



Easy Read Project

Services for Children, Young People and Families

Outcomes and Impact Report – May 2023

Project Aim

“For 50 staff in Services for Children, Young People & Families to have access to training, support and resources, on a digital platform, to enable them to provide easy read information for the families that they work with, by the end of April 2023.”

Inclusive Communication

Without effective communication it is very difficult to participate in daily life. Reasonable adjustments to communication are required, to reduce barriers and inequality. Speech and Language Therapists (SLTs) are key players in promoting communication inclusion¹. The ultimate aim of inclusive communication is to support all members of society to be equal, reduce communication barriers, subsequent prejudice, and exclusion from society.

Easy Read Information

Easy read is one aspect of Inclusive Communication. It is a method of presenting written information to make it easier to understand for people with difficulty reading and/or language comprehension difficulties.

An easy read document uses sentences of no more than ten to fifteen words, with each sentence having just one idea. Plain English is used, and it avoids jargon.

An easy read document is usually presented in at least 14-point text, plain font, and includes carefully selected images to help people understand².

The Scottish and UK government promotes the use of easy read across the public sector, to increase access to public services.

Scope of this Report

This report summarises the development of ‘easy read’ project in Services for Children, Young People and Families, in Perth and Kinross Council. The SLT that led the project participated in a Digital Health and Leadership Project run by NHS Education Scotland (NES) and used improvement methodology to drive the project forward.

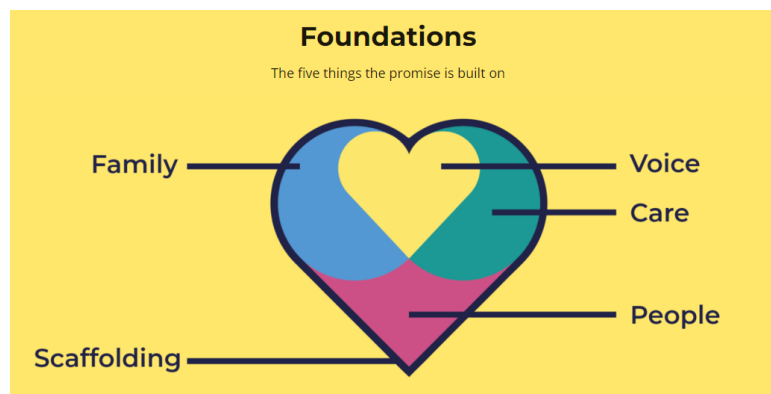
¹ [20162209_InclusiveComms_final.pdf \(rcslt.org\)](#)

² [Easy Read Service - Disability Equality Scotland](#)

Current Context

Scotland is currently progressing with the incorporation of the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) through the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill. The rights of children include education, freedom from violence, abuse, and neglect, being listened to and taken seriously, having a proper house, food, and clothing, and the right to relax and play³. Information needs to be accessible to them and their family if they are to thrive growing up in Scotland.

The UNCRC also states that all children should be able to grow up in a loving family environment. To make sure that this happens for care experienced children, the convention says there should be extra protections for them. Scotland has implemented 'The Promise' to make sure that there is support put in place to make this happen.



The 'scaffolding' of help, support and accountability must be ready and responsive, when required, to support families. The scaffolding must be inclusive enough to benefit families. Language must be clear to enable families to get help when they need it. Presenting information in an easy read format is an important part of the 'scaffolding'.

Within an Allied Health Professions (AHPs) context, inequalities are required to be a fundamental consideration of their practice and that AHPs must take opportunities to apply their breadth of skills in working across settings⁴

³ [Children's rights legislation in Scotland: quick reference guide - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

⁴ [Scottish allied health professions public health strategic framework implementation plan: 2022 to 2027 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

Speech and Language Therapy Role within This Project

Four roles were identified to enable the SLT to drive this project forward:

1. Lead a Working Group

This working group developed easy read templates that are now in use. The group also participated in some quality improvement tasks. The membership included Social Workers and an Improvement Officer which enabled the project to be driven forward at all levels. The core members of the group were:

- Janie Scott (Speech and Language Therapist)
- Julie Baker (Improvement Officer)
- Tracy Ross (Senior Practitioner, CREST)
- Claire Wilson (Social Worker, Change is a Must)

Angela McGeechan, Louise Barbour (Social Workers) and Wendy Smith (Mental Health Nurse) also provided some input to the group.

