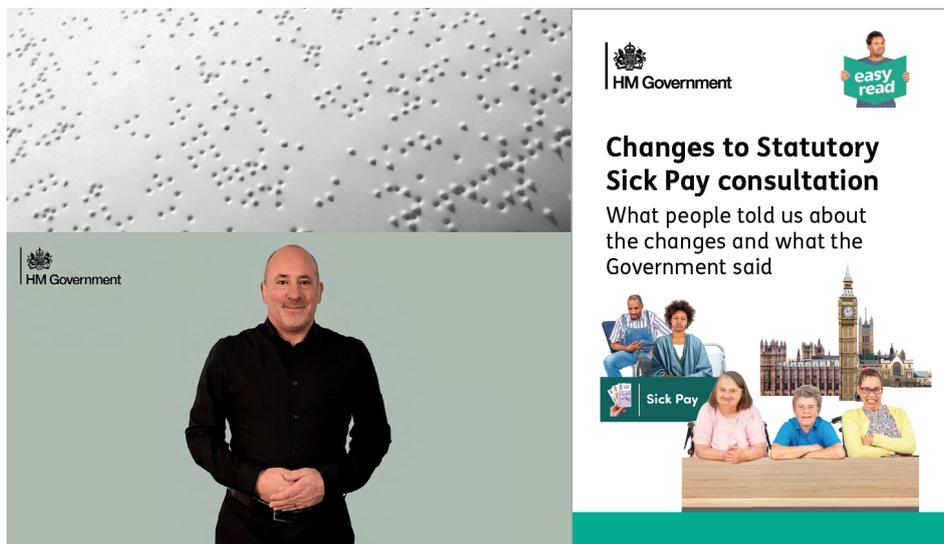# Guide to BSL, Audio, Braille & Easy Read

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The aim of this guide is to help you through the process of producing a laying paper in both BSL and Audio formats, with some points for Braille & Easy Read. All of these formats are produced on a very bespoke basis, this guide is to try and give indications of what will be required and needed and to help smooth the process.

Your HH Global account manager will be able to help or give any further advice you may require.

1. Introduction

BSL and Audio formats require a recording studio service, with the relevant actors, editors and engineers. As this is quite specialised work, the resource is often booked well in advance and even what may appear to be a small amend could involve a re-record, requiring all the elements as above and the time associated with that.

2. Starting the process

Please try to give HH Global as much advance warning as possible of your paper, so we can try and allocate and book the required resource. Please supply a briefing form to HH Global (**commandandhouse.team@hhglobal.com**) as soon as you know you will need to lay a paper, with as much with as much detail as possible, but the key elements being:

- Lay date

- Final file supply date

- Approximate Word count

- Approximate number of charts and tables

- Final output and hard copy requirements

HH Global will supply a quote back based on your briefing form, and once the quote has been approved or a PO supplied, the resource can be booked. Please update HH Global with any changes as soon as they become available, to that they can manage the resource.

Pre-production meetings should be arranged as soon as possible, to discuss the full requirements in detail and throughout the production cycle, working closely is the key to the process.

HH Global will allocate an account manager who will help with the production and co-ordination of your paper through to laying.

There will also be second line support at HH Global, to assist with any other requests, such as costs or timings, to ensure that the production is not interrupted whilst supplying required answers in a timely manner. Details of both will be supplied to you with the base quote.

3. Block booking

It is possible to block book the resource, both during normal hours and possibly outside of those times too. This resource is subject to availability and would need to be booked at least two full working weeks in advance.

Any work outside of normal working hours would also need to be booked in advance and is subject to additional costs

The block booking is only to have the resource available, any additional work, amends for example, that are allocated to the block booking would be an extra charge.

Once the block booking has been confirmed, it is subject to cancellation fees, as listed below:

- 0-7 days prior to start date – 100%

- 8-14 days prior to start date – 50%

- 15 days onwards, prior to start date – No charge.

4. Preparation

4.a Points to clarify when supplying your file:

All formats – any embedded hyperlinks need to be clearly identified, so that they can be presented as a URL as opposed to the text in front of the URL.

Audio

- Are there any abbreviations that need to be spoken rather than spelt i.e. "PSED", should this be read out as one word, or individual letters? A full list of acronyms and how they are to be treated should be supplied.

- Confirm final file requirements, MP3 or MP4. Your digital team will be able to advise on this.

- Instead of "Page ** – please confirm "later on in this document" OR "on Track xx".

