Inclusive Design

A quick guide to designing with accessibility in mind

Scope's new visual identity, developed by The Team in collaboration with Scope, uses accessible design in every aspect of its toolkit.

Accessible design should be commonplace, but is often met with a groan or confusion. We don't see accessibility as a barrier to creativity. Instead, we test its limits and push its boundaries in the ambition of achieving inspirational design.

This guide shares some of our learnings. Let's inspire a movement of accessible and effective design!

Typography

Equality

Alignment

Align large bodies of text to the left. Headings and small amounts of text can be centred. But never align to the right, or justify text.

Font size

As a general rule, use text size 14pt and, if necessary, 12pt. Use at least 18pt for visually impaired people.

Capital letters

Never use blocks of capital letters. Instead, use different font weights for emphasis and to pull out key information.

Legibility

Look for these characteristics in a font to maximise legibility and readability:

- broad horizontal proportions
- unambiguous letter shapes
- open spacing
- robust stroke weight
- large x-height
- open counters
- distinctive ascenders

Colour

Tints

Avoid colour combinations that feature tints of the same colour.

Glare

Avoid black text on a white background. Off-white or pale pastel coloured backgrounds reduce glare.

Colour contrast

Ensure there is a good contrast, at least 70% difference in colour value, between the text and the background.

Colour coding

Don't only use colour to convey meaning. Use a combination of colour, shapes and text.

Web applications

Follow Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) AA criteria.

Language and writing

Writing style

Use plain English and write in short, clear sentences and paragraphs.

Use everyday words

Use everyday words and avoid jargon, slang and figures of speech.

Hyphens and punctuation

Avoid words that have hyphen connections as well as less common punctuation marks.

Glossary

Consider providing a glossary for terms readers may not know.

Iconography

Recognisable icons

Choose commonly used icons that are easy to recognise. Label icons with text.

Consistent meaning

Give each icon one meaning only and don't use it elsewhere or for a different purpose.

Test, test, test

Test icons with real end users.

Alternative formats

Ask the user

Consider the needs of your target audience and involve relevant experts from the earliest planning stages.

Plan ahead

Make sure any accessible formats you produce are available at the same time as the standard print.

Design and layout

Grid

Use a consistent grid to create structure. Different sections can make text easier to digest.

Content

Use short sentences, bullet pointed lists and tables to break up long passages. Paragraphs should be kept short, with a full line space between sections and paragraphs.

Text on an image

Only place text on top of images if there's clear backgrounds and sufficient contrast. Also consider placing it inside a holding shape so it can be read more easily.

Tables

Avoid using tables where there is an alternative approach or break up large, complex tables into multiple simplified tables.

Columns

Do not have more than two columns of text on a page and use a comfortable width that is neither too narrow nor too wide.

Larger documents

For documents over six pages, use page numbers, and provide a contents list and summary. Use colour coding as a navigation aid.
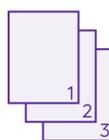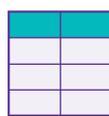
Images

Composition

Images must be bold, clear and to the point. Don't use distracting patterns or overbearing colours.

Supportive imagery

Use a relevant photograph, diagram or illustration to complement long written descriptions.

Text descriptions

Images or photographs conveying information not covered in the main text must have a text description.

Flashing images

Avoid using animated GIFs and flashing images.

Two Scope cyclists hugging after a training session.

"Working with The Team on our brand overhaul has been a huge success for Scope and a pleasure in the process too. Their quick understanding of our unique brand challenges was impressive from the offset. The commitment and talent across all teams is felt at all stages of a project and delivers results. Thanks to The Team we have a truly game-changing brand for our sector."
Danielle Wootton, Head of Marketing, Scope

theTeam. **SCOPE =** Equality for disabled people