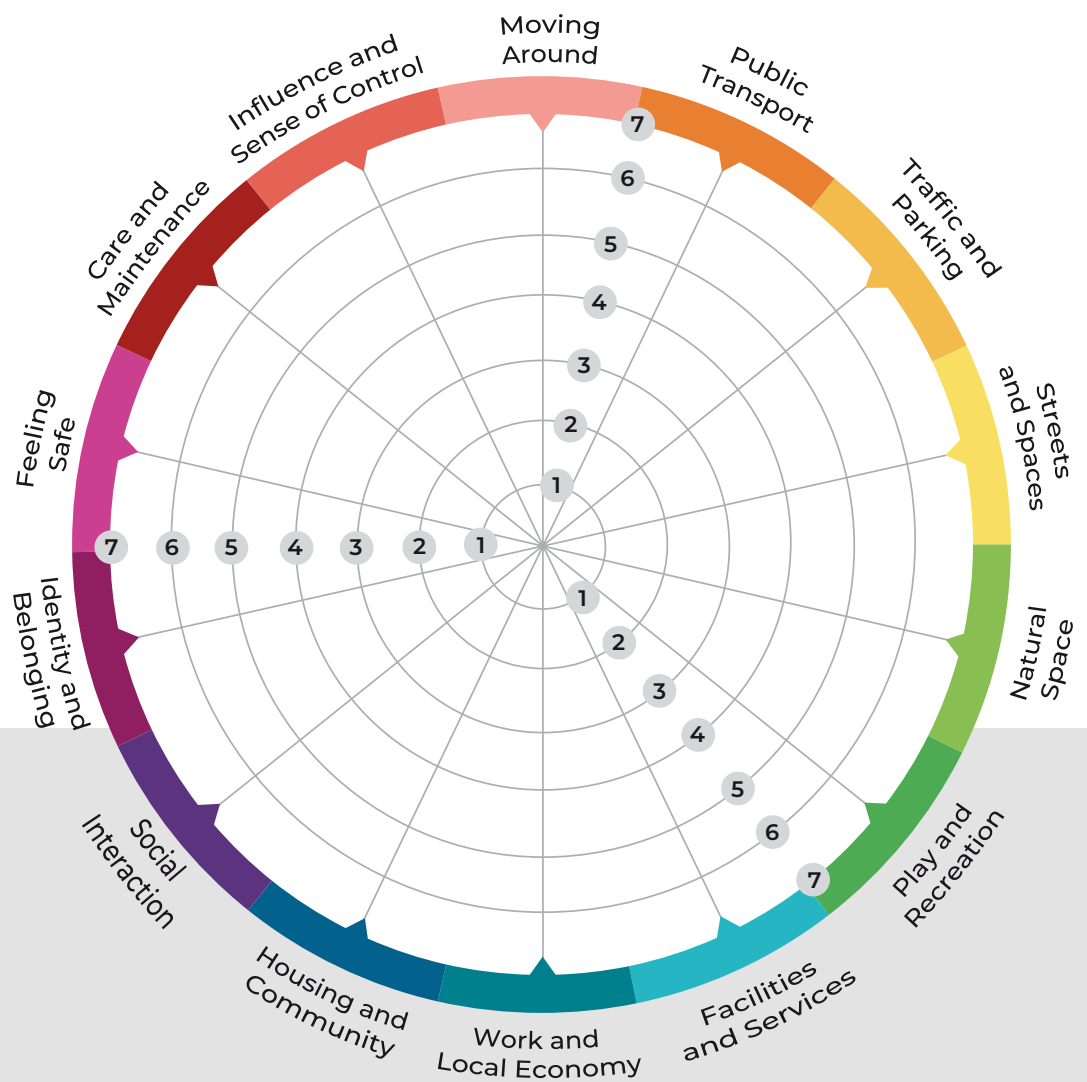




# PRACTICAL RESOURCE 2:

Step-by-step communication inclusive writing guidance



# **CONTENT**

<b>SECTION 1: Producing written information for participants</b>	<b>3</b>
Using the guide	3
Steps	3
Sentences	3
Words	5
Accessibility check	5
Hyperlinks	5
Font	5
Layout	6
Visual images	6
Document type	6
<b>SECTION 2: Participants communicating in writing to you</b>	<b>7</b>
Give people a choice	7
Make writing as easy as possible	7



# SECTION 1: PRODUCING WRITTEN INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS

## Using the guide

Use this step-by-step guide for all written information used in your Place Standard session. This includes everything from the advertising poster to the report telling people what's going to happen next. The more you practise these steps the more they will become communication habits.

If your organisation already has branding guidelines and a style guide check they include all the information below.



### Steps

- 1 Write down **what** you want to say.
- 2 **Cut** your message into sections, one section for each topic or point. Use a main heading and sub-headings.
- 3 Put sections in the **order** people need to know them.