2. Electronic Document Management Site (EDMS)

The SLT was supported initially by IT in PKC to construct an EDMS site for Inclusive Communication. The working group planned the structure of the site. The SLT regularly updates it with new resources. It contains the following sections:

- Easy Read Resources – this contains widely available resources and some resources that have been made by PKC staff.
- Guide to Make your Own – this contains a variety of guidance on easy read. Appendix 1 shows the guidance developed during this project.
- Visual Tools – this does not contain much information currently, but it is there to expand in the future, beyond the easy read project.
- PKC Templates – these are the templates that have been developed by the working group. Templates have been created for:
 - Child Protection Case Conferences
 - Child's Plan
 - Family Time
 - Kinship Assessment
 - Meet your Team
 - Readmission to School
 - Safety Plans
 - Wellbeing
 - Working Agreements
 - Young Person's Planning Meetings
 - Discussion Records

Appendix Two shows an example of a template. Some of the templates can be filled in during a meeting and this allows the parent to leave with clear understandable information in their hand e.g., a minute from a young persons planning meeting. Others need some preparation e.g., a safety plan.

The site also celebrates when a group completes the training as their photo is put on the news board. There is a Teams channel incorporated. There has not been much activity on this and is something for future development.

Welcome to Inclusive Communication EDMS site

This site is designed to make it easy to access resources to support children, young people and families. This will grow over time as more resources are added.

The 3 tiers of training

Bronze - watch the accessible information video on PKC Learn. Once this is done you can access this site.

Silver - attend some face to face training to:

- Develop skills in simplifying language
- Explore new EDMS site 'Inclusive Communication'
- Developed technical skills in producing an easy read document

Gold - submit 2 'easy read' documents to the inclusive communication working group.

News + Add See all

Gold Award

Links

- Jargon Buster - SCRA
- Easy Read Information - SCRA

3. Training

Four levels of training were developed:

1. Bronze Level

This is a 20-minute awareness level training on accessible information, created by Julia Pollock, SLT at REACH. Permission to the EDMS Inclusive Communication site is granted once this has been watched.

[Accessible Information](#)

2. Silver Level

This is a face to face 2-hour training to:

- Develop skills in simplifying language
- Explore the new EDMS site 'inclusive communication'
- Develop technical skills in producing an easy read document.

Certificates are presented to participants after this training.

3. Gold Level

The participants submit 2 easy read documents that have been created after the training. Feedback is then given, and a certificate issued.

4. Train the trainer

Two members of the working group attended the bronze and silver training. They felt confident to deliver the training to their own teams. This has successfully happened with one team and the other is due to deliver the training soon.

4. Ongoing Support

During this project the SLT has been available for a Teams consultation and has responded to requests for support through e-mail. The SLT feels that it is much easier to have a joint conversation about appropriate supports as others share the same knowledge about easy read.

Measures of Impact

Numbers Trained to Silver Level

Team	Numbers Trained to Silver Level
REACH	16
CREST	4
Perth City and Highland	9
Blairgowrie	6
Children and Disabilities Team	9
Woodlea Cottage	3
SHINE	7
Change is a Must	1
Adoption Team	6
Strathearn and Kinross	6
Family Change	3
Looked After Child (LAC) Reviewing Officer	1
Family Group Decision Maker (HSCP)	1

The total number is **72** participants over **12** face to face sessions. This exceeded the project aim of 50 participants.

