

## Writing for deaf people

Writing for deaf people is the same as writing for everyone – you need to make sure that the information you produce is easy to understand. The best way to do this is to write in plain English.

The Plain English Campaign defines plain English as “something the intended audience can read, understand and act upon the first time they read it.”

Here are some basic guidelines to get you started.

- Keep sentences and paragraphs short.
- Always substitute short words for long words where possible. For example, say 'use' not 'utilise' and 'buy' not 'purchase'
- Avoid jargon.
- Break up the writing with headings and bullet points.
- Think about using diagrams to replace long written descriptions. Photographs can also be effective, especially if they are real people, not models.
- Writing about deaf people
- Don't say 'the deaf.' Say 'deaf people', 'hard of hearing people' or 'people with a hearing loss'.
- Never use the phrase 'deaf and dumb'. It is negative, outdated and offensive.
- Many people whose first or preferred language is BSL consider themselves to be part of the 'Deaf Community'. Some may describe themselves as 'Deaf' with a capital D, to emphasise their deaf identity.
- Try not to use negative phrases such as 'hearing impaired' or 'partially deaf'. You can say people are deaf, hard of hearing or have a hearing loss.
- Don't use negative terms like 'victim' or 'sufferer'.
- Use accurate terms like 'hearing aid', not 'deaf aid' and 'cochlear implant,' not 'bionic ear'.