



Easy, Free and Quick ICT Accessibility

For Voluntary and Community Organisations

Produced by



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Introduction

This booklet is designed for all Voluntary and Community Organisations to explain why accessibility is vital to support your work with beneficiaries, and how easy it is to make simple practical improvements to your accessibility.

The booklet is part of an accessibility pack produced by AbilityNet, the UK's leading authority on accessible IT, for the ICT Hub, along with the Successful Computing for Disabled People CD.

The first section of the booklet explains how accessibility can help improve your service to users, volunteers and employees, and how through improving accessibility you can enhance the efficiency and reach of your service. It also aims to clarify your legal obligation to make adjustments for disabled people and simplify some of the information surrounding this area.

Section two gives straightforward and practical guidance for improving the accessibility of your organisation. Our top ten lists will help you make your services more accessible to staff, volunteers and service users who experience difficulty or discomfort using a PC. Experience also tells us that making IT accessible has the potential to improve the experience of a broad range of learners. Most of the ideas in this booklet are free, or cost less than £100.

Section three signposts sources of further information and advice for organisations wanting to build on the ideas suggested in this booklet. Along with the Successful Computing CD, it should give you the tools you need to affect further change.

What is Accessible Technology?

Accessibility is about making changes or adjustments to computers so they are easier for the user to access. All organisations need to ensure that their computers can be made accessible to those who have difficulty reading the screen, problems using the keyboard and mouse or reading and writing difficulties. In most cases this can be achieved through making minor low cost changes to system settings.

Who are AbilityNet?

AbilityNet is a national charity and the leading authority on disability and computing. AbilityNet provide Assessment, Training and Consultancy in accessible computing for the commercial, public and not-for-profit sector and for individuals.

Our assessment service recommends individually tailored IT solutions for people who find some aspect of using a computer difficult. We have a wealth of experience in training and consultancy to organisations of all sizes tailored to suit their requirements.

AbilityNet has a strong reputation for working with community and voluntary organisations as well as those involved in adult training. Recently AbilityNet worked with UFI learndirect on the Disability Champions project providing consultancy and training in accessibility to learndirect centres across England.

What is the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Hub?

We are a group of voluntary sector organisations who have come together to plan and deliver a co-ordinated framework of ICT guidance, good practice, advice and support for voluntary and community organisations, accessible at a local level.

Our aim is to improve voluntary and community sector ICT infrastructure so that voluntary and community organisations are enabled to achieve their missions more efficiently and effectively through the better use of ICT.

Part one:

Why accessibility is key to the VCS

Comply with the Law

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) makes it illegal to discriminate against people with a disability.

This means:

- treating a disabled person less favourably for a reason related to their disability
- failing to make reasonable adjustments to avoid placing a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with someone who is not disabled

How do we define disability?

The DDA states that:

- a disabled person is someone who has a physical or mental impairment, which has an effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities
- the effect must be substantial, adverse and long-term (more than 12 months)

How do we define less favourable?

The DDA contains some terms that will only be defined when case law is more established. Less favourable simply means that someone with a disability has been given a lower standard of service than someone without a disability would normally receive.

For example, if a shop has a section that is only accessible via a small flight of stairs, someone with a physical disability would not be able to reach that section, therefore they are being treated less favourably than someone without a disability.

What is a reasonable adjustment?

There are no hard rules that define what a reasonable adjustment is. It has to be reasonable for both parties. If you are a very small organisation you would not be expected to fit automatic doors, but you could fit a doorbell offering assistance to access the premises.

Many reasonable adjustments will be common sense and can be implemented cost effectively, sometimes even for free. The changes can often benefit everyone, not just disabled people

Some changes may be needed in the way some services are offered and supported, premises (equipment, signage, lighting, access), ways of communicating with people with disabilities and staff awareness of the issues facing people with a disability.

“Many reasonable adjustments will be common sense and can be implemented cost effectively, sometimes even for free.”

SENDA (Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001)

SENDA is a separate but complimentary act that gives disabled students the right not to be discriminated against in education, training and any services provided for students, and for anyone who is enrolled on a course provided by a responsible body (this includes FE/HE institutions and sixth form colleges).

Student services covered by SENDA can include educational and non-educational services, i.e. examinations/assessments, short courses, work placements, field trips, libraries and other learning resources.

What next?

To find out more about the DDA it is recommended that all employers, service providers and educational establishments read the Codes of Practice which can be found on the internet at: www.drc-gb.org/thelaw/practice.asp.

Improve your business and reach more people by being accessible

In the Voluntary and Community Sector, whether catering for public access, staff or volunteers, accessibility offers numerous benefits.

At the heart of these benefits is the realisation that improving the accessibility of your ICT will improve the experience of all computer users.