Braille

- Please ensure that all copy, such as grammar, format, bold text, italics, are correct, the Braille output will be a render of the supplied file.

- Text should be left aligned, with no tabs.

- Fractions should be written out – three-fifths or 0.6

BSL

- Please confirm the logo to be used, e.g. HM Government, departmental ,etc.

- Subtitles to be embedded or supplied as separate .srt files, your digital team will be able to advise on this.

- If embedded subtitles, please confirm background colour, e.g. departmental brand colour.

- Background colour to be used for video.

4.b Preparing and sending your file.

It is suggested that you run the Word editor before sending the file to HH Global for production. Without a full proof-reading service even something such as missing comma could mean a re-record on some formats. This is a quick and easy tool, your HH Global account manager can advise on the process if required, but it does need to be run at source as only the composer of the papers content will know the answer to any issues the tool may flag.

The alt text for any tables/figures should be both embedded in the Word file (for the accessible PDF) and supplied as a separate list. The list will be used as descriptive text for the Audio and BSL, where we include an image and sign the descriptive text.

Supply the final draft to HH Global as soon as possible, but no later than one week prior to final amends being supplied. The Easy Read will be started from this file as it is an interpretation of the content and not word for word.

HH Global will style the final draft in line with previous papers or to your guidance, and supply this back to you, which then becomes the Master file.

5. The Master file

This Master file will be used to create all other final outputs, so it is essential that all grammar, punctuation and capitalisation is correct in this version and only vital content changes are amended thereafter. This could save hours of time with re-recordings.

The first version will be suffixed Master V1, then all subsequent versions should be sequentially numbered, V2, V3 etc. The addition of TC to the suffix will denote it is the Tracked Changes version, the addition of CA to the suffix will denote is the Changes Accepted version. This way, their is full visibility of the most recent version, the changes that have been requested and when they have been accepted.

Any amends after the draft is supplied or during the process, should be made to the Master file, as tracked changes, and supplied back to HH with both Tracked Changes AND Changes Accepted i.e. MASTER_V2_TC AND MASTER_V2_CA. This will allow us to assess the impact of the amends on the flow of the document, page breaks etc., and that they have had client approval, sooner in the process rather than later, whilst also making the amends easily identifiable.

The MASTER version will be used to create all subsequent formats, print, e-lay, web accessible, which is why it must always be updated in real time. Work on these other outputs will not start until final approval has been received.

6. Proofing and amends

Due to the size and length of some of these files, the proof checking process can be quite time sensitive, so where possible, HH Global will provide key times for approvals on individual formats, to allow the buyer to prioritize in the required order.

The Braille proofs will be supplied as a text document for checking and approving, the first draft of the Easy Read will have some suggestions for the imagery to be used, to be confirmed by the client.

Changes to the BSL video/.srt and audio files will need to be supplied in Excel, with time stamps (example below), and the master updated accordingly. We can supply a template for the time stamp amends and we would require one for BSL and then a separate one for Audio, to avoid any cross confusion between the outputs.

| File name	Official	Listened when?	Noted @ [enter time]	Page number	Action/issue	Complete? Official initials and Green [complete] Red [not actioned yet]
Track 3 Chapter 1		28.03.25	0:06:24	22	Footnote 58 - in the audio version it is read out at the end of the bold paragraph. Text version shows this at the current system	

Changes to the Braille & Easy Read proofs should ideally be supplied as annotations to the proofs, using Adobe commenting tools. If this is problematic, then we can accept the changes on a spreadsheet, making it clear on where the content is, (i.e. page number/paragraph number) and what needs to change (include the current content and the revised content, with the changes in bold, or a different colour).

These amends need to be added to the MASTER document too & version control updated.

When proofing the BSL, the .srt file must be checked in conjunction with, so played at the same time as the video. Something may appear to be missing from the .srt but when seen in context with the video, it is potentially correct. Your digital team can help with this, .srt files should play on Media Player.

Easy Read proofs will be supplied based on easy read guidelines* as below and will also go through a peer panel review prior to publication. If it is felt that there are any aspects of the easy read that could be changed or improved, this can be discussed and agreed prior to the amends being made.

Please be aware that what may appear to be a small change, may have a big impact on the process. If the change is at the start of a recording, no matter how small but then has an impact that goes through the entire file, it could mean that the whole audio/video has to be re-recorded. An example is where the amend was to remove footnote 1, which in itself was a very small amend, but as it was the first instance, all the subsequent footnotes had to be amended and the body copy matched too, which meant the whole document had to be re-recorded.

