

# Plain English

Action for plain English

December 2010

## Microsoft calls from Bangalore

When Plain English Campaign received a call from the Microsoft offices in Bangalore earlier this year, we were keen to return to a country we have visited on many occasions since our extensive roadshow back in 1998.

The use of international offices for business customer services has brought its own challenges to people in places like Bangalore. Despite some excellent English education, many customer service employees struggle with language that is unfamiliar in their daily lives. When dealing with a worldwide audience about technical queries, especially when both parties have varying levels of knowledge and understanding, some training is needed.

Sometimes the issue can be as basic as using the right greeting. The impact of unclear communications is felt by both the employer and the customer.

No-one enjoys coming to work to face more problems than are necessary. Unfamiliar language can create problems from the first hello.



Trainees at Microsoft taking part in a Plain English course in Bangalore

## BBC's longest gap between episodes



### 'Inside Out' series

John Holmes (pictured above with our founder Chrissie Maher) was the BBC presenter who originally appeared 27 years ago on the 'Inside Out' programme featuring the early work of

the campaign and Chrissie's fight against jargon.

His trendy 70s outfit and moustache has given way to a more classic look. John clearly remembers the impact that Chrissie and the other campaigners had on the world of public information at that time, especially their work in distributing tripe to the users of jargon.

The days of tripe distribution have been stopped by Health and Safety regulations. Sadly the tripe of poor communications continues to be dished out by many organisations who still use language that confuses the public.

Inside Out is due to be broadcast during prime-time television in early 2011: Chrissie will give an update on the fight for clear communications and John may well sneak in a bit of tripe – just for old times' sake.

Plain English Campaign - working for clearer communication

PO Box 3, New Mills, High Peak, Derbyshire, SK22 4QP

Phone: 01663 744409 Fax: 01663 747038

E-mail: [info@plainenglish.co.uk](mailto:info@plainenglish.co.uk)

Website: [www.plainenglish.co.uk](http://www.plainenglish.co.uk)

# Why is the US clearer about plain English?

Earlier this year Plain English Campaign appeared on the front page of the Wall Street Journal with Chrissie Maher asking the question “Did jargon cause the credit crunch?”.

The people of America replied in blogs, emails, letters and calls to the campaign with their opinions.

Talking plain English finance

The campaign has since seen proof of the public’s concern about confusing financial jargon, and complaints which have resulted in practical action. Even Mervyn King, Governor of the Bank of England has publicly announced that the bankers were at the root of the problem with a lack of understanding in their financial products.

President Obama promoted Reform Bills in both health and finance. On 21 July 2010, the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) voted for a ruling that means investment advisers must provide clients with information in brochures. They must use plain English descriptions of the advisers’ businesses, services and any conflicts of interest.

Goldman Sachs, a market leader in the investment industry, received a \$500 million fine in the High Court for the misleading small print in their information to investors. This resulted in Royal Bank of Scotland losses of over £800 million.

## Plain english Budget speech

Back in the UK, we saw the Chancellor of the Exchequer presenting what was the most ‘plain English’ Budget speech for decades.

We can’t comment on the accusations of ‘hidden’ small print that were followed by revelations about pension details.

But we happily acknowledge that the coalition Government were making a serious attempt to ‘talk the talk, walk the walk’ and cut back – not just on public spending but also on political gobbledeygook.

Best intentions

After all, during the general election, the Liberal Democrats’ political manifesto clearly proposed that the language of police paperwork be reviewed by the Law Commission and Plain English Campaign. David Cameron made many references to clear communications and plain English, as he fought to push Labour out of Number 10. Gordon Brown has, on more than one occasion, attracted the campaign’s attention. He has received a ‘Foot in Mouth’ award for his ‘endogenous growth theory’ and ‘quantitative easing’. They were as unclear as the state of affairs that the new Government faces.

Bushisms

However, the lifetime achievement for the Foot in Mouth award in 2009 was given to former US President George Bush for his catalogue of garbled language. It seems to be human nature that we push things to the limit before coming back to plain commonsense and plain language.

We have yet to find an MP who disagrees that using plain English is beneficial to public communications. So why don’t they use it?

Ask your MP, “Why is there no plain English act in the UK?”

Until we have a UK plain English act, sign our Plain English Charter to show your support for clear public information. [www.plainenglish.co.uk/plainenglishcharter](http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/plainenglishcharter).

## Plain language action around the world

To date, the UK Parliament has failed to make the use of plain English communications into a legal duty. In 1999, Gyles Brandreth MP raised a private members’ bill (the Plain Language Bill), and in 2008 Dr Nick Palmer MP raised another, the Small Print Bill. Nothing came of either bill.

Sweden

Sweden has had plain language legislation for over 30 years.

USA

On Wednesday 13 October 2010, President Obama signed the Plain Writing Bill 2010 into law. It applies to all federal documents such as college aid applications, tax returns and veterans’ administration forms.

Australia

The Australian Parliamentary Counsel Office is committed to drafting Australian legislation in as clear a style as possible and has produced a working guide on drafting approaches and a plain English manual.

New Zealand

Numerous New Zealand laws and covenants imply that clear language is vital in government communications, for reasons of equity, democracy and safety.

Canada

Canada has also been a pioneer at drafting laws in plain language. Alberta’s Financial Services Act 1990, for instance, was written in plain language and the Government has imposed a duty to use plain language in some financial documents.

South Africa

South Africa’s Constitution is in plain language and requires plain language.

Businesses in South Africa are now required to use plain language when dealing with consumers as part of the The Consumer Protection Act.

# Public spending in the public eye

As we hear of doom and gloom throughout public services, we want to suggest a way of cutting back and identifying possible savings.

Our advice is no different from over 20 years ago when we helped government offices cut back administration costs as part of the Rayner Review – “Look for the waste before you make sweeping decisions”.

