

# Five principles for producing better information for disabled people

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**Supporting public sector communicators and practitioners**

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Office for Disability Issues

HM Government





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*Pictured: Anne McGuire  
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## Foreword

Public services need to respond to the challenges and demands of today's society. They have to be focused around the needs of service users, pupils, passengers and public who need to have a greater say in the design and delivery of the services they use. Good quality information provision is an essential part of helping us provide these services.

If our customers are not aware of the service, the criteria needed to qualify for it, and how it can benefit them, we will fail the very people we seek to benefit. We cannot provide responsive services unless people have a bigger say in what they receive and the places where they live.

Disabled people are a particularly important group of customers. Not only do over 10 million people have rights under the Disability Discrimination Act, but as the population continues to age this group is likely to get larger. No public body serious about its role in delivering services to people can hope to meet their wider strategic objectives without first thinking explicitly about the impact upon disabled people.

The Disability Equality Duty (DED), which came into force in December 2006, now requires all public bodies to look at the impact on disabled people of everything they do. Such an approach will benefit the service provider as well as the customer. An inclusive approach to developing the service will not only benefit disabled people but all customers. It is important when designing your service to think about how your customers will get to know about it; and that you consider explicitly disabled people's needs.

You should think about all of the information you provide, whether in the form of websites, events, leaflets, booklets or even through another organisation. By considering disabled people's needs from the outset you can channel your resources more effectively and

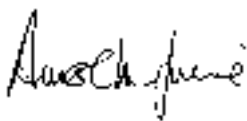
make a much bigger impact. However, to really know whether the approach you take is working, you still need to consult with users.

Your approach should not just focus on the format in which information is provided. You should seek to gain an understanding of how disabled people need and use services. Like all people, different groups of disabled people may require different information to others. A person with a severe learning disability may require a very different approach to someone who is visually impaired. A disabled person who does not speak English as their first language may have particular needs.

Having said that, there are some guiding principles which should always be applied and we highlight these in this document. These principles have come about as the result of work co-ordinated by the Office for Disability Issues (ODI).

This work marks the mid point in a project that seeks to improve the way information is provided to disabled people. The ODI will continue to work with specific government departments and local public bodies to test and further develop the principles in this document. We are keen to know what is being done in practice in this area and would like to hear from you if you feel you are applying good practice. Please contact us at [office-for-disability-issues@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:office-for-disability-issues@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)

Those of us involved in the design and delivery of services need to make a reality of the principle of inclusive and universal public services. We are all busy people but to achieve our wider objectives, it is crucial that we involve service users and disabled people in particular. This document is intended as a first step in a process of identifying the right approach but we hope at the very least it will get you thinking creatively about how you provide information to disabled people.



**Anne McGuire**  
Minister for Disabled People