

NICCY Accessible Information Policy

In line with our Accessible Information policy, the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY) is committed to making information as accessible as possible. To help to do this we can provide a copy of the policy in the following formats:

- Large print (font size as required),
- Computer disk,
- Braille,
- Audio tape, and
- Other languages for those who are not fluent in English

We will also consider requests for other formats if they are not included in the list above.

To ask for an alternative format, please contact the Communications and Participation Team on 028 9031 1616 or via email communications@niccy.org

A copy of the policy can also be found on the NICCY website at www.niccy.org



Contents:

- 1.0 Policy Statement
- 2.0 Introduction
- 3.0 Priority Groups
- 4.0 Implementation
- 5.0 Distribution Channels
- 6.0 Supporting the Policy
- 7.0 Monitoring and Evaluation
- 8.0 Appendix One – Language



1.0 Accessible Information Policy Statement

1.1 The Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY) is committed to equality of opportunity as outlined in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1988 ("the Act") and to the principle of making oral and written information as accessible as possible.

1.2 NICCY will make sure that thought is given to providing information in a format appropriate to meeting a range of information needs, including:

- People with hearing impairments
- People with sight impairments
- People with learning difficulties
- People with literacy difficulties
- People with physical disabilities
- People from ethnic minority groups whose first language is not English

1.3 Due consideration will be given to all requests for information in alternative formats or appropriate language and will be dealt with in a timely manner.



2.0 Introduction

2.1 The policy reinforces NICCY's commitment to making information as accessible and equitable as possible and to promoting positive and meaningful dialogue with local people. It supports recent legislation; the Northern Ireland Act 1998, Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Human Rights legislation.

2.2 The policy also demonstrates NICCY's commitment under Section 75 to carry out all its functions, powers and duties with due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:

- Between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- Between men and women generally;
- Between persons with a disability and persons without; and
- Between persons with dependants and persons without.

NICCY have developed an Equality Scheme which sets out how they propose to fulfil the duties imposed by Section 75. You can view the full Scheme at www.niccy.org

2.3 Specifically the policy complies with Section 6 – 'Public Access to Information and Services' of the NICCY Equality Scheme

2.4 The policy acknowledges that there are differing levels of literacy, that some people have sensory impairments that require communication in alternative formats and that not everyone is fluent in English as their first language.

2.5 It recognises the need for information to be produced in a style and format that is easy to understand and accessible, and that promotes alternative formats to make sure information provided is as equitable as possible – for example producing child friendly and age appropriate versions of publications (for further details see Guidelines for Writing Child Friendly Publications).



2.6 The policy applies to the many ways in which NICCY communicates its work. It covers a range of communication methods including:

- Telephone
- Text phone
- Internet
- Minicom (same as textphone)
- Email
- Public consultation
- Research
- Meetings
- Seminars and conferences
- Exhibition material
- Printed material
- Public launches
- Press releases
- Public advertisements and
- Distributing information



2.7 NICCY is committed to maximising available resources to best effect to make sure positive and meaningful communication and involvement in working for and on behalf of children and young people.

2.8 NICCY's commitment will be reflected in a test of reasonableness. That is, we will proactively seek to inform people that alternative versions are available.

2.9 All publications including leaflets and smaller publications should include information on alternative formats. Despite the small size of some publications, it is still important to plan for alternative formats. Publications such as the Annual Review, results of research, corporate plan should always contain information on alternative formats, because of the nature of the information and the length of the publication. Each request for an alternative format will be dealt with on an individual basis.



3.0 Priority Groups

3.1 The following people have been identified as having particular communication needs:

- Children and Young People
- People who are blind or have a sight impairment
- People who are deaf/hard of hearing
- People who are deaf and blind
- People with literacy difficulties
- People with learning difficulties
- People from minority ethnic groups whose first language is not English

3.2 Alternative formats – NICCY is committed to providing accessible information and therefore the following statement should be included in any new publication:

Alternative formats statement:

‘Please contact the Communications and Participation team at NICCY if you require alternative formats of this material.’

The Royal National Institute for the Blind recommends that this be stated in a prominent position on the publication, preferably in 14 point type size. The inside front cover or the back cover are the recommended places for the statement. NICCY will adopt this recommendation.



4.0 Implementation - Making Information Accessible

4.1 Style Guidelines - To make sure all NICCY information is as accessible and equitable as possible, all public documents will be produced using the following style:

- Jargon free language and plain English where appropriate
- Easy to read print e.g. Futura Book font (which is the type of print used in this document).
- Minimum print size of at least 12 (as used in this document) – where possible and when appropriate consideration should be given to using font size 14
- The use of unjustified right hand margins creates even spacing between words and makes text easier to read (as used in this document)
- Avoid the unnecessary use of capitals in continuous text
- Short titles of documents or headings can be in upper case e.g. VETTING REVIEW. However, upper and lower case is recommended for longer titles and most headings e.g. Review of Speech and Language Therapy Service. Titles and headings can be in bold.
- Avoid splitting words at the end of a line of text
- Clear and simple design and layout of information
- Use of black ink on white or yellow paper
- Use of non glossy paper, and
- Information to be concise and where appropriate an executive summary will be included
- For large documents there should be consideration given to the binding. For example where the document is large it may be more appropriate to use ring binding rather than stitching.



