Style guide – PHC website

**What is Digital Accessibility?**

* Digital accessibility is the practice of designing and creating digital content which can be used by everyone, regardless of their cognitive ability or motor skills.
* Some people use assistive technologies such as screen readers and eye tracking tools.
* But these tools only work if the websites they are navigating are accessible. Without alternative text or image descriptions for example, a screen-reader cannot provide a user with any useful information about an image.

*The following are some tips for both general style and for ensuring digital accessibility when uploading content to the PHC website.*

**Text**

* Use an adequate font size and ensure that the font is legible. Stick to the font styles used throughout the website.
* *Do not overuse italics as they can be distracting.*
* DO NOT OVERUSE CAPS. Full caps can be difficult to read and misinterpreted by screen readers. They also make it seem like you are shouting!
* Avoid using underlining for emphasis; this generally suggests hyperlinks, especially on webpages (if you need to use formatting for emphasis, bold is the best option and should be used sparingly).
* For hyperlinks: Instead of using vague terms like “click here,” use more descriptive and specific call-to-actions such as “sign up,” “click here for more information” or “subscribe.” Make sure your hyperlink is long enough that it is not missed. For example, hyperlink “Click here for more information” instead of just the word “here.”
* Use simple and concise language. Many people accessing our websites (e.g., PANORAMIC trial website) may not have English as a first language. For people with dyslexia or other learning difficulties, plain language and instructional diagrams make things much easier to understand.
* Limit line length. Long and wordy sentences may be confusing with a screen reader and can interfere with readability and retention.

**Capitalisation**

When referring to the Division and the University, and implicitly meaning the Medical Sciences Division or University of Oxford, please capitalise Division and University. Do not capitalise in other instances

*Correct use of capitalisation:*

* The Division is the largest division in the University.
* The University has four divisions. I work in the best division, the Medical Sciences Division. The Division is great!
* I work on the divisional website in the divisional office.
* I work in the Medical Sciences Divisional Office, for the divisional Finance team.

**Bullet points**

* Do not punctuate at the end of each bullet point
* Capitalise each new bullet point

**Images**

* Keep the issue of representation in mind when selecting photos for the website.
* Make sure you select images that are high-resolution, so they do not look pixelated when uploaded.
* Profile images should be professional images, if possible.
* The media often over-represents young, white, able-bodied men in their imagery. People who do not fit this description can thus feel left out, especially when it comes to important communications about healthcare.
* Be aware of role assignment and portrayal as well. Check that your image is not promoting any racist, ageist, sexist, homophobic, or other stereotype.
* Avoid embedding too much text in images. Smaller fonts tend to become pixelated and hard to read when magnified.

**Image Description**

* Image descriptions and “alternative text” (“alt text”) help people to visualize images.
* Whenever you use an image or a gif, include an image description, so that individuals using screen-readers can appreciate the information.

**Downloads**

* If you are providing resources to download, make sure you have versions that can be read by screen readers (e.g., Word documents, not just PDFs).
* Often in PDF documents, the “text” on the page is a scanned image of the text, rather than the True Text itself. This is problematic because images of text cannot be read by screen readers and other assistive technologies.

**Resources**

[Oxford University Style Guide](https://www.ox.ac.uk/sites/files/oxford/media_wysiwyg/University%20of%20Oxford%20Style%20Guide.pdf)

[Haiku HQ](https://www.haikuhq.com/)

[PHC Communications Guidelines](https://www.phc.ox.ac.uk/intranet/communications)

[NDM Writing for the Web](https://www.ndm.ox.ac.uk/internal/ndm-web-team/writing-for-the-web)