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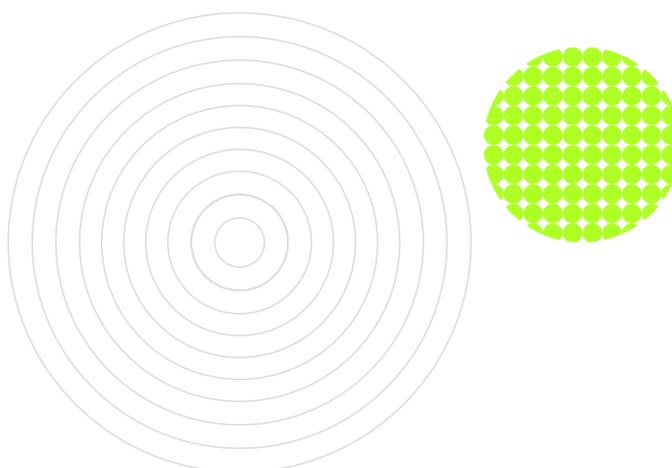
*   The Easy Read text, images and layout conform to European Standards and Mencap Guidelines. Text will use easy words. Difficult words or jargon will be explained. The information will be a summary and use only important points. Complex information will be simplified. Sentences will be short. Paragraphs will mostly contain only one sentence.

7. Points to note about proofs

Proofs will be supplied via the HH Global Box solution, you may require internal permission to access Box, test files can be supplied prior to go live.

Below is a list of some of the most common ways that the named format will differ from the print format. This is to try and avoid these being flagged as errors or issues when proofs are supplied, as this is the standard treatment.

Checking the proofs can be quite time sensitive and intensive, so please try to factor in as much time for your checks as possible. One method that was successful was one team work on BSL proofs, another on Audio and so on.

Audio

- Opening and closing brackets are not normally referenced in the audio files.
- Websites are spelt out rather than said.
- See below becomes: Given shortly/next.
- See above becomes: Previously given/mentioned.
- Footnotes are read after each corresponding sentence/paragraph, unless a separate reference document for the footnotes is requested.
- We usually state how long the recording is at the beginning of the document.
- As well as stating the length of the content, the recordings are also broken down into tracks where appropriate.
- Graphs/Relevant Pictures are explained rather than read as a sighted person would.

Braille

- Any quotation marks in the content of the paper will be produced as double quotation marks.
- Tables/graphs/charts will have: "The following is a table/graph/chart, the text has been lifted for your reference".

BSL

- Websites will be finger-spelt, so each letter will be presented one at a time, not acted as words.
- "Page" will be later on/earlier in this document.
- See below becomes: See below in video.
- See above becomes: Been explained earlier on in this video.
- Graphs/Relevant Pictures are explained rather than read as a sighted person would. It requires short text to explain about the graphs and we will also add the images on videos next to the translator for reference.

8. Indicative timings

The BSL and Audio files take the longest time to produce, due to the large number of people and processes required.

The two charts below give indicative timings, in working days, for a simple conversion, a complex conversion, for one round of simple amends and one round of complex amends. To arrive at a total indicative timeline, you will need to add the initial conversion, plus the number of appropriate amends. For example, a simple BSL conversion of 10,000 words with one round of complex amends and one round of simple amends would be 4 days (conversion) plus 5 days (complex amends) plus 2 days (simple amends), total – 11 working days, subject to approvals.