At AbilityNet, we often find that demonstrating a few simple changes, like increasing menu sizes, is popular with not only the person we are assessing, but also their colleagues!



Increase productivity and benefit

Use the skills of older and disabled staff and volunteers

Building in accessibility can allow your organisation staff/volunteers to fully access your ICT resources, increasing productivity and saving both time and money. For a staff member or volunteer, using appropriate access technology usually results in an increase in productivity, by using tools which save keystrokes or make common tasks easier.

You may not currently employ any members of staff with disabilities, however many people during the course of their working life experience either a temporary, or long-term injury. By quickly and effectively responding to the needs of any employee who has difficulty or discomfort in using the computer, your organisation can retain their valuable services. Disabled people also offer a potentially untapped source of volunteers for your organisation.

A survey by the Department for Work and Pensions (2002) found that 12% of disabled people of working age volunteer, compared to 10% of non-disabled people.

“At AbilityNet, we often find that demonstrating a few simple changes, is popular with not only the person we are assessing, but also their colleagues!”

Accessibility can increase your organisation's customer base

There are approximately 8.9 million disabled people in Britain, which is a lot of potential customers, volunteers and employees. Disabled people have an average annual spending power of £50 billion a year¹.

Not only does the economy heavily rely on this income but it also provides a very powerful voice that cannot easily be ignored. Having inaccessible facilities can mean that this powerful customer base is being turned down by your organisation.

Voluntary and Community organisations do not usually sell services to their users, however whatever the measure of your effectiveness as an organisation, helping more people usually attracts more funding.

Disabled people can be a receptive audience for your services, however they may need to be given the message that you are catering for their needs. Your commitment to accessibility will make for good, proactive marketing content.

Increased accessibility benefits all

It is not only disabled individuals who benefit from increased accessibility. Accessibility can allow many individuals a more comfortable working experience. For example, an accessible website is 35% easier to use for every visitor².

Many ICT issues that are viewed as common problems, such as difficulty seeing information on the screen or fatigue whilst working at a computer, can also be overcome by increased accessibility. Planning ahead to create a healthy computing environment also helps to prevent/detect Repetitive Strain Injury earlier, thus avoiding a potential cause of injury to employees.

Strengthen your Funding bids

Accessibility can be used to attract funding as it demonstrates that your organisation is up to date with current legislation, and has a commitment to social responsibility.

Many funding bodies now ask for evidence concerning Equal Opportunities and Diversity policies. A strong accessibility policy offers evidence of your organisation's pro-active commitment in these areas.

“Disabled people have an average spending power of £50 billion a year”

1. **Source:** Regulatory Impact Assessment, Access to Goods, Services and Facilities, Disability Discrimination Act, Department of Work and Pensions, July 2001.

2. **Source:** DRC Formal Investigation into website accessibility April 2004
<http://www.drc-gb.org/library/webaccessibility.asp>

Case Study: Reaching more learners through accessibility

Whitehawk Inn Training Centre, Brighton

The Whitehawk Inn Training Centre in Brighton, an IT open learning centre for the local community, welcomes a group of students with acquired brain injury on a weekly basis. Says Sara Callarman, Tutor (Equal Opportunities):

“The AbilityNet Accessibility Kit enables us to cater for all kinds of disability and adapt the technology to the individual. Through gaining computer skills, our disabled students have increased in confidence and enjoy using e-mail and the Internet. Some are even thinking about undertaking some IT qualifications.”

Simply the right thing to do...

Over and above considering accessibility because of the business benefits and legal requirements, it is simply the right thing to do.

Disabled and older people are often those who will benefit most from services, particularly those offered through ICT. They also have a lot to gain from remaining actively involved in the community through volunteering.

Many volunteers are those who are no longer able to work full-time due to health issues, or who have retired but wish to give some of their time to a worthy organisation. Similarly, many people with disabilities are able and willing to work full-time, giving the employer the benefit of their individual skills and experience. For disabled people to miss out on these opportunities, when a few simple changes could allow them to participate is simply wrong.

Voluntary and Community Organisations are many and varied, but are united in a wish to make a positive impact to society or individuals in their chosen area. While achieving these core aims, you are also in a good position to show a genuine commitment to equal opportunities and diversity.

Having accessible ICT demonstrates that you are not only aware of other individuals requirements, but that your organisation is acting with a social responsibility. Demonstrating social responsibility is a key element to building a good reputation and becoming a trusted organisation.

By simply reading this guide, you will learn how to plan and offer accessible IT to your service users, staff and volunteers. At AbilityNet we believe in offering real chances and opportunities to all, and can show you how to obey the spirit of the law rather than just following the letter of the law.

“For disabled people to miss out on these opportunities, when a few simple changes could allow them to participate is simply wrong.”

