



Digital content guide 2023



Digital writing style

Tone of voice

Tone of voice used for digital content for different audiences should follow our tone of voice guide.

How do people consume online content?

The pandemic has pushed even more users online and using a mobile device to look at our content is now very common. This means scroll needs to be reduced to get customers to the information they need more effectively.

Most users skim and scan content, looking for the relevant keywords or links to where they want to go. Large blocks of text can be daunting and unnecessary images/pop ups and adverts cause page load time to be increased. Both causing a negative experience to the user.

How to optimise digital content to make it easy to read

Plain English should be used where possible. Technical terms should only be used in the right place and at the right time rather than confusing the reader with 'technical speak'. There are two types of audience, those who know what they are looking for and those that don't. Getting overly technical could alienate people.

- **Use plain English that can be understood by low reading ages**
- **Keep it simple - don't make people think**
- **Avoid repetition**

Using short sentences, bullet points, sub headings and making sure there is lots of white space makes digital content easier to scan and read effectively for users.

Our digital content principles

Using research on how people consume online content, we've developed 6 key principles for the digital content we create:

- User needs come first
- Be short, simple and directive
- Assume no prior knowledge
- Be empathetic emotionally
- Layer information
- Meet accessibility requirements

Digital accessibility

Making our digital content accessible is very important. As an organisation set up to support children with disabilities we should strive to make sure our digital content is inclusive and can be used by people of all abilities.

Images, alt text and videos

All images must be accompanied by alt text – this is a description of the image.

The description doesn't need to include the words: image of/picture of ... For example, alt text for the carrot image below could be "six dirty carrots".



Images should not contain numbers or text, if they do they should be referred to in the alt text.

If an image containing useful content is unavoidable, for example, in an infographic, then an alternative format should also be provided. If another format isn't available on the site then there needs to be a way for the website visitor to get access to another format e.g. email address or ..contact of the content owner.

All videos must contain captions even if it is to mention that there is no voice over or speech on the video.

Documents

Provide most of the content on the page and not hidden within documents e.g., PDFs, word docs, excel spreadsheets. These formats often put in a barrier to access and are often not accessible. If you do use PDFs make sure they are tagged to be accessible. But it is preferable to provide an alternative that works as a page and is optimised to work digitally.

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Digital accessibility (cont)

Heading structure

Content management systems (e.g. the website platform), marketing automation software, MSOffice Programmes (most WYSIWYG editors) have built in heading styles that can be customised.

Headings are important as they create signposts for the user. They are styled and ordered by size and importance. The title of the page should be an H1 and subheadings should be H2 (with additional content nested in between). For example, if we had a page about family events and activities it could look something like this:

Family events and activities [H1]

Virtual events for children [H2]

Rhymetime [H3]

Here is some copy about Rhymetime

Virtual Storytime [H3]

Here is some copy about Storytime

Virtual events for parents [H2]

Virtual Library [H3]

Here is some copy about virtual library

Links on a page (hyperlinks)

Don't use the words 'click here' in a hyperlink – the link needs to be descriptive.

For example, instead of writing “See this link to Care Professional webinars” write: “View our Care Professional webinars”.

Another example: “See link here for details of how to donate to our Butterfly Fund” could be “Find out more about donating to support the Butterfly Fund.”

Don't make hyperlinks too long

For example, instead of writing “View the selection of online book websites that recommend books for parents of seriously ill children” write: “View the selection of online book websites that recommend books for parents of seriously ill children”

Don't write a full website address on a page

Use a hyperlink description instead (as above) For example, instead of writing “View our family resources at [https://www.togetherforshortlives.org.uk/get-](https://www.togetherforshortlives.org.uk/get-support/supporting-you/family-resources/)

[support/supporting-you/family-resources/](https://www.togetherforshortlives.org.uk/get-support/supporting-you/family-resources/)” write: “View our family resources”

Think about what it sounds like out loud

A long web address link written like this: <https://www.togetherforshortlives.org.uk/get-support/supporting-you/family-resources/>

Would read out on a screen reader menu as:

h t t p s colon forward slash forward slash w w w dot togetherforshortlives dot org dot uk forward slash info forward slash get support forward slash supporting you forward slash family resources

Front loading: putting the keywords at the beginning of the link helps users scan the page more easily

It's not an exact science, just try to pull out the keywords so that if someone is scanning the page or reading links with a screen reader, they can easily find the content they want.

Using our colours

Use our TfSL colour palette in digital design. They have been chosen to ensure that they work together, however there are some simple rules you will need to follow to keep them accessible.

Colour contrast is important. It can affect people's ability to receive the information visually. Anything that is indicated by colour needs to have a secondary way for it to be distinguished. E.g. Press the red button may be unhelpful if there are several buttons and the person

cannot distinguish red from green.

Text needs to have sufficient contrast to the background. Use the [colour accessibility section](#) of our online brand guidelines to ensure you are using contrast in an accessible manner.

If you are uncertain, contact the Communications team or use the [Webaim Contrast Checker](#) to check whether the two colours will work for all audiences.