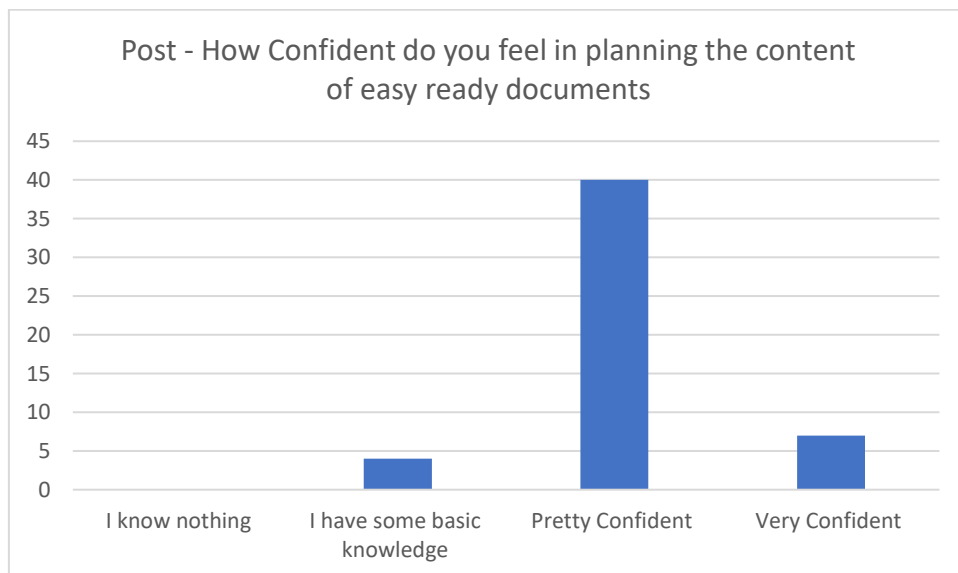
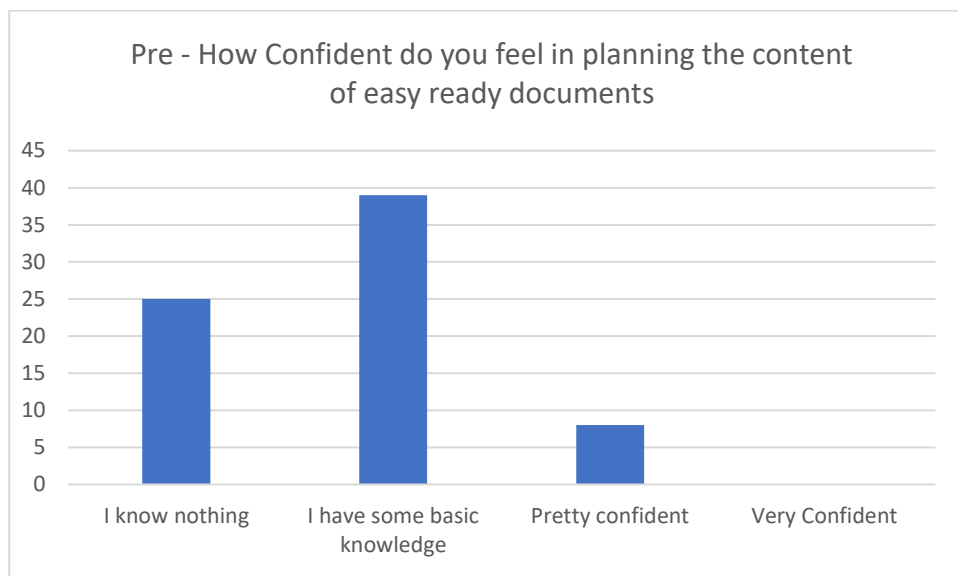
Numbers Trained to Gold Level

Three participants have submitted excellent easy read documents and have received their gold certificate. These documents were safety plans, service information leaflets, social stories, bedtime routines and sleeping tips.