Part two:

Handy Hints

Ten easy, free and quick ways to improve the accessibility of your computers

Here are 10 ways to improve the accessibility of your computers. None of these will cost you any money, and all of them can make a real difference for many individuals.

At the end of each section is a sentence that describes who would benefit from this alteration the most. However, all ideas in this section could be of use to any user, particularly as it shows that computers can be adapted to suit people rather than the other way round!

You do not have to know much about computers to make these changes. For more detailed information and full instructions, please refer to the AbilityNet fact-sheets on the: “**Successful Computing for Disabled People**” CD included with this guide. Please refer to the fact-sheet quoted or phone:0800 269 545 to be talked through the changes.

1. Show people how to set screen colours which suit them

The default colour setting for windows does not suit everyone, especially on menus where dark grey text is displayed on a light grey background. Screens can be hard to see due to visual impairment, or simply “getting older”.

Many individuals find the white background uncomfortable, including those with migraines and dyslexia. The colour settings in Windows can be changed to high contrast colours such as yellow on black, or a light colour background used instead of white. These settings can be easily accessed in the display properties section.

May help individuals with visual difficulties and dyslexia

Also see AbilityNet Skill-sheet on the CD – Changing fonts and colours in Windows XP

2. Increasing menu sizes

Many people struggle to read menus and would find larger text more comfortable. The size of menu text can be easily increased from 8 pt up to 24pt. This also makes for a larger target area for users less accurate with the mouse. These settings can also be accessed in the display properties window.

May help individuals with visual difficulties and dyslexia

Also see AbilityNet Skill-sheet on the CD – Changing fonts and colours in Windows XP

3. Make text more readable

The windows default font is **Times New Roman** which is a serif font (one with extra lines on the letters) and is particularly difficult to read for many people. Fonts which do not have serifs, such as **Comic Sans MS** and **Arial** are much easier to read. Most word processors have a variety of fonts to choose from, and when given the opportunity, people will have individual preferences.

May help individuals with dyslexia and learning difficulties

Handy Hints

Also see AbilityNet Skill-sheet on the CD – Choosing Your Preferred Text Style in Windows

4. Tuning the keyboard

People who physically struggle to type on a standard keyboard can be helped by changing the settings of the keyboard in Windows Accessibility Options. Here you can set the computer to ignore keys hit twice, slow down the repeat rate and even ignore keys hit in error (by setting a minimum time for the key to be held down). Almost every AbilityNet assessment starts with changing these settings, and you can offer this too!

May help individuals with physical difficulties

Also see AbilityNet Fact-sheet on the CD – Accessibility Options in Windows XP

5. Taming the mouse

Many users struggle with the standard mouse, but many of these difficulties can be overcome by changing the mouse settings. The cursor can be slowed down, the double-click speed slowed down, and the pointer made bigger so it's easier to see. Many left handed mouse users are also unaware that the mouse buttons can be set for a left handed user.

May help individuals with physical difficulties or left handed users

Also see AbilityNet Fact-sheet on the CD – Dealing with keyboard and mouse difficulties

6. Using the keyboard as a mouse

Many users are physically unable to use a mouse, but can use a keyboard successfully. A useful facility called mousekeys allows the numberpad to be used to move the mouse.

May help individuals with physical difficulties

7. Or using the mouse as a keyboard

If a member of staff/volunteer is having difficulty using a keyboard but can use a mouse easily then an on-screen keyboard could be used. An on-screen keyboard is a programme that displays a virtual keyboard on the computer screen that can be used with a pointing device. There is an onscreen keyboard built into windows, which can be found under the accessories menu in accessibility.

May help individuals with physical difficulties

8. Install a free text reader

Many individuals could benefit from the ability to have the computer read text out loud. A free programme called ReadPlease can perform this useful function. The programme can be downloaded for free from www.readplease.com. It is also clear that the providers have a sense of humour – try clicking on the faces and see what happens!

May help individuals with visual difficulties, learning difficulties and dyslexia

9. Use free magnification and screen reader software

Many users with a visual impairment will struggle even with large text, as many areas of the computer cannot be enlarged. Magnification software makes things on the screen bigger, and a screen-reader reads information from the screen. There is a free magnifier and a free screen-reader called 'Narrator' built into windows, which can be found in the program menu under accessories, then accessibility.

May help individuals with visual difficulties

I0. Install free word prediction software

Many people are now familiar with word prediction software, which is now used on most mobile phones. A free version for the computer is available called LetMeType. This program learns as you type and displays a list of words based on characters typed. In time it can help to save keystrokes, so increasing speed and reducing effort.

May help individuals with dyslexia and learning difficulties

Case Study: Making the most of volunteers

Citizens Advice Bureau, Boston

Maggie, Bureau Manager explains:

“Three of our volunteer advisers were assessed in 2003. During which they were able to try many different keyboards and mice and were amazed at the different the appropriate equipment made. Two had feared that they would have to give up being advisers because they found it so difficult to use conventional IT equipment.”

