practitioner (currently an external professional), the HR Manager Employee Relations & Business Partnering; the Group Commander Occupational Health, Establishment & Welfare and a Designated Manager, normally the Group Commander (Personnel & Training).
- 4.3 At Medical Case Conference the Occupational Health Practitioner may make a recommendation that an employee is referred to the NIFRS Reasonable Adjustment Panel. The Medical Case Conference may also determine the case should be considered by NIFRS Reasonable Adjustment Panel when there is a recommendation for Modified Duties rather than a Phased Return to Full Duties.
- 4.4 Where a case has been referred to the Reasonable Adjustment Panel consideration will be given, in the first instance, to whether reasonable adjustments are appropriate and can be implemented. Redeployment may also be considered, if feasible. In the event of neither of these being reasonable or appropriate, then termination of employment will be discussed.
- 4.5 The Reasonable Adjustment Panel comprises the HR Manager Employee Relations & Business Partnering; the HR Manager Equality, Inclusion & Legal; the Group Commander Occupational Health, Establishment & Welfare and a Designated Manager, normally the Group Commander (Personnel & Training).

- 4.6 The Reasonable Adjustment Panel will obtain a further report as necessary from the Occupational Health Practitioner (known as the 'Adjustment Report'), requesting appropriate adjustments for the disability, impairment or health condition. This assists NIFRS in considering adjustments for the employee and determining their reasonableness.
- 4.7 Upon receipt of the adjustment report from the Occupational Health Practitioner, a relevant manager, normally the Group Commander (Personnel & Training), will prepare a Risk Assessment/Report on this basis and in the context of the employee's role map/job-description and will submit this to the Reasonable Adjustment Panel.
- 4.8 The Reasonable Adjustment Panel will review and agree the Risk Assessment/Report. The employee will be provided with a copy of this. Where a meeting is required, the Reasonable Adjustment Panel will discuss the Risk Assessment/Report with the employee and the relevant manager. The employee can also bring a member of the Representative Body or a work colleague with them to the meeting.
- 4.9 The purpose of the employee's meeting with the Reasonable Adjustment Panel is to provide the employee an opportunity to comment on the agreed Risk Assessment/Report, outlining the adjustments that NIFRS consider reasonable, or otherwise.
- 4.10 When appropriate the Reasonable Adjustment Panel may contact outside agencies to explore reasonable adjustments for example Access to Work Advisors from the Training and Employment Agency who will conduct a Workplace Assessment, or for further details regarding the nature of the employee's disability. Further information can be found in **Appendix 2**.
- 4.11 For employees with Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLDs) such as dyslexia, the Reasonable Adjustment Panel will require documentation from the employee, usually an Educational Psychologist Report or current professional diagnostic assessment which outlines the nature of their SpLD, to enable the Panel to explore the adjustments required. NIFRS may procure the services of Chartered Psychologists who are able to diagnose SpLDs through professional assessment and recommend appropriate work based adjustments.
- 4.12 Where a suitable reasonable adjustment involves redeployment, the employee will normally remain in the redeployed role for a minimum period of 12 months and, for operational employees, temporary promotion will not be available during this period.

- 4.13 Where a suitable reasonable adjustment involves redeployment to an alternative role at a lower grade, NIFRS will apply pay protection. Pay protection will be for a period of 3 years. In the event of a change of base location, excess mileage will not apply. If in exceptional circumstances, an employee requests further consideration of the pay protection arrangements, this should be in writing to NIFRS Board, via the Director of Human Resources.
- 4.14 Once reasonable adjustments have been identified in conjunction with the employee, the Reasonable Adjustment Panel will set a timescale to review the effectiveness of the reasonable adjustment. A reasonable adjustment that has worked effectively for a period of time may stop being as effective as an employee's impairment or health condition changes or the nature of the work itself changes.
- 4.15 Where reasonable adjustments and/or redeployment is not an option, or has been unsuccessful, the Reasonable Adjustment Panel may give consideration to termination of employment and in any such case due consideration will be given to access to the relevant Pension Scheme. Appeals relating to ill-health retirement decisions for operational employees will be progressed by the Occupational Health, Welfare and Establishment team and for support employees such appeals will be progressed by HR Resourcing & Employee Services.
- 4.16 Examples of reasonable adjustments can be found within **Appendix 3**.