Course Feedback

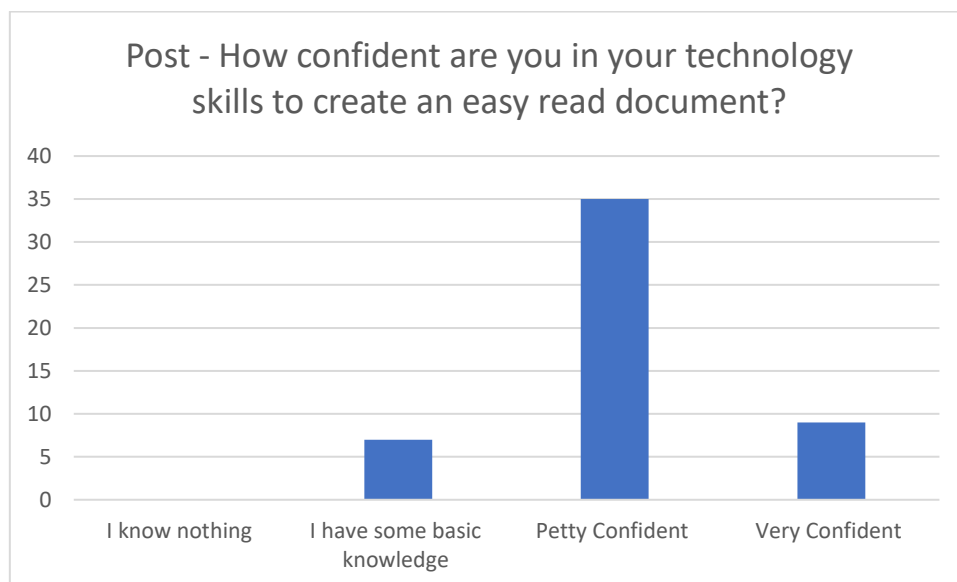
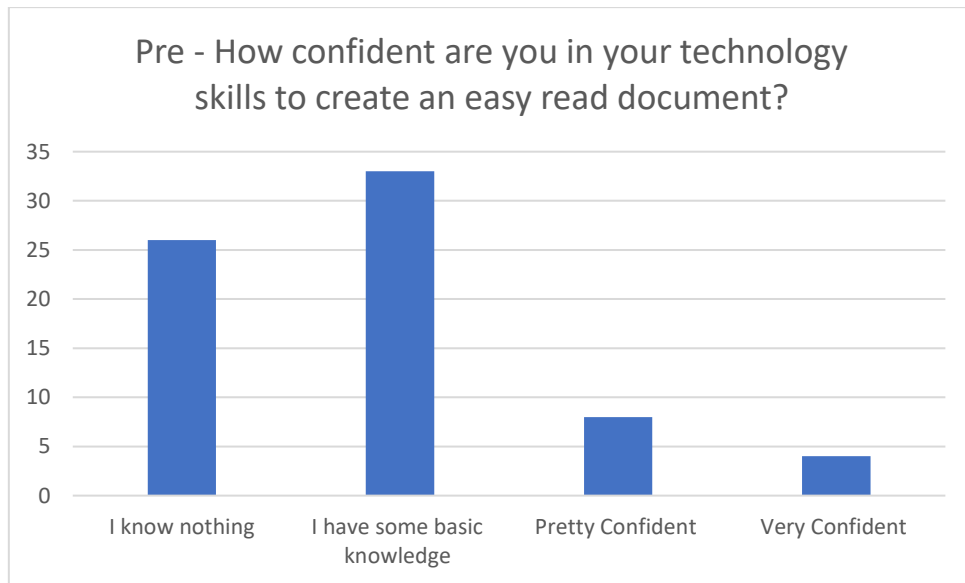
Feedback was gathered during the first 5 minutes of the course. This is called the pre-course feedback. This measures confidence in planning an easy read document and confidence in technical skills, prior to any training. The same measures were used post training. Additional questions were also asked in the post training questionnaire.

1. How Confident do you feel in planning the content of easy read documents?



This shows a substantial shift in confidence levels in planning the content of easy read documents. The number feeling very confident is low. This suggests that some ongoing support might be needed.

2. How confident are you in your technology skills to create an easy read document?



This again shows a positive shift in confidence levels of staff in creating an easy read document. Not many reached very confident so some ongoing coaching might be needed.

3. Overall, how would you rate the course?

Excellent	34
Very good	15
Good	1
Fair	0
Poor	0



4. How useful will the EDMS Inclusive Communication Site be to you in your current role?

● Extremely useful	39
● Somewhat useful	9
● Neutral	1
● Somewhat not useful	0
● Extremely not useful	0



5. How do you plan to put the training into practice?

Participants plan to use easy read principles in their work with children, young people, and families to help them to understand:

- The concerns that currently exist
- Contact (family time) agreements
- Working agreements and explain what is expected of family members.
- Safety plans - they are clearer and easier to understand
- Routines
- Timetables
- Content of reports
- Outcomes/recommendations
- Future tasks and decisions including after a LAC review or CP meeting
- Life story work (for adopted children)
- Legal processes around permanence orders and adoption orders to birth families
- Family plans

The feedback showed that this would be an effective way to support parents who have communication difficulties and support children with additional support needs. Many of the staff had already been adapting paperwork. The EDMS site now gives them standardised templates which can be easily adapted. It also provides a template for social stories.

"It has helped me think about how we currently do the children's reports and how we might adapt that to better support parents."

"I work with people and families with complex care needs and learning disabilities. This will be incredibly useful for communicating the family's plan and things that social work expects."

"The EDMS site will be the "go-to" place for ideas, templates, and advice."