“Diane has rheumatoid arthritis and this affects her wrists, fingers and ankles. She is unable to handwrite and experiences pain using a standard keyboard or mouse. Diane’s needs were assessed and she tested several different kinds of keyboard and mouse. The best choice for her was a Goldtouch Ergonomic Keyboard which has a lift and split action. The addition of two gel wrist supports was also suggested and these made her more comfortable. She now uses a large Logitech cordless mouse which supports her whole hand whilst her thumb controls the trackball.”

Ten easy and low cost ways to improve your computers' accessibility further

I. Scanner & Optical Character Recognition Software

Scanners are very useful tools especially when combined with Optical Character Recognition (OCR). OCR software allows the computer to scan documents and convert to text.

This means that a printed letter can be scanned in and formatted with a word processor to make the text bigger and displayed using the user's preferred colour settings. Used in conjunction with text reading software such as ReadPlease, scanned text can be read out loud by the computer.



Cost: **Approximately £60**
Supplier: **Most IT suppliers**

Keyboards

Everyone's hands are a different size and shape, so it is surprising that most computers have the same standard size keyboard. In addition, a majority of users do not use all the keys on the keyboard so quite often vital space is being taken up by these extra keys, particularly the number-pad.

Below is a list of possible alternatives that might suit your staff/volunteers needs better than a standard keyboard. Even if the budget is a problem it is worth being aware that different keyboards are available and stocking a few alternatives. is a good idea to cover a broader range of users.

High visibility keyboard stickers

High visibility keyboard stickers make the letters on the keyboard much easier to see. These are a cheap and effective method that will help the majority of users whether they are visually impaired or just not touch typists.



Cost: **£12.00**
Supplier: **Keytools**

Handy Hints

3. Cherry Compact Keyboard

Small keyboards can be easily positioned and are often suited to single handed users. They also fit easily between the arms of a wheelchair. The number-pad is built into the existing keys to reduce space, which also allows the mouse to sit in a more healthy position in front of the right shoulder for a right-handed user. The Cherry is a good all round keyboard and is worth investing in.



Cost: £45.00
Supplier: Inclusive Technology

Mice

As with the standard keyboard, everyone has different sized hands but usually use the same size mouse. Additionally, novice computer users often struggle with the complex physical skills required to use a mouse, such as double clicking. Below is a list of possible mice and tips and other pointing devices that may be worth investing in.

TIP: why not have two mice per PC?

A computer can easily have two mice plugged in that both work. Having two mice will mean that one could be set for a left-handed person.

4. Small Right Hand (RH) Contour

A generally good all round multi functional mouse that comes in a range of sizes.



Price: £82.00
Supplier: Keytools

TIP: why use a mouse at all?

Most programmes have built in keyboard shortcuts, which can be faster than using a mouse.

5. Kensington Expert Pro

The Expert Pro is a ten button trackball that can be easier to use for those who find the mouse difficult. Clicking is done separately from moving the pointer, making this much easier. The six additional programmable buttons provide very useful functions.



Cost: £89
Supplier: Keytools

6. Speakers or headsets

Many computer programmes use sound as an output, especially software to help those with visual or reading and writing difficulties. Providing a headset or speakers for these users is an effective accessibility option that is low cost.



7. A Text Reading Facility

ReadPlease

Having text read aloud can be very beneficial to many computer users whether they are visually impaired, have a literacy difficulty or simply find it easier to proof read their work by sound.

Readplease is a free program that allows text to be read aloud. A Commercial version called ReadPlease Plus has better speech and has additional benefits such as reading directly from the internet.

Price: Free up to \$59.95
Supplier: www.readplease.com

Case Study: Speech recognition software for service delivery

MS Therapy Centre

Mike explains “I am a tetraplegic MS sufferer with no movement below my neck. In 2003 I needed voice recognition software and an accompanying training package to continue producing a bimonthly magazine for the MS Therapy Centre.

AbilityNet provided a first-class service for me, providing and installing the software on my laptop, and offering training at home. Using my computer is now simple and easy, and I’m able to complete tasks quickly and accurately. In fact, my computer skills are now better than they’ve ever been - hands or no hands.

I was able to learn about Dragon NaturallySpeaking quickly and easily, After the initial session I was already able to dictate text, and control of the remaining computer functions was learnt by the end of the second tuition morning. By that stage, I was confidently navigating all the PC functions.

The ability to use this software has given me a huge boost. The MS Therapy Centre has benefited as well. Not only can I now continue producing their magazine, but I also design signs and posters for use around the Centre.”

