



**GreenLight**

**Making written  
information  
easier to understand**



# Format

- Use Arial 12/14 point. Avoid fancy fonts as they are hard to read.
- Use clear headings in **bold**.
- Use bullet points.
- Use text boxes to break up the page.
- Justify text to the left.
- Don't use block capitals, italics and underlining as they are hard to read.
- Space out the writing.
- Avoid using columns.
- Only use illustrations/images where necessary. The Patient Information Centre can provide advice.

# Design and layout

- Always provide a contents page.
- Clearly number each page.
- Keeps titles and headings clear.
- Keep information in a logical order.
- Put points in an order that makes sense.
- The start of new sections should be made clear.
- Do not cram lots of information on one page, as this can deter people for starting to read the text.

# Plan what you want to say

- Is written information the best way to give information?
- Who is the information for and why is it being written down?
- Include only what people need to know.
- Leave out information you don't need.
- Put points in an order that makes sense.
- Use easy words and short sentences (maximum 15 words per sentence).
- Use people's names rather than pronouns.
- Try to write as you usually speak.
- Don't use jargon. Use words familiar to the reader.
- Explain jargon terms or unfamiliar words.

Contact the Patient Information Centre for further advice  
Tel: 0191 246 7288 Email: [pic@cntw.nhs.uk](mailto:pic@cntw.nhs.uk)