## **5 Accessible formats**

- 5.1 The DDA also includes requirements on the accessibility of information and the format it is produced. A reasonable adjustment for employees may include modifying instructions or reference manuals, producing these in a different format such as larger text. Instructions for employees with SpLDs may need to be conveyed orally with individual demonstration.
- 5.2 NIFRS Emergency Response has taken steps to produce an accessible format for all new Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and revised SOPs taking account of guidance produced by the British Dyslexia Association.
- 5.3 NIFRS Corporate Identity Guidelines also include a reference to accessible information for people with visual impairments. On most NIFRS documents such as letters, memos, faxes, reports, policy documents, etc, the font size is 12 point with 14 point leading. As a general rule the font size should be 12 point. Where large print material is required a minimum of 14 point is recommended. Further information on accessibility of information can be found on page 18 of the NIFRS Corporate Identity Guidelines.
- 5.4 For further information on accessible information please refer to **Appendix 4**.

## **6 Reasonable adjustments during recruitment and selection exercises**

### **Internally advertised vacancies**

- 6.1 Establishment Instructions (EIs) will contain information on how to request a reasonable adjustment and the point of contact within Human Resources, normally a member of the HR Equality, Inclusion & Legal Team. It is the responsibility of the employee to make a request for reasonable adjustments at the time of each advertisement. Early contact is essential to enable reasonable adjustments to be fully considered.
- 6.2 Requests may be referred to the Reasonable Adjustment Panel to determine reasonable adjustments for assessments and interviews, taking into account the particulars of the employee's disability, impairment or health conditions and the duties required under the job role.
- 6.3 The Reasonable Adjustment Panel, normally the HR Manager, Equality, Inclusion and Legal, will also be consulted by lead officers involved in developing, designing or reviewing assessments. This will support the disability equality proofing of assessments, where possible.

### **Externally advertised vacancies**

- 6.4 Current practice is to produce an Application Pack for all vacancies. Packs will contain an outline of the format of any tests/assessments required as part of the selection process.
- 6.5 Application Packs will contain details of the point of contact within Human Resources, normally a member of the HR Equality, Inclusion & Legal Team, for making a request for consideration of a reasonable adjustment. It is the responsibility of the candidate to make a request for reasonable adjustments. Early contact is essential to enable reasonable adjustments to be fully considered.
- 6.6 In line with NIFRS Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection, Application Packs will contain a text phone number and an email address to enable the candidate to choose an accessible format and to discuss their needs for a reasonable adjustment.
- 6.7 Application packs will also state that alternative formats are available, upon request. Under NIFRS e-Recruitment, disabled candidates will be afforded the opportunity to complete their application in a handwritten/typed format.
- 6.8 Recruitment information sessions during Retained Firefighter and other campaigns will be designed to be accessible to people with disabilities, in particular those with dyslexia.

## **7 Employee responsibilities**

- 7.1 All employees have a responsibility to be aware that people with a disability, impairment or long-term health condition that impacts upon their daily activities, may require reasonable adjustments to be considered. Such adjustments are intended to tackle discrimination and create equality of opportunity for disabled employees, and are carefully designed so that they do not impact negatively on the work of other employees or the organisation.
- 7.2 In some cases a reasonable adjustment will not work without the co-operation of other employees. Employees may therefore have an important role in helping to ensure that a reasonable adjustment is carried out in practice.
- 7.3 Although it is the responsibility of NIFRS to take steps to find out about any need for reasonable adjustments, employees with disabilities have an obligation under this policy to bring to the attention of their line manager the fact that they have additional needs, and to assist with the investigation and implementation of reasonable adjustments as required.
- 7.4 Therefore employees should maintain appropriate, timely communication with their line manager if they believe they have developed a condition that may fall within the boundaries of the DDA and reasonable adjustments may be required to enable them to support them to undertake their role.