4.2 In addition, all public documents will include the following information:

- NICCY's commitment to Accessible Information will be clearly stated in all public information – (See 3.2)
- NICCY's telephone, textphone, minicom, and email contact details
- NICCY's website address
- The availability of the translated document in either printed format or on audio tape

4.3 Formats to be considered

The following formats will be considered and where appropriate will be adopted when producing public information to meet the specific communication needs of groups identified. NICCY will continue to consult with relevant groups on the most appropriate formats of communication. Formats to be considered:

- Large print (21 point)
- Computer CD-ROM containing sound files (e.g. MP3 files)
- Audio tape (where possible a single tape will be used to incorporate several documents)
- Braille
- Makaton/Easy Read (use of symbols to convey meaning), and
- Translation into ethnic minority languages
- Accessible PDF

4.5 NICCY will work in partnership with those whose first language is not English to consider how best to meet the particular information and communication needs of those individuals.



4.6 Event Management Communication Guidelines

The following communication guidelines will be considered during the early planning stages and adopted where appropriate, when organising meetings and events involving members of the public, such as exhibitions, launches, seminars, conferences, focus groups etc. to make sure that information is provided in an equitable and accessible manner.

4.6.1 Event Management Communication Guidelines:

- All invitations to NICCY events should meet the Accessible Information Policy
- Invitations should clearly state that the venue is physically accessible (when located in the NICCY offices)
- When appropriate invitations should include a section requesting details of any special requirements including dietary requirements
- Event booking forms should include a section requesting details of any special requirements including dietary requirements
- Use of a Sign Language Interpreter to be considered
- Use of an interpreter/translator to be considered
- Loop system (method of communication for people with hearing difficulties) to be considered
- Exhibition material should reflect the communication needs of the audience e.g. black ink on white or yellow paper should be used to meet the communication needs of people with visual impairment
- Information pack - needs of audience to be considered when preparing material
- Appropriate signage for advice e.g. fire escape, toilets etc

(NICCY Accessibility Policy August 2008)



- Visual aids e.g. use of projector and screen. Presentations should be easily read by those at the back of the room
- Audio aids e.g. use of microphone should be considered, and
- Teleconferencing to be considered, budget allowing

4.6.2 For further information see the NICCY Event Management Manual at www.niccy.org



5.0 Distribution Channels

As well as communicating through the list of channels, NICCY will continue to review and develop new methods of distribution to ensure that NICCY information is accessible to everyone in Northern Ireland.

Some examples of alternative channels include:

- Talking Newspapers
- Belfast Telegraph Deaf/Talkabout column
- Distributing information through minority ethnic community groups
- Where appropriate gay/lesbian publications may be considered if specifically targeting this group
- NICCY information and press releases published in newsletters, and publications of local voluntary organisations, support groups and ethnic minority organisations
- Widening the circulation of NICCY publications, such as NICCY News Ezine and the Annual Review, to voluntary organisations, support groups and ethnic minority groups and
- Distribution of NICCY information to GP surgeries, libraries, Post Offices and Citizens Advice Bureaux



6.0 Supporting the Policy

6.1 Guidance and Information Pack

NICCY's policy will be supported by a Guidance and Information Pack for all staff which will be available on the NICCY internal server (also known as the 'M' Drive). The pack will include the following documentation:

- Accessible Information Policy
- Corporate Identity Guidelines - providing advice on how the NICCY branding should be used
- Event Management Manual - providing advice when organising events

6.3 NICCY Accountability

To ensure effective implementation, each member of the Senior Management Team will be responsible for making sure that all public information produced by staff within their team meets the NICCY's Accessible Information Policy. Support and advice will be provided by the Communications and Participation (C&P) Department; training can also be provided as and when required.



7.0 Monitoring and Evaluation

All public information produced by NICCY staff will be monitored regularly by Communications and Participation Team to make sure the policy is being applied.

The policy will be periodically reviewed to assess its appropriateness and effectiveness in light of good practice and other developments.

Policy approved by:



Gerard Campbell
Chief Executive
05/08/08



8.0 Appendix One – Language

8.1 NICCY will take reasonable steps to provide information in the languages stated under the Belfast Agreement 1998 and subsequent legislation. As this recognises Irish and Ulster-Scots as official languages NICCY acknowledges that we have a requirement, on request, to produce information in Irish and Ulster-Scots.

8.2 We will consider requests for NICCY information to be supplied in other languages upon request

