Online information resources checklist

phn
WESTERN NSW

An Australian Government Initiative

By building a better health literacy environment we reduce the burden on individuals to find, understand, assess and use health information and services.

Use this checklist as a self-assessment tool or to guide development of user-friendly online information about health and health services.

Planning

- [ ] Your resource has a **clear purpose** – ideally behaviour based, e.g. to encourage regular skin checks instead of to raise awareness of skin cancer.

- [ ] You have identified **two or three key messages** to support your purpose.

- [ ] Your resource is targeted at **a specific audience**.

- [ ] You **consulted with the target audience** in the development of the resource.

Language

- [ ] You have used **familiar words** and removed, replaced or explained any technical terms, acronyms or medical jargon.

- [ ] You have used **'you', 'we' and 'us'** instead of 'the patient', 'the health service', etc.

- [ ] You have used an **active voice** – e.g. 'Have check-ups regularly' instead of 'Regular check-ups are encouraged'.

- [ ] You have used **positive language** that encourages desired behaviours rather than prohibiting undesired behaviours – e.g. 'Eat less cheese' not 'Don't eat a lot of cheese'.

- [ ] You have **used words consistently** and avoided interchangeable terms.

Structure

- [ ] Your page has a meaningful **heading** that provides readers with enough information to know what to expect.

- [ ] You have used **informative sub-headings** that provide the reader with a clear outline of page content as they scan the page

- [ ] Your **important information is 'above the fold'**, that is, visible on the screen that appears when the page loads. (80% of readers do not scroll to read information below the fold.)

- [ ] You have included a **summary of the main points** at the top of the page.

- [ ] You have used **line breaks** to create white space between chunks of text, so readers need only focus on one idea at a time.

- [ ] You have used **dot points for lists**, where each point contains only one idea or piece of information.

- [ ] Your **sentences** contain around 15 words on average. Long sentences are used sparingly and have no more than 25 words. Short sentences contain around 8–10 words.

- [ ] You have used **short paragraphs** of around 3–5 sentences.

- [ ] You have checked the **readability** of your content (without titles and proper nouns), ensuring that it can be read and understood by someone in Year 7 (12–14 years old).

Content

☐ Your content focuses on your two or three key messages, and **only contains important or essential information** directly related to the key messages.

☐ Your **linked text is meaningful** and describes what readers will get when they click the link – e.g. 'Our next women's health clinic will be held in May' not 'To find out more about our next women's health clinic click here'.

☐ Your **content stands alone** and does not assume that the reader has read other information on your website.

☐ You have used **bold type** to highlight important information. (Capitals or italics can be hard to read and underlining is normally used to represent a hyperlink.)

☐ You have included any important information on the web page and **not relied on an attached PDF**. If a page is about a PDF document, you should include enough information for a reader to know what is in the PDF and if they need to download it.

☐ You have included a **date** on the page, so the reader knows when the information was published/last revised.

Multimedia content

☐ Your multimedia content has **captions** (video) and **transcripts** (audio/video).

☐ You have used **photos, diagrams and illustrations** to reduce text, simplify ideas or visually represent information. They are clear, adequately sized and have captions and/or labels as appropriate.

☐ You have ensured that photos, diagrams and illustrations that convey meaning have **alt text.** Alt text is used by screen-reading tools to describe images to readers who have a visual impairment. It is not necessary for decorative images.

Review

☐ You have **asked a colleague to review the page** using this checklist and provide feedback.

☐ You have **tested the page with a sample of the intended audience** to ensure that it is understandable and appropriate.

HEALTH LITERACY