Develop accessible Word documents - checklist

## Styles

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | * Edit ‘Styles’ to format your document – Do not use font formatting to style text i.e. change font type and size manually. |
|  | Style elements (e.g. Heading hierarchy etc.) have a significant role in terms of accessibility – ensure these are used as they have a different look i.e. Heading 1 looks bigger than Heading 2 etc. |
|  | * Headings levels should be in correct order i.e. Heading 1, Heading 2, Heading 3 not Heading 1, Heading 3, Heading 2. |

## Fonts

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | * Use 12 point font or larger. |
|  | Use a sans serif font i.e. Arial, Helvetica or Verdana. |
|  | Using italics or upper-case letters for emphasis is not recommended. |
|  | * Be consistent with the fonts used in the document. |

## Colours

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | * Avoid using colour as the only means of distinguishing information. |
|  | If you are using colour, ensure the information being conveyed can be done without the colour e.g. consider this with graphs etc and if it can’t consider an alternative. |
|  | * Ensure there is colour contrast e.g. black and white. |
|  | * If printing the document use a matte/non-glossy finish. |

## Spacing

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | When starting a new page, use the Insert tab then Page Break or CTRL + Enter. Don’t keep pressing Enter to generate space. |
|  | When adjusting spacing do it via the ‘paragraph’ formatting menu. |
|  | * Space between the lines should be at least 25 to 30% of the point size. |

## Images

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | * Default the wrapping style of non-text elements as ‘in line with text’. |
|  | Ensure any graphics and images have alternative explanatory text. |
|  | Avoid text boxes, Word Art, SmartArt and watermarks as they’re inaccessible to screen readers. |
|  | * Avoid using watermarks and background images as they can make documents illegible. |

## Columns

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | * When inserting a column, use the ‘page layout’ tab then ‘columns’. |
|  | * Try to avoid using multiple successive spaces and tabs – assistive technology will not recognise this as a column. |

## Tables

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | * When including a table, use the ‘insert’ tab then ‘table’. |
|  | * Use correct ‘table headings’ and ‘check’ the ‘header row’ check box. |
|  | If a table extends across a page the heading rows must be repeated at the top of the table on each of the subsequent page/s. |
|  | Avoid merging cells and rows and having empty cells and don’t put links or images in tables. |

## Hyperlinks

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | When choosing which word/s to hyperlink, choose the word/s that best describe where you are taking the user. |
|  | Don’t use terms such as ‘click here’ or ‘more info’ as the hyperlink title. |

## Graphs and Charts

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Add a short caption preceding the chart or graph that describes the content. |
|  | * Provide an alternative presentation of any findings. For many charts, the best alternative format in which to present data is a table with the original figures. |

## Headers & Footers

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | * Do not manually type the page numbers. Use the ‘insert tab’ then ‘page number’. |

Remember – once completing your document always run accessibility checker!