

## Communications and Digital Media Policy

### What do we mean by “communications”?

Communication encompasses all methods of contact between Deafblind Scotland and with our Service-users, staff, guide/communicators, volunteers and all outside people and organisations.

### What do we mean by “digital media”?

Digital media is information shared through a digital device or screen, including social media posts (see separate Communications Policy for further guidance), graphics, videos, and websites or research articles.

### Policy Statement

Deafblind Scotland is committed to promoting accessible, effective, professional and consistent standards of communication across the organisation. All staff are expected to practice and maintain high standards of communication in all aspects of the business of the organisation and adhere to the defined acceptable standards of communication.

### The policy covers:

- All printed information available to the general public
- The Deafblind Scotland website
- Letters and e-mails
- Public meetings and events
- Public contact - reception, telephone
- Social media sites

In addition, in order to meet the particular needs of individuals with dual sensory loss/deafblindness, Deafblind Scotland implements the steps outlined in the Communication Forum Scotland guidelines.

### Correspondence

Deafblind Scotland will accept and respond to correspondence from the public in accessible formats such as; Large Print, Braille, moon, BSL or electronic media and emails.

### Enquiries

Enquiries can be made in person, by letter, fax, email, by phone, text or video call or through our website.

In dealing with enquiries Deafblind Scotland staff will always

- Be polite and helpful
- Be succinct
- Treat others as you would like to be treated yourself
- Deal with enquiries efficiently and promptly, ensure the enquiry is followed up and logged.
- Avoid promises that cannot be delivered

- Have a right to take further action if the enquirer is abusive or threatening involving external agencies where appropriate

### **Provision of written material in alternative formats**

All documents will be available in the following alternative formats on request:

- Braille
- CD
- Large print
- Electronic formats
- Moon

### **Text – Using Plain English**

Written material produced by Deafblind Scotland will be in plain English and avoid unnecessary jargon. Follow the guidelines below to produce plain English:

- Keep your sentences short – be concise, an average sentence length is 15 to 20 words.
- Prefer active verbs

Passive verbs cause several problems.  
They can be confusing.  
They often make writing more long-winded.  
They make writing less lively.

Here are some more examples of how to turn a passive verb into an active verb:

This matter will be considered by us shortly. (Passive)  
We will consider this matter shortly. (Active)

The riot was stopped by the police. (Passive)  
The police stopped the riot. (Active)

The mine had to be closed by the authority. (Passive)  
The authority had to close the mine. (Active)

- Use 'you' and 'we'  
Here are some examples:

Applicants must send us...  
You must send us...

We always tell customers before we...  
We will tell you before we...

Advice is available from...  
You can get advice from

- Use words that are appropriate for the reader – avoid jargon and say exactly what you mean, using the simplest words that fit
- Use lists where appropriate
- And always check that your writing is clear, helpful, human and polite

## **Text – Tables**

A logical table structure is essential for users who rely on assistive technologies.

- Use cell markers and headers in tables to create information that is easily interpreted by screen readers.
- Check with the person reading the document if they prefer tables to be described in plain text rather than through a table.
- Do not use table layouts or text boxes in word documents i.e. for minutes or agendas.

## **Graphics**

All graphics that are produced should be accessible. Graphics may be used on social media, websites, digital documents and videos.

- **Use good colour contrast**  
Use WebAIM's Contrast Checker to evaluate the colour contrast in your graphic <https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/>
- **Text**  
Ensure all text is black on a white background, this is our standard for the most accessible format.  
Don't place pictures behind text.
- **Font size**  
Ensure that the text is readable at different sizes, allowing users to adjust as needed.
- **Use Alternative Text**  
Be sure to include meaningful alternative descriptions that convey the visual information.
- **Simplify without losing information**  
Keep to one or two colours, simple design, to ensure alternative text can be as accurate as possible.

## **Videos**

### **Audio Description**

- Best practice is to include audio description as part of the video, create scripts that include descriptions of visual information.
- Alternatively add in an audio description track to the video, including as much visual information as possible without overloading the listener.
- A transcript of the video with audio descriptions included can also be provided underneath the video on a webpage, or in the text of a social media post.



### **Captions**

We will only create captions/subtitles with white text on black background.

### **BSL Interpreted**

Endeavor to include a BSL Interpreter on the bottom right of all videos in BSL (unless the whole video is being presented)

It is only acceptable to use a qualified BSL interpreter or a Deaf sign language user to produce signing in videos.

### **Audio**

Use high quality audio tracks.

Music can be used, but must not overlap with speech,

### **Use good colour contract**

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