Top accessibility tips for committee report writing

- Arial Font size 12. Line spacing 1.15. Left aligned, not justified.
- Avoid using abbreviations. Use "and" instead of "&" unless part of a company name e.g. "Holland & Barratt" or a standard abbreviation like A&E.
- Don't use ALL CAPITAL LETTERS except for recognised initialisms or acronyms such as NHS or WDHCP. If you use abbreviations state them in full when you first use them in a document e.g. Wakefield District Health & Care Partnership (WDHCP). The same goes for names of people in minutes or notes. Then you can continue to use the abbreviation after that.
- Don't use underlining unless it's for a hyperlink. Hyperlinks need to be accessible and describe what the link is about e.g. The NHS website has more information on how to find a GP.
- Don't use *italics* (unless it's for a legal document like a contract or legislation).
- Use **bold** for emphasis, but use it sparingly. If you need to separate words with a forward slash (/) always include a space either side of it.
- **Images and Tables:** Use Alt text for Images and Tables. Alt text can be added by right-clicking the image, clicking 'Format picture', choosing 'Alt text' and typing in the description field. You do not need to type in 'Picture of' or 'Image of' before your descriptive text. Make your alt text as short as possible but meaningful, it's not a literal description but needs to convey the context and purpose of the image or table.
- Don't fit text around images. Place images at end of paragraphs where possible. Avoid inserting images of scanned documents containing text.
- **Remember:** You must explain the key content of images or tables in the main text of the document above the table or image. You cannot rely solely on someone understanding the information from the image or table displayed. Using the caption function on tables makes this easier as you can refer then to Table 1 etc. and it will number your other tables automatically. If this is not practicable you should indicate from where a more detailed explanation may be obtained.
- **Format tables:** Use the 'Insert Table' command to create a table. If the table spans multiple pages, this header should be repeated by highlighting the row, right clicking it, going into 'Table properties' and checking the 'Repeat as header row at the top of each page' box. To make sure that rows don't split across pages, enter the table properties and uncheck 'Allow row to break across pages'. Text direction in tables must be horizontal.
- Tables should **not** contain split or merged cells (relative to the cells on other rows), completely blank rows or columns, or nested tables.
- **Flow charts:** Save as an image and remember to use alt text. Then describe in a simple paragraph next to the image the steps of the process **unless** already described in document.
- Check the accessibility of your document in 'Word' by using its built-in word accessibility checker. This will highlight any accessibility-related problems with your document, describe why you should fix them, and give you guidance on how to do so.
- If in doubt use the Producing Accessible Content and Documents Guidance or seek advice – please e-mail: calccg.equalityckw@nhs.net