

Case study 3: Providing information in the appropriate format.

A youngster from the neighbouring village telephones the contact number for the flower & produce show, to be hosted at the hall, which she has obtained from a poster. She asks if she can be sent the rules and entrance forms and she gives her address and postcode. When the papers arrive she realises she cannot read them as they are in really small print. She telephones again asking if large print forms are available. She is told that if she brings the forms in someone will fill them in with her.

How would you respond?

- Assuming that you are the person responsible for issuing the information, apologise!
- Do not say that someone will fill them in – disabled people are entitled to their dignity and independence.
- Agree to send the documents in a clear font (e.g. Arial) using a minimum 16pt script; it may be worth asking about their preference as some people could need a 24pt. Obviously, the further away the reader is likely to be (i.e. a notice board with furniture in front of it) the larger the point. If your documents are in an electronic form (i.e. produced on a computer) you might like to ask if the person has email and then they can produce them to exactly the right size for their need. Some people say that this will increase printing costs, but remember, with current technology documents can be sent via email to probably a quarter of those needing them, thus reducing current costs by 25%, which will make up the balance.
- A simple statement on all your paperwork (documents, posters, minutes, newsletters etc.) saying 'If you would like this in larger print, please contact xxx' Sometimes that statement also includes 'alternative formats'. Some people with visual impairments can read Braille and the RNIB have a free transcription service for not for profit items. Some would prefer an audio tape. We would suggest that all important information that is unlikely to change for a while could be produced in an audio format (e.g. village welcome pack, basic information about the hall) and you are likely to have volunteers who will produce the

information for you.

- People with visual impairments need stark contrasts; and so do people who wear glasses for reading! This means that the print should contrast with the background (best is dark writing like black on a light yellow background).
- People with learning disabilities and those who find it difficult to read, like pictures and signs with their text. They also find it difficult to 'read' the pattern of letters in words, so you should not use blocks of capital letters; these should only be used where appropriate – i.e. for proper names, after a full stop,