Case Studies

Parent

This Mum had attended a young person planning meeting for her son, a couple of days prior to gaining this feedback. This mum has specific memory difficulties, after a stroke. The young person did not feel able to attend the meeting. An easy read minute was filled in during the meeting for the Mum to share with the young person when she got home.

"We sat together and looked at the information. It was easy to understand. It was so good having it written down. I didn't have to try so hard to remember and it helped me to remember. He could read it and understand it. After reading the report he said he would like to come along to the next meeting."

Sarah Alexander – Family Group Decision Making and Lifelong Links Co-ordinator

"I did a home-visit to meet a young couple who are about to become parents. This was to inform them about the family group decision making process and gain their consent. It is essential that they understand what they are voluntarily agreeing to. The young dad had ADHD and I could see that he had difficulties focusing on what I was saying. I showed him our usual leaflet first, but I was not sure that he was understanding the process. I then brought out our easy read version of our leaflet. He calmed physically and started to engage in the conversation. The parents gave consent to the 'family group decision making' and they asked to keep the easy read version of the information. The easy read leaflet allowed me to be confident that they understood the process and gave informed consent."

Additional Impacts

1. The CREST Team have completed their improvement plan for 23/24 and have included developing easy read templates and practices

within the plan. They have approached the working group to request working towards a team Gold Award.

Tracy Ross – Senior Practitioner, CREST

“We are a new team who are still developing our processes and paperwork. The easy read training has been invaluable in helping us develop how we share information, and it has helped us to think about the words that we use. In addition to creating easy read leaflets, we are also looking at how to make evaluations and consultations in an easy read format. A family plan is developed at the end of a family group decision making process. The format for this is being revised to ensure the information can be understood by each family.”

2. A member of PKC staff teaches Social Work at Stirling University. She asked for permission to use the Bronze Level Training as part of the Social Work degree course, and this has now been embedded into the graduate course.

3. The SLT has been approached by several teams, out with Services for Children, Young People and Families to find out more about this project with the potential of receiving training (CAMHS, SCOPE, HSCP). This is currently out with the scope of this project but signals a wider need across many services to adopt easy read principles in the delivery of services.

Conclusion and Future Hopes

This has been a highly successful project in meeting its outcomes. The number of participants exceeded the predicted number. There was an eagerness from participants to gain knowledge. The silver training was rated excellent and very good by the vast majority and felt to be relevant to their current roles. It is anticipated that the positive outcomes to children and families will increase as the impacts deepen.

The SLT's temporary contract has ended, and the hours are now 2.5 days in REACH. The following tasks will continue within the REACH role:

- Offer bronze and silver training to REACH staff
- Consultations for REACH staff
- Meet with mosaic project leads to see if this could fit into the new IT system

- Develop the TEAMS channel to provide updates for everyone on the EDMS site.

Capacity has been built within other teams, but some ongoing support may be required. This is currently an unmet need. Some teams have not received the training. This is also an unmet need.













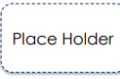

At a local level the SLT plans to link in with two PKC employees, who create easy read and Perth Independent Advocacy to update them on the project.

Hopes for the future are to continue to build capacity within many teams to develop the vision within The Promise – 'to share the right information at the right time.' This vision needs support to spread across all services that support children, young people, and families.

Janie Scott

Highly Specialist Speech and Language Therapist

Appendix One – Top Tips

 Easy Read – Top Tips 	 Easy Read – Top Tips 
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think about who the information is for.  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use simple day-to-day language.  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid jargon. • Explain topic specific words in simple day-to-day language.  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pictures on the left, text on the right. • Make sure the pictures you use are very clear and print well. • Make sure the picture matches the text.  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use at least 14pt size. • This document uses 16pt for the text. 18pt should be used for headings • Use an accessible font. • This document uses century gothic. Aerial is another accessible font. No comic sans. • Avoid writing words in capitals. 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An EDMS Inclusive Communication site has been set up. • This contains easy read resources produced by other organisations. • It contains PKC easy read templates.  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This function allows you to screen grab images. • These can be copied and pasted into a documents or saved into a folder.  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select the template you want to use. • You will be forced to save a copy to your own folder. • You can then edit the document.  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type into the place holder. • The place holder can be moved anywhere on the page.  <p>Decide on a picture that matches the text</p>