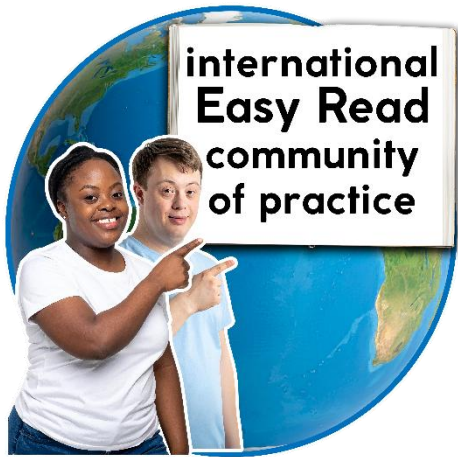


A guide to choosing pictures for Easy Read documents

This is a free resource from the International Easy Read Community of Practice.



Contents

A guide to choosing pictures for Easy Read documents	1
About this guide	3
1. Choose inclusive imagery	3
2. Make pictures look like the reader's local community	4
3. Show everyday life, not only disability services	4
4. Portray the reader's reality	4
5. Do sensitivity and consent checks	4
6. Involve Easy Read users when you develop and test pictures	5
7. Keep image style consistent	5
8. Symbols	5
9. Check ease of use	5
10. Compatibility across apps	5
11. Keep the page layout simple	6
12. Check image quality	6
13. Alt-text	6
14. Think about internet speed	6
What next for this work	7

About this guide

This guide for choosing pictures to support Easy Read text was developed by members of the [International Easy Read Community of Practice](#).

The International Easy Read Community of Practice supports and connects people around the world who use Easy Read in their personal and working lives.

We believe everyone has a right to information.

We think pictures that help explain easy read words should be clear, realistic, respectful and tested with Easy Read users.

Here are some ideas from our group members and the easy read users they talked to.

1. Choose inclusive imagery

Easy Read users told us they often prefer photos, but cartoons can work when they are clear and consistent.

Show people who look realistic and varied.

Represent different people, bodies and communities so readers can recognise themselves on the page.

Not all people with disability look like they have disability. One person who uses a hearing aid said it's nice to see people with hearing aids. Another person said they like to see people with nice clothes.

Not all people with disability have a carer so pictures of people with disability without a carer are good too.

2. Make pictures look like the reader's local community

If illustrating 'your home', check what type of homes local people live in. A person living high up in a flat may not identify a picture of a house with a garden as home.

Check that uniforms, buildings and settings match the reader's town or country. For example, not all doctors wear white coats.

If your region has people from different cultures, look at how to represent this. Use cultural advisors when showing people from diverse cultures.

3. Show everyday life, not only disability services

Include pictures about many topics, such as government, popular culture, celebrations, travel and feelings.

4. Portray the reader's reality

Choose pictures that match what the reader is likely to imagine, not what the writer prefers.

5. Do sensitivity and consent checks

If using photos, especially in a small community, ask people to sign an Easy Read photo release form.

Protect people's identity and remove their photo if they no longer consent or if their circumstances change.

Think carefully about representing sensitive subjects such as violence.

6. Involve Easy Read users when you develop and test pictures

Co-design pictures where possible and test whether users can quickly understand what is happening.

7. Keep image style consistent

Use one image style throughout the document, such as all photos or all cartoons.

Use realistic photos or clear graphics.

Users said they prefer photographs that are close to what they will see in real life.

Avoid abstract pictures that make readers guess the meaning.

8. Symbols

Avoid symbols, unless they are really common, and check they represent the real world. Consider the telephone symbol. Younger people who use mobile phones may not recognise the old-fashioned telephone image.

9. Check ease of use

Make sure pictures are easy to download, insert and adapt so they match the words.

10. Compatibility across apps

Look at whether the pictures work well with other communication supports such as AAC symbol systems or Talking Mats.

11. Keep the page layout simple

Use images that are easy to see and limit each image to 2 or 3 main elements.

12. Check image quality

Test that each image is clear at the size it will appear in the document.

For online documents, use a colour contrast checker to confirm the image is easy to read. Webaim.com or accessibleweb.com

13. Alt-text

Use alt-text only for cover images, logos and pictures that have text. Do not use alt-text for pictures that support the meaning of the easy read words.

14. Think about internet speed

Some people have slow internet or use older devices.

Look at these tips:

- simple pictures
- flat colours
- strong outlines
- no blurry backgrounds
- no words inside pictures
- small picture files
- check pictures print clearly in black and white
- test the document on slow internet
- test the document on older phones or computers.

What next for this work

We hope you find these tips helpful.

This guide was written in August 2026 and we will review it in a year.

If you have any questions or would like more information about our group, please contact:

Bev Streater, Katy Brickley and Sonya Kunawicz

training@disabilityequality.scot