8. Word Prediction Software

Staff/volunteers that have difficulty with literacy or input speed could benefit from a word prediction facility. Penfriend is a typing tool that predicts the word the user is typing based on the characters typed and the frequency of each word. In the picture below Penfriend is predicting following letters “TH” being typed, to choose “there”, the user would press F3.



Price: £60

Supplier: Penfriend

Handy Hints

9. Dragon NaturallySpeaking Standard

Dragon NaturallySpeaking is voice recognition software which allows you to input text using your voice alone. Higher cost versions also allow menus and programs to be controlled by voice. Voice recognition software is useful to people with physical difficulties and dyslexia, and can allow any user to improve their speed and productivity.

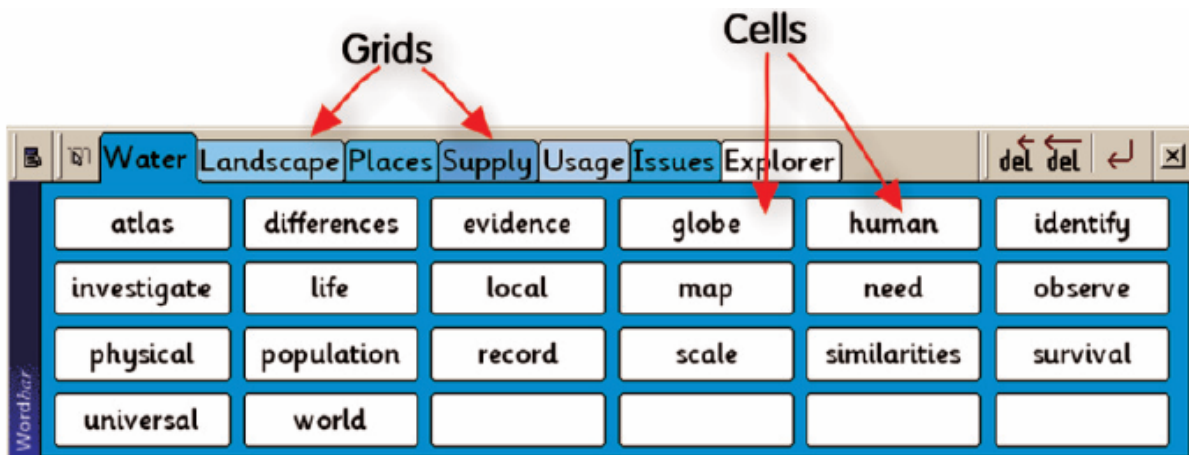


Price: From £79.98 (standard)

Supplier: Nuance

10. Wordbar

Wordbar is a toolbar that sits along the bottom of your screen. You can click on words and phrases in Wordbar to send them to your word processor. This can speed up a users input and offer vocabulary support or a writing framework for those with literacy difficulties.



Cost : £60

Supplier: Crick Software

Case Study: Retaining a valuable employee

Peter Bedford Housing

Following a promotion to housing team leader, Becky needed to use a computer more, but she developed severe pain in her hands and elbows and Tenosynovitis in her arms. An AbilityNet consultant met with her in her workplace and tested out various pieces of equipment before writing up a full assessment. The equipment recommended was for voice recognition software, a special keyboard and a graphics tablet, as well as some training.

Becky describes the result of this:

“Before the assessment and the purchase of my adapted computer equipment I was totally unable to use my computer, and my symptoms were beginning to affect my life outside work, for example holding a phone or chopping vegetables. At work I needed to hand write everything and have it typed up by a colleague, I even needed to make appointments with my colleagues so that they could help me check my e-mail as I could not use a mouse.

I felt unproductive and at one point very de-skilled as I was reliant on others to do virtually everything for me. From an organisational standpoint this means I’m not taking up the time of my colleagues, and I have been able to stay in post and do my job, and they haven’t had to recruit to my post.”

Ten easy ways to plan for accessibility

1. Make sure your team have the right attitude.

Talk to your staff about how you can all meet the needs of disabled users, and make sure they are happy and confident that they can do so. If necessary, some disability awareness training could be arranged.

2. Examine the layout of your rooms and building.

Is there enough room for a wheelchair user to move around the offices and is there a disabled entrance/toilet?

3. Have a safe computing policy.

Provide training to existing and new staff on using a computer safely and give all employees/volunteers a DSE Assessment. Spotting inadequate furniture, or badly set out equipment can pay dividends in avoiding strain and discomfort caused by computer use.

4. Offer to set up the computer to suit each individual user.

Many people will not ask for help, and may not realise that computers can be easily adjusted. Offering to set text to a suitable size and tune the keyboard/mouse as part of a standard introduction will help to take away any embarrassment they may feel.