## **8 Review of policy**

- 8.1 The Human Resources Directorate will review this Policy at least triennially in light of best practice and changes to legislation. Such review will involve consultation with the appropriate stakeholders and negotiation, where appropriate, with the recognised trade unions and, where necessary, wider consultation under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act, 1998.



## **Disability Discrimination Act 1995**

### **What is disability?**

The DDA defines disability as “a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities”.

**Physical impairment** - this includes, for instance, a weakening of part of the body (eyes, ears, limbs, internal organs) caused through illness, by accident or from birth. Examples are blindness, deafness, paralysis of a leg or heart disease.

**Mental impairment** - this includes mental ill health and what is commonly known as learning disability.

**Substantial** - put simply, this means that the effect of the physical or mental impairment on ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities is more than minor or trivial. It does not have to be a severe effect.

**Long-term adverse effect** - the effect has to have lasted, or be likely to last, overall for at least twelve months and the effect must be a detrimental one.

People who are diagnosed with cancer, HIV and multiple sclerosis are deemed to be disabled from the point of diagnosis rather than from the point when the condition has some adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

**A normal day-to-day activity** is something which is carried out by most people on a fairly regular and frequent basis, such as washing, eating, catching a bus or turning on a television. It does not mean something as individual as playing a musical instrument to a professional standard or doing everything involved in a particular job.

**To meet the definition, a person must be affected in at least one of the following as listed in the DDA:**

- mobility;
- manual dexterity;
- physical co-ordination;
- continence;
- ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects;
- speech, hearing or eyesight;
- memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand; or
- perception of risk of physical danger
- Taking part in normal social interaction
- Forming social relationships

People who satisfy the definition of ‘disability’ are covered by the DDA. This includes people who have had a disability in the past.

## **Access to Work (NI) - practical help at work**

The government Access to Work (NI) scheme can help people with disabilities who wish to take up employment, or who are in work and experience difficulties related to their disability. It can also help employers who wish to recruit or retain people with disabilities in employment.

### **How can Access to Work (NI) help you**

Access to Work (NI) is available to overcome the practical problems caused by disability. It offers advice and help in a flexible way that can be tailored to suit the needs of an individual in a particular job, or getting to and from work. It can also contribute towards the additional approved costs that arise. Personal and Business benefit are taken into account in all cases. Access to work (NI) can help towards the cost of:

### **Communication support at interview**

- for deaf people or people who have a hearing impairment and need a communicator with them at interview

### **Special aids and equipment**

- provision of special equipment to suit particular work needs arising from disability

### **Adaptations to premises and equipment**

- adaptation in the workplace to facilitate an employee with disabilities

### **Support workers**

- support can be provided if practical help is needed because of a disability, either at work or getting to and from work

### **Travel to work**

- support can be provided when a person with a disability incurs extra costs in travelling to and from work because of disability

### **Miscellaneous**

- support can be provided to assist employers where other additional costs arise because of disability - for example, extra 'in-work' travel costs, or provision of disability awareness training

## **Application**

The Access to Work (NI) application must be made by the person with the disability. The Employment Service Adviser will refer the application to an Access to Work (NI) Adviser who will normally visit the place of work and advise on the most cost effective solution.

Help will be approved for as long as it is required up to a maximum of three years. After that, if support is required to continue it will be considered under the rules of the programme in operation at that time.

## **The Disability Employment Service**

The Disability Employment Service provides support to employers to help them recruit people with health issues or disabilities and enables employers to retain employees who become sick or disabled in their jobs.

