

TfL text legibility standard

Issue 3

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Foreword

A well designed, confident and consistent visual identity is highly effective in communicating the strengths of our organisation. It is essential that Transport for London (TfL) maintains a high standard for coordinated design in every aspect of our operations.

This document details the rules that are to be followed when using text on posters, leaflets, reports and all other printed and non-printed outputs.

I Corporate typeface

The typeface we use is Johnston I00. It is exclusive to TfL and should be applied for by third parties through our website: tfl.gov.uk/corporatedesign

Headings

Headings are always to be set in Johnston I00 Medium.

Body copy

Body copy should always be set in Johnston I00 Light when displayed at 12pt or below. When displayed at above 12pt, Johnston I00 Regular must be used.

Point sizes

The minimum point size used on a piece is determined by the distance it is expected to be viewed from.

We have set minimum point sizes for each standard poster size. The minimum point sizes are compulsory and are detailed later in this document.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMN**OPQRSTUVWXYZ**
abcdefghijklm**nopqrstuvwxyz**
1234567890£/.,“()::;

Johnston I00 Medium

ABCDEFGHIJKLMN**OPQRSTUVWXYZ**
abcdefghijklm**nopqrstuvwxyz**
1234567890£/.,“()::;

Johnston I00 Regular

ABCDEFGHIJKLMN**OPQRSTUVWXYZ**
abcdefghijklm**nopqrstuvwxyz**
1234567890£/.,“()::;

Johnston I00 Light

2 Typographic policy

In consultation with the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB), we have developed a 'clear print' strategy for setting type in a way that makes it accessible to visually impaired people.

The main directives of this policy are:

- Text should always be set in mixed upper and lower case (never all upper case - even with headings)
- Minimum point sizes to depend on viewing distances (we also take into account the size of the poster or leaflet)
- For standard A4 documents the minimum body copy point size is 12pt
- Text should always be ranged left (ragged right) and never justified, or ranged right
- Text, on posters only, may be centred, but only where the body copy does not exceed three lines
- Headings are to be centred only where body copy is centred - centred headings should not exceed more than three lines of text
- Headings are not to include full stops
- Text should be set horizontally and never vertically, at an angle or following a curve
- Do not use italics
- To emphasise a word, use a different type weight
- Ensure good colour contrast between text and background colour
- Do not adjust the character spacing of the font (tracking)
- Do not reduce line spacing (leading)
- Do not indent the first line of a paragraph
- Use additional leading to achieve clear separation of paragraphs
- Bullet point indentations are allowed so long as text follows the indent
- Do not place text over an image unless the area on which the text is to be placed is flat and clear (such as a clear blue sky)
- Creative typefaces may be used for headlines on campaign posters, but only where headlines are included as part of the creative execution
- If using a creative typeface for a headline, avoid highly stylised typefaces such as ornamental, decorative or handwriting styles. Stylised typefaces should never be used for body copy or for calls to action
- Line lengths are never to exceed 70 characters
- The use of terminology on all material must comply with our editorial style guide

3 Text legibility and contrast

The correct level of contrast between text and background must always be displayed on TfL outputs.

TfL requires a contrast ratio of 4.5:1 for normal text and 3:1 for large text (WCAG level AA compliance).

TfL defines normal text as being below 18pt and large text as being 18pt or above.

To ensure the legibility of text, there are a number of websites that enable you to test the contrast between your text and background.

The website used by TfL Design is: <https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker>

Please note that the TfL Graphics team has the final say on whether a piece displays the correct level of contrast.

	
	
	
	
	
	
	

In this example text contrast is measured against the lightest area of the background

In this example text contrast is measured against the lightest area of the background

In this example text contrast is measured against the darkest area of the background

4 Minimum point sizes

Minimum point sizes for standard TfL poster and leaflet sizes are as follows:

Small guide leaflet

Viewing distance: Less than 1 metre

- Body copy 12pt (3mm cap height)

DL leaflet

Viewing distance: Less than 1 metre

- Body copy 12pt (3mm cap height)

A6 leaflet

Viewing distance: Less than 1 metre

- Body copy 12pt (3mm cap height)

A5 leaflet

Viewing distance: Less than one metre

- Body copy 12pt (3mm cap height)

Metro Ad

Viewing distance: Less than one metre

- Body copy 12pt (3mm cap height)

A4 poster

Viewing distance: Less than one metre

- Body copy 21pt (5mm cap height)

A3 poster

Viewing distance: Less than one metre

- Body copy 27pt (6mm cap height)

Tube car end panel

Viewing distance: Less than one metre

- Body copy 27pt (6mm cap height)

Escalator panel

Viewing distance: 1.5 metres

- Body copy 38pt (10mm cap height)

Bus headliner panel

Viewing distance: 1.5 metres

- Body copy 38pt (9mm cap height)

Tube/Tram/Overground panel

Viewing distance: 1.5 metres

- Body copy 38pt (9mm cap height)

Double royal poster

Viewing distance: Three metres

- Body copy 43pt (10mm cap height)

Quad Royal poster

Viewing distance: Three metres

- Body copy 43pt (10mm cap height)

Double Crown poster

Viewing distance: Three metres

- Body copy 43pt (10mm cap height)

4 sheet poster

Viewing distance: Three to six metres

- Body copy 86pt (20mm cap height)

6 sheet poster

Viewing distance: Three metres

- Body copy 86pt (20mm cap height)

16 sheet poster

Viewing distance: Seven metres

- Body copy 145pt (34mm cap height)

48 sheet poster

Viewing distance: Seven metres

- Body copy 200pt (47mm cap height)

96 sheet poster

Viewing distance: 26 metres

- Body copy 370pt (87mm cap height)

Note:

If the poster size that you require is not shown or, if in doubt, please contact the TfL Graphics team.

Further information

This standard outlines basic principles and therefore cannot cover every application or eventuality.

If you have any questions on how to apply these rules, contact the TfL Graphics team.

Email: corporatedesign@tfl.gov.uk

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