5. Have a small range of alternative keyboards and pointing devices on display.

Again, offering to let people try different keyboards and mice is a friendly way to make sure they are aware of the alternatives available. Ideally, a range should be out and plugged into computers so people can try them without having to ask. If you invest in a splitter, you can plug one standard and one non-standard mouse into each computer.

6. Have a selection of adaptive software available, and someone who knows how to use it.

A good range of software can be compiled from the other top ten lists in this book. With a basic voice recognition package, magnification and screen-reading software and word prediction software you could meet the needs of many people.

7. Refer individuals with more complex needs to a specialist organisation.

It is likely that once you start meeting people's needs in this way you will gain in confidence swiftly and be able to help many people. However, don't forget there is specialist advice and information available from AbilityNet for those people who need extra help.

8. If the computers are to be networked, consider setting up profiles for users with different needs.

Setting up a profile for visual impairment, one for dyslexia and one for physical disability can allow your staff to quickly adapt computers for people without needing to take much time. A factsheet will be available in the near future, but in the meantime call the AbilityNet helpdesk on 0800 269545.

9. If you use laptops ensure that staff/volunteers are trained to use them safely and provide docking stations with external mice and keyboards.

Using a laptop improperly can lead to pain and discomfort for the user. When the laptop is being used as a workstation, a docking station with external devices allows the laptop to be used more like a desktop computer.

10. Ask for feedback from users.

Conduct a survey on current and potential users to assess what difficulties they may have faced accessing the IT – and act on the results

Case Study: The impact of accessible equipment

MS Holiday Centre, Scotland

At the Leuchie House, MS holiday centre in Scotland, Carol Wicker heads up a nurse-led 'Cybercafe' for guests and is delighted with the results:

“Using a computer, often for the first time, is really exciting and fulfilling for our guests. Our accessibility kit enables us to cater for the wide range of disabilities that they present and adapt the technology to each individual. Exploring e-mail and the Internet, playing challenging games, getting in touch with long lost friends and creating photo albums of their stay are just some of the activities guests undertake with our help. We are primarily nursing staff, but with AbilityNet’s support, computers have added a whole new dimension to life at Leuchie.”

Part three:

What you can do now

Frequently Asked Questions

Here are answers to some of the most frequent questions from voluntary and community sector organisations.

If the answer to your question is not here, please contact AbilityNet on 0800 269 545 to find out what you need to know. Don't forget to mention that you have read this booklet!

Q I am really interested in improving the accessibility of my organisation – what can I do now?

A The CD accompanying this booklet has a range of fact-sheets and other resources to help you do just that. To find out more about what you can do to help disabled staff, volunteers and service users look out for more events and resources at www.ictHub.org.uk, or call AbilityNet.

Q I have a client who is struggling to read the screen, how do I make text bigger?

A Click on Start, then Control panel. Click on Display and then click on display properties. The font size is set to normal but you can change it here if you need too. Tip – you can use the zoom feature in Word to increase text size without affecting printing!

Q I use a computer in my voluntary work and have arthritis. How can I stop getting lots of characters when I hold down the key for too long?

A Again go to Control Panel, but this time click on Accessibility Options, click on filter keys and follow the instructions. Tip – there is an AbilityNet fact-sheet to give full details about how to tune the keyboard on the CD which accompanies this booklet.

Q I'm new to computers and struggling to use the mouse. How can I slow it down?

A Click on Control Panel, then on Mouse. Go to the Pointer Options property sheet, and the top section allows you to change the speed of the pointer. Tip – you can slow down the double click speed here as well!

Q I can only use one hand and can't use my keyboard. What can I do?

A You might want to consider using a compact keyboard, which is smaller than a traditional one. You could also try word prediction software which cuts down on keystrokes. Tip – you can get free downloads of word prediction software to try. Look at the resources section of the CD.

Q I am struggling to use the computers in my local centre, as I can't read the text on the computer screen. Is there anything which can read the text to me?

A Try using a text reader, such as ReadPlease. This can be downloaded free from <http://www.readplease.com/>

What you can do now

Q I am helping a member of staff who sometimes hits two keys at once. What can I do to help her?

A Consider getting a keyboard with a keyguard. This is a rigid metal plate with holes drilled in above each key. One of these should mean only one key can be hit at a time.

Q One of our computer users is struggling to use either a keyboard or a mouse. I've tried different things, but can't afford to buy lots of different things for him to try. What should I do?

A It sounds like he would benefit from an assessment of his IT needs. AbilityNet offer an assessment service, where we can bring along lots of kit for him to try. Contact us for more information.



Glossary

Here are definitions of some of the terms used in this booklet. There are often official definitions of some of these terms, but we have written our own definitions for simplicity.

Accessibility - making changes or adjustments to computers so they are easier for the user to access.

Accessible website – a website which complies with accessibility standards, to ensure that people with disabilities or using assistive technology can access the website.

