



Doncaster Council

Report

To the Health and Wellbeing Board

Date: 9 June 2022

Easy Read – accessible information about public services

1. Background

- 1.1. Accessible information is vital to help people from a range of backgrounds, learning styles and disabilities find out the information they need about the council, to access services and help make decisions about their life.
- 1.2. One accessibility format is Easy Read. Easy Read information is for some people who:
 - have a learning disability
 - have low literacy levels
 - use English as a second language
 - are elderly
 - are deaf.
- 1.3. Easy Read is a way of translating difficult information and making it easy to understand. Easy Read information uses simple words in short sentences, with pictures to help explain the words. Easy Read is different from plain English and plain language but uses the same principles and builds on them.
- 1.4. Our customers have a range of requirements and Easy Read is one format that we as a council are using more to engage and inform our residents. However it is not embedded in our communications arsenal across services and inconsistently used across the council with some services providing Easy Read documents and others not. It should become a default format as part of our communications and engagement toolbox.
- 1.5. Communicating clearly and consistently with our residents in formats that are relevant to them is critical in helping them to access information and services. We deal with complicated, often jargon-filled information in letters, information sheets and brochures that are sent to residents and there is a presumption that this is enough to explain.

Why now and why is it important?

- 1.6. Quite simply the pandemic has shown us a range of ways our residents and businesses want to be communicated with. They want accessible information that helps them to understand, appreciate and access our services in a way that

suits them and in a format that they are comfortable and knowledgeable with. Communications that are accessible have a range of benefits, not least customer satisfaction and acknowledgment of individuals' and groups' needs but also it is best practice. Organisations and businesses are engaging with their customers via Easy Read and accessible formats as part of their everyday business methods. Having Easy Read embedded into our accessible communications offer will help the council now and in the future.

- 1.7. Customers who feel appropriately engaged with, find information, advice and guidance easier and more effectively. This find first time approach will also reduce the number of unnecessary customer interactions on line and in person or on the phone, if the information advice and guidance is provided at the outset of the customer search whether online or sent via post or available on site. This approach also fits in with shift 4 of the regenerative council programme strategic outlook and goals.
- 1.8. Easy Read also supports digital lab aspirations and insight as we find out more about how and where our audiences engage with us. It also offers more accessibility to our services' information, advice and guidance and more routes for public engagement.

2. Proposal

- 2.1. The council is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion being at the heart of all we do and this should also apply to how we communicate and engage with our residents and service users.
- 2.2. The use of Easy Read across the council is not consistent. Some services and in particular Adults, Health and Wellbeing, regularly use this format to engage with their customers whilst others only use it for specific larger scale projects or upon request.
- 2.3. There is no 'central repository' of resources or service to create and develop Easy Read documents and this is currently done by services themselves.
- 2.4. Easy Read usage is a distinct skill and one that cannot be easily assimilated as a corporate offer even though there are colleagues around the council who have detailed experience of producing documents whilst others do not, so no consistency in developing Easy Read documents or even producing them as standard for an audience.
- 2.5. Therefore the Council is subscribing to an annual Easy Read Library for all services to access the 'how to' guides, assets such as pictures and formats and this becomes part of the toolkit for services to use when communicating with residents. There will be a procurement exercise to determine the best option.

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 For Health and Wellbeing Board partners to consider whether there is an opportunity to partner with the Council on Easy Read approaches to support wider awareness and inclusion of Doncaster people in health and wellbeing.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1 – Examples of Easy Read documents

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Appendix 1 – Excerpts from Easy Read documents 2021

Example 1 – Winter booklet from Corporate resources



3. Get active

Doncaster has lots of parks and outdoor spaces you can visit with your household or **support bubble**.



A **support bubble** is where a single person joins up with another household.



For information about outdoor places you can visit in Doncaster go to: www.visitdoncaster.com/green-doncaster



You can also do activities on the internet, like yoga, Zumba and keep fit.



Websites like YouTube have lots of videos showing you how to keep fit in your own home.

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Introduction



Doncaster Council is here to support you.



This information explains the help and support that is available to you this winter.



Cold weather advice

For advice about what to do during cold weather, go to:

www.doncaster.gov.uk/winter



Coronavirus COVID-19

Coronavirus COVID-19 is a new illness that can affect your lungs and breathing.

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Illness during cold weather



Cold weather can be very bad for your health, so it's important to look after yourself during winter.



If you have a cough or a cold, go to the pharmacy straight away before it gets worse.



Your pharmacist can tell you what medicine you should have at home to help get through the cold weather.



Medication

Make sure you order enough to last through Christmas and New Year.



If you run out, contact your pharmacy or phone **NHS 111** who should be able to help.

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Example 2 – from Adults, Health and Wellbeing

Why we wear PPE

Keeping everybody safe



Staff at Stainforth may look different.

This is Fiona wearing her extra protection called PPE.

- ✓ Face mask and Visor
- ✓ Gloves
- ✓ Aprons

Don't be scared



- ✓ PPE helps staff to work safely
- ✓ PPE helps stop the Coronavirus spreading to others
- ✓ Underneath it is still the same person looking after you.

Coronavirus

How to get a test



If you get **symptoms of coronavirus** you can now get tested.

Book a test as soon as possible. There is a new NHS website and **119** phone number you can call.

What happens?

You can ask for a test to do at home - a carer can help



Or you can ask to go to a local testing centre



An NHS worker will explain more on the phone or at the testing centre



Call **119** to book a test



If you have symptoms
Stay home for 7 days
Phone 119 to book a test
In an emergency call 999