For example, if you are giving information about a meeting a good order is:

- ▶ Meeting title
- ▶ Day
- ▶ Time
- ▶ Place
- ▶ What will be covered at the meeting
- ▶ Who to contact for more information

### 4 Sentence length

Break each section of what you want to say into sentences that each say one or two things.

A sentence with a lot of “ands” and “ors” is probably too long.

If you want to give a list, use an opening line followed by bullet points taking up one line each.

## 5 Sentence style

The writing style you use depends on:

- ▶ your personal style
- ▶ how formal you need to be
- ▶ the audience you are writing for
- ▶ the purpose of your email, report etc

However, it's more inclusive to:

- ▶ minimise the amount of written information
- ▶ be direct
- ▶ be polite but avoid “perhaps”, “if possible”, “if that’s alright”, type phrases which make it a complicated and long sentence

## 6 Sentence type

Use “**Active**” sentences. “Passive” sentences are more difficult to understand. An active sentence should:

- ▶ Begin with **who** is doing the thing – the subject.
- ▶ Then **what** they are doing – the doing word or verb.
- ▶ End with what they are doing it to – the **object**.

Here is an example of an “active” sentence.

Jimmy (**who**) will do (**what**) the work (**object**).

Here is the same sentence in the “passive” form.

Work (**object**) will be done (**what**) by Jimmy (**who**).

Some sentence types are hard. Avoid sentences with:

- ▶ “ifs and buts”
- ▶ text in brackets

## 7 Words

Remove jargon and words people might not come across every day.

Words with two or three syllables are better. If you must use specialist longer words explain them.

Don't use abbreviations or acronyms – ever.

Don't use metaphors like “drive forward”, “blue sky thinking” or “horizon scanning”.

## 8 Test on Hemingway – [Hemingway Editor \(hemingwayapp.com\)](https://hemingwayapp.com)

Hemingway gives you an accessible language score. Keep changing your writing to reduce your score and increase your access score.

Test using the Accessibility checker on your computer.

Listening to what you have written helps you spot complicated language and mistakes.

## 9 Make hyperlinks meaningful

Give links a description. Don't just say “click here”.

## 10 Fix the font

Use San Serif font such as:

- ▶ Arial size 12 at least for main text
- ▶ Arial size 14 for main headings

Some people may need larger fonts. For example, people living with sight loss may need larger fonts.

Don't use:

- ▶ too much bold
- ▶ italics and underlining

## 11 Layout

Good layout has:

- ▶ left aligned text rather than centred or justified text
- ▶ 6-point space between sentences
- ▶ 12-point space between paragraphs
- ▶ text rather than table layout. Tables don't work well with screen readers.
- ▶ white space and uncluttered layout
- ▶ no text overlaid on pictures or abstract designs
- ▶ clear colour contrast between background and text and avoiding colours difficult for people with colour blindness

## 12 Add pictures – photographs, cartoon drawings, icons, symbols, graphics

Pictures help people:

- ▶ Look at the written page, focus and pay attention.
- ▶ Understand what the writing is about. So, if someone can't read, they can decide if they want someone to read to them.
- ▶ Find what they are looking for quickly in the text.

Select pictures to match headings, key words and / or ideas.

Use pictures that are easily understood by most people, and which don't need a lot of explanation.

Avoid abstract or very stylised pictures.

Do not use images just as a design feature.

Avoid lots of pictures all over the page.

Place symbols to the left of text. Wrap "in line" with text or "square" with text.

The following resources provide symbols and photographs representing Place Standard themes.

### **PRACTICAL RESOURCE 8: Photographs for each theme**

### **PRACTICAL RESOURCE 9: Symbols for each theme and scoring**

Add Alt text for people who use screen readers. If people need to know what's in the picture to understand the message, add a description. If they don't – tick "decorative".

## 13 Save your document in an accessible format.

## 14 Avoid saving as a PDF. PDFs don't work easily with screen readers.

If you must use a PDF, make it as accessible as possible.

Protected Word documents are a good format for saving your document.

# SECTION 2: PARTICIPANTS COMMUNICATING IN WRITING TO YOU

## Give people a choice

Offer people options of ways they can communicate with you, so they don't need to write if they prefer not to. Let them choose another way that works for them. For example, offer:

- ▶ a phone call
- ▶ a face-to-face conversation
- ▶ an automatic message to you at the click of an online button
- ▶ a QR code that takes them to a communication inclusive information page

## Make writing as easy as possible

If people do need to write during a Place Standard session:

- ▶ Provide plenty of space to write by hand.
- ▶ Some people may prefer to use their communication aid.
- ▶ Some people may prefer to use predictive text on their mobile.
- ▶ Offer support to write down what people tell you.
- ▶ Minimise the amount people must write by providing tick boxes supported by pictures.

**Architecture &  
Design Scotland**  
Aithearachd is Dealbhadh na h-Alba



**is.**  
improvement service



**Public Health  
Scotland**



**Scottish Government**  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
gov.scot