Assistive technology – hardware or software which makes it easier for individuals with disabilities to use a computer.

Assessment - an assessment focuses on helping individuals overcome any difficulties they may experience using a computer by considering the needs of the individual and trying different solutions to come up with the most suitable.

Compact keyboard – a keyboard which has a small footprint. Usually without a number-pad, but with the same size keys as a standard keyboard.

Dyslexia – a specific difficulty with reading and writing which affects different individuals in different ways.

ICT – abbreviation for Information and Communication Technology.

Keyguard – a metal plate which fits to a keyboard. Small holes allow keys to be pressed – but only one at a time!

On-screen keyboard – a pictorial representation of a keyboard on the screen which can be accessed by using a mouse or switch.

Optical Character Recognition Software – software to convert scanned text into text which can be recognised by a computer. It can then be set to the individual's preferences.

Magnification software – software which enlarges the picture on the screen for people with a visual impairment. Usually displays only part of the screen at a time, so makes navigation more difficult.

Repetitive Strain Injury – injury resulting from repetitive movements, often associated with computer use.

Screen-reader – software which reads information from the screen. The most sophisticated screen-readers allow computers to be used by people who have no vision at all.

Text reader – software which reads text out loud. Useful for people who have difficulty in taking in information, or with visual impairment.

Trackball – a pointing device with the ball on the top. Easier to use for many people than the standard mouse, especially as it often separates clicking from moving the mouse.

Visual impairment – a visual problem, including blurred vision, fatigue or nystagmus (flickering).

Word prediction software – software which predicts which word is being typed as letters are typed. Useful for many different people including people with dyslexia and physical difficulties.

Voice recognition software – software which types as words are dictated. Good for productivity, people with fatigue and those with physical difficulties.

Helpful Organisations

ICT Hub Partner Organisations

AbilityNet

Address: PO Box 94

Warwick

Warwickshire CV34 5WS

Telephone: 0800 269545

Fax: 01926 407425

Website: <http://www.abilitynet.org.uk>

Email: enquiries@abilitynet.org.uk

AbilityNet supports anyone with a disability to access ICT, sets standards in accessible web design and trains 4,000 professionals a year in healthy computer use and the benefits of accessible ICT for all. It is committed to ensuring everyone who wishes can benefit from the equality of opportunity that using a computer brings.

IT4 Communities

Address: CentralPoint

45 Beech Street

London EC2Y 8AD

Telephone: 020 7796 2144

Fax: 01926 407425

Website: <http://www.it4communities.org.uk>

Email: info@it4communities.org.uk

IT4 Communities provides volunteer IT support to the voluntary and community sector through a network of IT professionals. Launched in November 2002, it has delivered over £580,000 of support to date with a return on investment of over 3:1.

LASA - London Advice Services Alliance

Address: Universal House

88-94 Wentworth Street

London E1 7SA

Telephone: 020 7377 2748

Fax: 020 7247 4725

Website: <http://www.lasa.org.uk>

Email: info@lasa.org.uk

LASA offers comprehensive online ICT information for small and medium sized organisations, written in plain English, for non-specialists. It also hosts the UK Circuit Rider steering group. Circuit Riders are IT professionals offering mobile support to local organisations.

What you can do now

NACVS – National Association of Councils for Voluntary Service

Address: 177 Arundel Street
Sheffield S1 2NU
Telephone: 0114 278 6636
Textphone: 0114 278 7025
Fax: 0114 278 7004
Website: <http://www.nacvs.org.uk>
Email: nacvs@nacvs.org.uk

NACVS is a network of over 300 Councils for Voluntary Service providing local support and a national voice for these organisations. It hosts an IT email list with over 130 members, and provides IT services, training and events for its members.

NCVO – The National Council for Voluntary Organisations.

Address: Regents Wharf
8 All Saints Street
London N1 9RL
Telephone: 020 7713 6161
Fax: 020 7713 6300
Helpdesk: 0800 2798 798
Textphone: 0800 0188 111
Website: <http://ncvo-vol.org.uk>
Email: ncvo@ncvo-vol.org.uk

NCVO has over 10 years experience of increasing the capacity of the voluntary and community sector through ICT. It organises events, lobbies and works with funders, hosts a forum of over 500 ICT practitioners, and has negotiated discounts with suppliers saving the sector in excess of £10million over 5 years. It also operates a free ICT advice and information helpdesk.

Other helpful organisations

For a full list of helpful organisations, please see the Successful Computing CD contacts list. These are a few which we think you'll find particularly helpful.