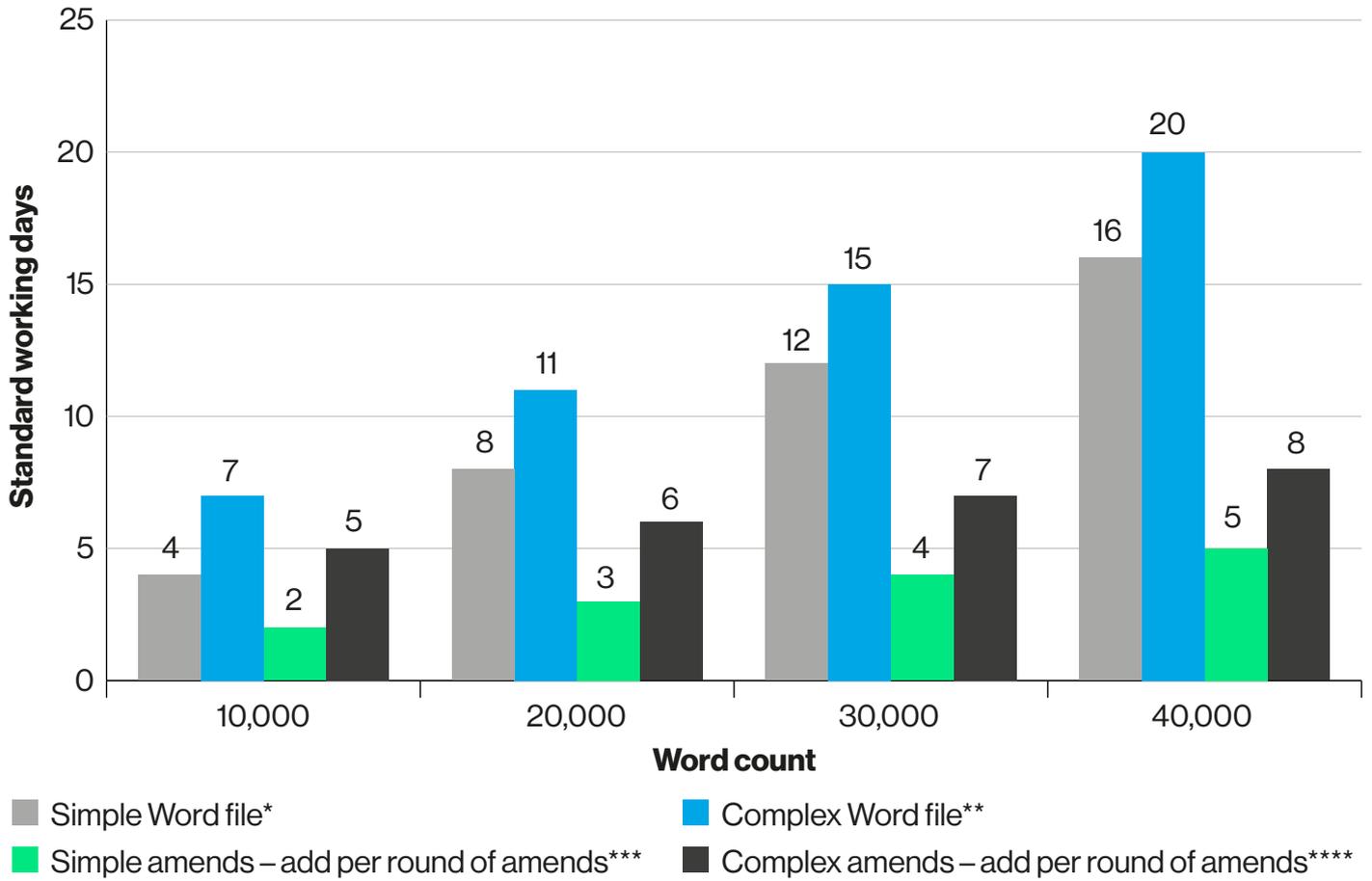For the purpose of the graphs, the following explanations apply:

* Simple Word file would be all basic text, no graphs, images, writing or footnotes with long URL's

** Complex Word file would have graphs, images, writing or footnotes with long URL's

*** Simple amends would be small type or punctuation corrections that require minimal re-recording

**** Complex amends would be re-styling, or any amend that had a knock-on effect throughout the document, meaning large sections to be re-recorded.

The number of days in the table represents days from receipt of the clean Word file to first proof, or from receipt of amends to revised proof.

These figures are purely for indicative purposes and cannot be taken as a guarantee for any specific project.

The schedules are all subject to resource/capacity availability at the required time.

Audio and BSL indicative schedule

Standard working days (y-axis, 0–25)
Word count (x-axis)

Word count	Simple Word file*	Complex Word file**	Simple amends – add per round of amends***	Complex amends – add per round of amends****
10,000	4	7	2	5
20,000	8	11	3	6
30,000	12	15	4	7
40,000	16	20	5	8

- Simple Word file*
- Complex Word file**
- Simple amends – add per round of amends***
- Complex amends – add per round of amends****

Easy Read indicative schedule

Standard working days (y-axis, 0–16)
Word count (x-axis)

Word count	Simple Word file*	Complex Word file**	Simple amends – add per round of amends***	Complex amends – add per round of amends****
10,000	5	7	1	2
20,000	7	9	2	3
30,000	8	10	3	4
40,000	10	14	4	5

- Simple Word file*
- Complex Word file**
- Simple amends – add per round of amends***
- Complex amends – add per round of amends****