## **Examples of Reasonable Adjustments**

### **Employment provisions**

It is unlawful for an employer to discriminate on the grounds of disability. This includes the following areas:

- recruitment and selection
- terms and conditions of service
- arrangements for induction
- sickness policies and procedures
- pensions (subject to exceptions)
- opportunities for promotion, transfer, training, or receipt of other employment benefits, or refusal of such opportunities
- dismissal or any other detriment.

### **Reasonable adjustments by employers**

Employers may have to take particular steps to prevent their arrangements or premises from discriminating against people with disabilities – referred to as ‘reasonable adjustments’. Reasonable adjustments are designed to ensure fair access for disabled people or to compensate for the disadvantage they experience as a result of their disability. They include:-

- making adjustments to premises
- allocating some of the person’s duties to another person
- altering the person’s working hours
- allowing absences during working hours for rehabilitation, assessment or treatment and agreeing how these will be recorded
- acquiring or modifying equipment

The Act lists a number of factors which may have a bearing on whether it will be reasonable for the employer to have to make a particular adjustment. These are:

- the effectiveness of the particular adjustment in preventing the disadvantage
- the practicability of the adjustment
- the financial and other costs of the adjustment and the extent of any disruption caused
- the extent of the employer’s financial and other resources
- the availability to the employer of financial or other assistance to help make an adjustment.

Failure to make a reasonable adjustment can only be justified if the reason for failing to do so is relevant to the circumstance of the particular case, and substantial.

Examples of steps it might be reasonable for an employer to have to take include:

**1 Making adjustments to premises.**

**For example:**

An employer makes structural or other physical changes such as widening a doorway, providing a ramp or moving furniture for a wheelchair user; relocates light switches, door handles, or shelves for someone who has difficulty in reaching; or provides appropriate contrast in decor to help the safe mobility of a visually impaired person.

**2 Allocating some of your duties to another person.**

**For example:**

An employer reallocates minor or subsidiary duties to another worker as a disabled worker has difficulty doing them because of their disability, for example, the job involves occasionally going onto the open roof of a building but the employer transfers this work away from a worker whose disability involves severe vertigo.

**3 Transferring you to fill an existing vacancy.**

**For example:**

An employer should consider whether a suitable alternative post is available for a worker who becomes disabled (or whose disability worsens), where no reasonable adjustment would enable the worker to continue doing the current job. This might also involve retraining or other reasonable adjustments such as equipment for the new post or a transfer to a position on a higher grade.

**4 Altering your hours of working or training.**

**For example:**

An employer allows a person with a disability to work flexible hours to enable them to have additional breaks to overcome fatigue arising from their disability. It could also include permitting part time working, or different working hours to avoid the need to travel in the rush hour if this is a problem related to an impairment. A phased return to work with a gradual build-up of hours might also be appropriate in some circumstances.

## **5 Assigning you to a different place of work or training.**

### **For example:**

An employer relocates the work station of a newly disabled worker (who now uses a wheelchair) from an inaccessible third floor office to an accessible one on the ground floor. If the employer operates from more than one workplace, it may be reasonable to move the worker's place of work to other premises of the same employer if the first building is inaccessible and the other premises are not.

## **6 Allowing you to be absent during working or training hours for rehabilitation, assessment or treatment.**

### **For example:**

An employer allows a person with a disability who has recently developed a condition to have more time off work than would be allowed to non-disabled workers to enable them to have rehabilitation. A similar adjustment would be appropriate if a disability worsens or if a disabled worker needs occasional treatment anyway.

## **7 Giving, or arranging for, training or mentoring (whether for you or for other people). This could be training in particular pieces of equipment which you will be using, or an alteration to the standard workplace training to reflect your particular impairment.**

### **For example:**

- All workers are trained in the use of a particular machine but an employer provides slightly different or longer training for an employee with restricted hand or arm movements, or training in additional software for a visually impaired person so that they can use a computer with speech output.
- An employer provides training for workers on conducting meetings in a way that enables a Deaf staff member to participate effectively.
- A person with a disability returns to work after a six-month period of absence due to a stroke. Their employer pays for them to see a work mentor, and allows time off to see the mentor, to help with their loss of confidence following the onset of their disability.