Centre for Accessible Environments

70 South Lambeth Road
London, SW8 1RL
Telephone: 0207 840 0125
Textphone: 0207 840 0125
Fax: 0207 840 5811
SMS: 07921 700098
Web: <http://www.cae.org.uk>
Email: info@cae.org.uk

A charity with a mission to share expertise on the practicalities of designing accessible buildings and places. Services include information, training and consultancy. Clients and service users are disabled people, their families and advisers, including occupational therapists, construction professionals, businesses large and small, health trusts, schools and colleges, community projects and many others.

What you can do now

Computers For The Disabled

41 New Waverley Road
Noak Bridge, Laindon
Essex, SS15 4BJ

Telephone: 01268 284834

Fax: 01268-479028

Web: <http://www.cftd.co.uk>

Email: bigpaulh@blueyonder.co.uk

New and 2nd Hand PC's & parts can be supplied to disabled people and associated organisations by this Non-profit organisation.

DIAL UK

St Catherine's
Tickhill Road
Doncaster, DN4 8QN

Telephone: 01302 310 123

Fax: 01302 310 404

Textphone: 01302 310 123

Web: <http://www.dialuk.org.uk>

Email: informationenquiries@dialuk.org.uk

DIAL information and advice services are based throughout the UK and provide information and advice to disabled people and others on all aspects of living with a disability.

Foundation for Assistive Technology (FAST)

12 City Forum
250 City Road
London, EC1V 8AF

Telephone: 020 7253 3303

Fax: 020 7253 5990

Web: <http://www.fastuk.org>

Email: info@fastuk.org

Their mission is to maximise personal autonomy by promoting collaboration between users of assistive technology, service providers, product manufacturers and those involved in developmental research to ensure the future is needs-led.

National Network of Assessment Centres (incorporating NFAC since April 2004)

Web: <http://www.nnac.org/index.html>

Email: broadbentco@btconnect.com or
Lesley.Morrice@nottingham.ac.uk

The National Network of Assessment Centres is a UK-wide network of specialist services that work together to facilitate access for disabled people to education, training, employment and personal development. Assessment Centre services include quality assessment and support in the use of assistive technology and/or specialised learning strategies.

What you can do now

REMAP

D9 Chaucer Business Park

Kemsing TN15 6YU

Telephone: 0845 130 0456

Fax: 0845 130 0789

Web: <http://www.radar.org.uk>

Email: info@remap.org.uk

REMAP is a national registered charity which for more than 30 years has provided one off technical aids which help disabled people of all ages to enjoy a better lifestyle.

Skill

Chapter House

18-20 Crucifix Lane

London, SE1 3JW

Telephone: 0800 328 5050

Textphone: 0800 068 2422

Fax: 020 7450 0650

Web: <http://www.skill.org.uk>

Email: skill@skill.org.uk

National Bureau for Students With Disabilities. Skill promotes opportunities for young people and adults with any kind of disability in post-16 education, training and employment across the UK.

TechDis Accessibility Database

The Higher Education Academy

Innovation Way

York Science Park

York, YO10 5BR

Telephone: 01904 717580

Web: <http://www.techdis.ac.uk/>

Email: helpdesk@techdis.ac.uk

This site provides an on-line resource of information about products which are available to assist those with disabilities. The resource is designed to provide information on assistive, adaptive and enabling technologies to the United Kingdom Higher and Further education sectors.

The Disability Rights Commission (DRC)

DRC Helpline

Freepost MID 02164

Stratford-upon-Avon, CV37 9BR

Telephone: 08457 622 633

Textphone: 08457 622 644

Fax: 08457 778 878

Web: <http://www.drc-gb.org>

Email: ddaahelp@stra.sitel.co.uk

The Disability Rights Commission (DRC) is an independent body, established by Act of Parliament to eliminate discrimination against disabled people and promote equality of opportunity.

Case Study: Reaching more service users through accessibility

Edmonds Court Foyer Learn Direct Centre, Birmingham

The PR & Communications Manager, Catherine Clarke writes: “St Basils is the leading regional provider of accommodation for young people who are or may be at risk of becoming homeless. We work with young people by providing accommodation and support services to prevent homelessness happening in the first place.

We have 399 units of mainly self contained accommodation in Birmingham Solihull and Redditch areas. Our Equality Diversity Strategy informs and drives everything we do. In terms of accessibility we have a number of units of accommodation which are accessible for disabled people. Our computers are all accessible for wheelchair users. We provide a range of software and hardware that enable full access to the training courses.



Our staff have the RNIB certificate in supporting people with sight impairment and are experienced in working with disabled people.

At Edmonds Court Foyer based in Small Heath, where we have four accessible units, we recently held our annual open day with the theme of accessibility. Many visitors came from various disability organisations and visited the accommodation and training facilities.

The event was well attended. We have three other projects around the city which have accessible accommodation and we will make adjustments wherever necessary to enable any young person to receive our services and to access our accommodation.”