

My Ileostomy & Me

The Development of an easy read guide to stoma care for patients with learning disabilities

Written by Harriet Seeley, Salts Medilink Community Stoma Nurse

I had a small selection of patients with learning difficulties referred to me following ileostomy formation. Their Learning Disability nurse asked for some supporting literature to help the patients understand their need for surgery and learn how to care for their stoma.

I searched for learning disability friendly literature on this topic, but could not find any publications. The only similar literature was aimed at children, but I wanted something for adults. Following discussions with local LD nurse and research online, an “easy read” leaflet was created.



Easy read is a format created to help people with learning disabilities understand information easily.

Easy read uses simple language and supporting illustrations with each small section of text.

Typically pictures go on the left and text on the right, presented in a bold and clear font of at least size 14. Sentences should be as short as possible.

More than 15 words is harder to read. Each document must not exceed 20 pages. Text is to be written in contrasting colour to the background of the publication.

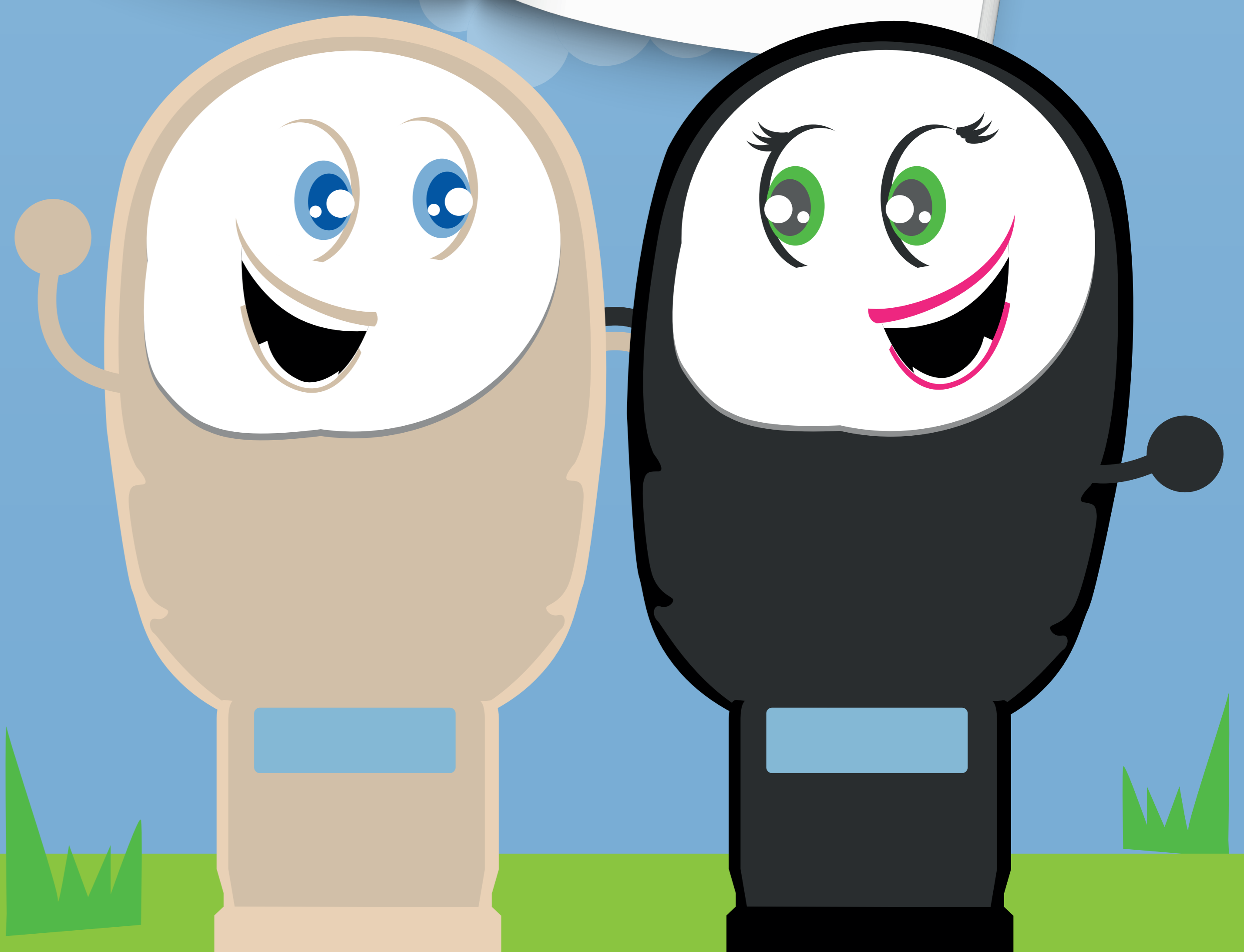
Content

- Explanation and reason for surgery
- How to empty a stoma bag
- How to change a stoma bag
- Notes

Result

The leaflet has been produced for patients with an ileostomy, with the view to design further leaflets for colostomy and urostomy if they prove successful.

To date, the leaflet has been used by 2 patients and positive feedback has been received. It has helped them gain confidence and knowledge in stoma care.



References

Change. (2022, April 4). How To Make Information Accessible. A guide to producing easy read documents. Leeds. North Yorkshire County Council. (n.d.). A guide to producing written information in easy read. Northallerton. Office for disability issues. (2022, April 4). A guide to making Easy Read information. Retrieved from <https://www.odi.govt.nz/guidance-and-resources/a-guide-to-making-easy-read-information/>