## **8 Acquiring or modifying equipment.**

### **For example:**

An employer might have to provide special equipment (such as an adapted keyboard for someone with arthritis or a large screen for a visually impaired person), an adapted telephone for someone with a hearing impairment, or other modified equipment for disabled workers (such as longer handles on a machine).

**The employer does not have to provide or modify equipment for personal purposes unconnected with your job**, such as providing a wheelchair if you need one in any event but do not have one. This is because in this situation the disadvantages you are facing do not flow from things your employer has control over.

## **9 Modifying instructions or reference manuals.**

### **For example:**

The format of instructions and manuals might need to be modified for some disabled workers (such as being produced in Braille or on audio CD) and instructions for people with learning disabilities might need to be conveyed orally with individual demonstration or in Easy Read.

## **10 Modifying procedures for testing or assessment.**

### **For example:**

A worker with restricted manual dexterity who was applying for promotion would be disadvantaged by a written test, so the employer gives that person an oral test instead.

## **11 Providing a reader or interpreter.**

### **For example:**

An employer arranges for a colleague to read hard copy post to a worker with a visual impairment at particular times during the working day. Alternatively, the employer might hire a reader.

# Reasonable adjustments for employees with dyslexia

## Written Communication

### General difficulty with reading:

- Give verbal as well as written instructions.
- Highlight salient points in documents.
- Use voice mail as opposed to written memos.
- Use screen reading software.
- Supply screen reading software and scanner.
- A Reading Pen may be useful for unfamiliar words.
- Provide information on coloured paper (find out which colour helps the person to read best).
- Set up a computer screen with a coloured background to documents.

### Difficulty with reading and writing:

- Allow plenty of time to read and complete the task.
- Examine other ways of giving the same information to avoid reading.
- Discuss the material with the employee, giving summaries and/or key points.
- Utilise information prepared in other formats for example audio or videotape, drawings, diagrams and flowcharts.
- Use mind-mapping software.
- Use digital recorders.
- Use speech to text software.
- Get someone else to take the Minutes of meetings.

### Spelling and grammar errors:

- Offer assistive text software.
- Proof read work.
- Instant spell checker on all computers.
- Offer assistive text software on all applications, where possible.

### Working at a computer:

- Change background colour of screen to suit individual preference.
- Supply anti-glare screen filter.
- Allow frequent breaks, at least every hour.
- Alternate computer work with other tasks where possible.
- Avoid continuous all day computer work.



## Verbal Communication

### Difficulty remembering and following verbal instructions:

- Give instructions one at a time.
- Communicate instructions slowly and clearly in a quiet location.
- Write down important information.
- Demonstrate and supervise tasks and projects.
- Encourage the person to take notes and then check them.
- Ask instructions to be repeated back, to confirm that the instruction has been understood correctly.
- Write a memo outlining a plan of action.
- Use a digital recorder to record important instructions.
- Back up multiple instructions in writing or with diagrams.
- Difficulty with hidden meanings in conversation.
- Give clear concise and direct instructions; do not hint or make assumptions that you have been understood.

## Time and Work Planning

### Concentration difficulties/distractions:

- Make sure the workplace is quiet and away from distractions for example away from doors, busy phones, loud machinery.
- Allocate a private workspace if possible.
- Where feasible allow an employee to work from home occasionally.
- Provide a quiet working environment for a dyslexic employee by allocating libraries, file rooms, private offices and other enclosed areas when others are not using them.

### Remembering appointments and deadlines:

- Remind the person of important deadlines and review priorities regularly.
- Hang a wall planner that visually highlights daily/monthly appointments, deadlines, tasks and projects.
- Encourage the employee to use the daily calendar and alarm features on his/her computer.

### Organising workflow:

- Supply and use a wall planner.
- Prioritise important tasks.
- Create a daily, dated "To Do" list.
- Use diaries.
- Write a layout for regular tasks with appropriate prompts for example for meetings or taking notes.
- Allow extra time for unforeseen occurrences.
- Build planning time into each day.

**General difficulties:****Reversing numbers:**

- Encourage the person to say the numbers out loud, write them down or press the calculator keys and check the figures have been understood.
- Supply a talking calculator.

**Directional difficulties:**

Always try to use the same route.

- Show the route and visible landmarks.
- Give time to practise going from one place to another.
- Supply detailed maps.
- Supply GPS car navigation system.

**Short term memory problems especially names, numbers and lists:**

- Use mnemonic devices and acronyms.
- Organise details on paper so that they can be referred to easily using diagrams and flowcharts.
- Check back understanding.
- Use multi-sensory learning techniques such as reading material onto a tape machine and then playing it back whilst re-reading.
- Use computer software; sometimes well-developed program menus and help features are useful.
- Use a calculator.

## **Guidance on producing accessible information**

It is essential that your written material reflects the needs of people with disabilities. You must consider the following when designing written material:

### **Contrast**

The type and the colour of background used should contrast. For example, using a pale pink writing on a white background will not provide a good contrast.

Many dyslexic people are sensitive to the glare of white backgrounds on a page, white board or computer screen. This can make the reading of text much harder.

The use of cream or pastel coloured backgrounds can mitigate this difficulty as can coloured filters either as an overlay or as tinted reading glasses.

The choice of colour of text on white backgrounds can also affect clarity, eg, using red on a whiteboard can render the text almost invisible for some dyslexic students.

**Type size** – type size should be at least 12 point preferably 14 point.

**Type weight** – should be medium or bold. Avoid light type weights.

### **Font**

- Use a plain, evenly spaced sans serif font such as Arial and *Comic Sans*. Alternatives include Verdana, Tahoma, Century Gothic, Trebuchet.
- Font size should be 12-14 point. Some dyslexic readers may request a larger font.
- Use dark coloured text on a light (not white) background.
- Avoid green and red/pink as these are difficult for colour-blind individuals.

### **Layout**

- Use left-justified with ragged right edge. Do not stretch or condense text to fit, ie, do not justify text as it makes it harder to read.
- Avoid narrow columns (as used in newspapers).
- Lines should not be too long: 60 to 70 characters.
- Avoid cramping material and using long, dense paragraphs: space it out.
- Line spacing of 1.5 is preferable.
- Avoid starting a sentence at the end of a line.
- Use bullet points and numbering rather than continuous prose.

## Headings and Emphasis

- Avoid underlining and *italics*: these tend to make the text appear to run together. Use **bold** instead.
- AVOID TEXT IN BLOCK CAPITALS: this is much harder to read.
- For Headings, use larger font size in **bold**, lower case.
- Boxes and borders can be used for effective emphasis.

## Space paragraphs and columns

Avoid wrapping text around pictures or illustrations as fitting text around illustrations results in different line lengths, which can make it difficult to read. If you have pictures do not put text over them as it can be harder to read. You can put a solid colour on the picture and then write the text over the solid colour, ensuring that the contrast is good. Also avoid using watermarks.

## Binding

if your document is large you will need to consider how it is bound. A person should be able to place the document flat on a table. You may need to ring bind a document rather than stitching so that the document can be laid flat. This is important for someone who may have dexterity problems or someone who is using a magnifier.

## Writing Style

- Use short, simple sentences in a direct style.
- Give instructions clearly. Avoid long sentences of explanation.
- Use active rather than passive voice.
- Avoid double negatives.
- Be concise.

## Increasing accessibility

- Flow charts are ideal for explaining procedures.
- Pictograms and graphics help to locate information.
- Lists of 'do's and 'don'ts' are more useful than continuous text to highlight aspects of good practice.
- Avoid abbreviations if possible or provide a glossary of abbreviations and jargon.
- For long documents include a contents page at the beginning and an index at end.