Just as with good copywriting, the skilled eye learns to get rid of any unnecessary words and provide a clear message and a clear way forward. That old saying ‘can’t see the wood for the trees’ usually means that things have become over-complicated and have lost their true original intentions.

For example, ‘political correctness’ was originally intended to acknowledge different social groups and respect diversity. Taken to its extremes this has become so cumbersome that it has put a straitjacket on our everyday language. Eric Pickles MP made headlines with his intention to rid the nanny state of its PC madness and we support him on that.

Pressure from the Government to identify public savings has already led to local authorities reducing their emphasis on plain English, as communication and training budgets managers have to make difficult decisions.

We are urging councils and other organisations who have already invested in using plain English to keep their information clear and let plain English save words, time and money for everyone.

For example, council rebranding and image makeovers are unnecessary. We have to ask why these public services need a new image. The public know what the council or the police are there to do, so why use clever logos and marketing bylines? Public services are not in a competitive market where a new image might give them ‘an edge’. Local residents have no choice but to use the public services they pay for, so let’s see that money spent on communications that will improve the service for the public rather than the image of the provider.

And what about those council ‘Welcome’ signs that greet travellers to your local town? An article by Jasper Copping, journalist with the Telegraph, revealed that the cost of these new signs can amount to over £30,000.

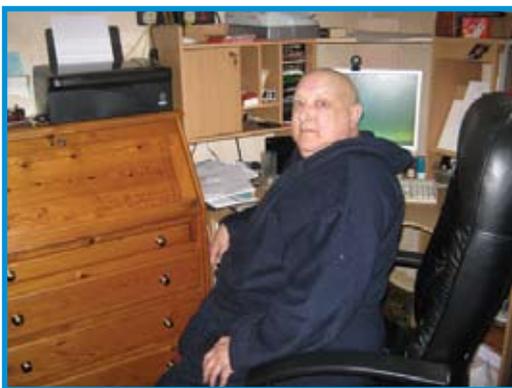
- “Welcome to Tower Hamlets – let’s make it happen” (£29,677)
- “Proud to be part of Sandwell – Great people, great place, great prospects” (£20,430)
- “Welcome to Oldham – many places one destination” (£30,000)
- “Hyndburn - an excellent council” (£25,566)

Tell us about your most amusing or infuriating council sign– send a photo and your own plain English version of the intended message.



Chrissie recently wrote to the Prime Minister and the Home Secretary to offer her voluntary services as an ‘ambassador for plain English’ in Government communications in an attempt to cut words rather than services. We are waiting for his reply.

## Contradictory council tax benefits



John Parrott at home in Cumbria

The daily delivery of jargon and gobbledegook is nothing new at our offices, but sometimes a particular query will really get our blood boiling.

This was the case when we received an email from John Parrott in Cumbria, pointing out the contradictory statements in his letter about his council tax benefits.

Following the diagnosis of his terminal illness, taxi-driver John had been able to get help with filling in the forms for claiming benefits. Despite the valuable advice, he received a returned form stating that it was incorrectly completed, although there was no indication of what was incorrect.

A second attempt resulted in an award letter of many pages containing the breakdown of John’s benefits.

After fighting through the calculations, there were two contradictory totals showing that, firstly, he was not entitled to any money and then immediately afterwards another total showing that he would be getting something.

Worrying that any money awarded may be taken back, John contacted us for a plain english explanation.

After investigating, we were able to set John’s mind at rest, but it became clear that the calculations were laid out in such a way that benefited the process and computer systems, while leaving the public frustrated and confused.

John voices his complaints on BBC One Inside Out North East, to be shown in early 2011.

# New look to the awards



Chrissie Maher collecting her Honorary Fellowship from Liverpool John Moores University - July 2010. Photo courtesy of LJMU

With this year being tough for most businesses and organisations, it's good to find a reason to celebrate.

In July, the Liverpool John Moores University gave me an Honorary Fellowship, and then in September I received two awards for achievements in Public Affairs at the 'Dods and Scottish Widows Women in Public Life' awards.

But I never forget that every recognition I receive is a reflection of the efforts made by every individual who communicates in plain English.

Another reason for some fun is our annual awards ceremony at Chetham's School of Music, Manchester.

We specifically chose the venue as part of the campaign's growing focus on education and the world of creativity. We have invited the well-known pianist and university lecturer David Owen Norris to present our awards.

As a special tribute to the work of the campaign, David has composed a song for the awards. This new work will be performed as part of a public recital in the afternoon.

If you can't be with us on the day, then I hope to share the day with you through our website.

Love

Chrissie x

## About our host for the awards

In the last 12 months, David Owen Norris has played English music across the UK, in Amsterdam, Dresden, Berlin, Taipei, San Diego and Chicago.

He also celebrated the 20th anniversary of his appointment as the first Gilmore Artist in the Gilmore Festival in Michigan.

His projects with the musicians' collective The Works ('a treasure trove' BBC Radio 3; 'a treasure house' Sunday Times) included his Haydn adaptation *A New Creation*, where 600 children sang, played and danced in Winchester Cathedral. He is currently working on another radio opera, *The Body in the Ballroom*.



David Owen Norris at Elgar's piano. Photo courtesy of Simon Weir

## National Plain English Day

On Friday 10 December 2010 we will be recognising National Plain English Day and celebrating the anniversary of the start of Plain English Campaign.

We will be shredding jargon-filled documents in Manchester City Centre to mirror the event that took place on Parliament Green in Westminster in 1979. At that time Chrissie and other campaign supporters were moved on by the police.

Those now infamous words, "Does that mean we have to go?", uttered by Chrissie in response to a policeman reading her the words of the Metropolitan Police Act of 1836 captured the reason for the campaign.



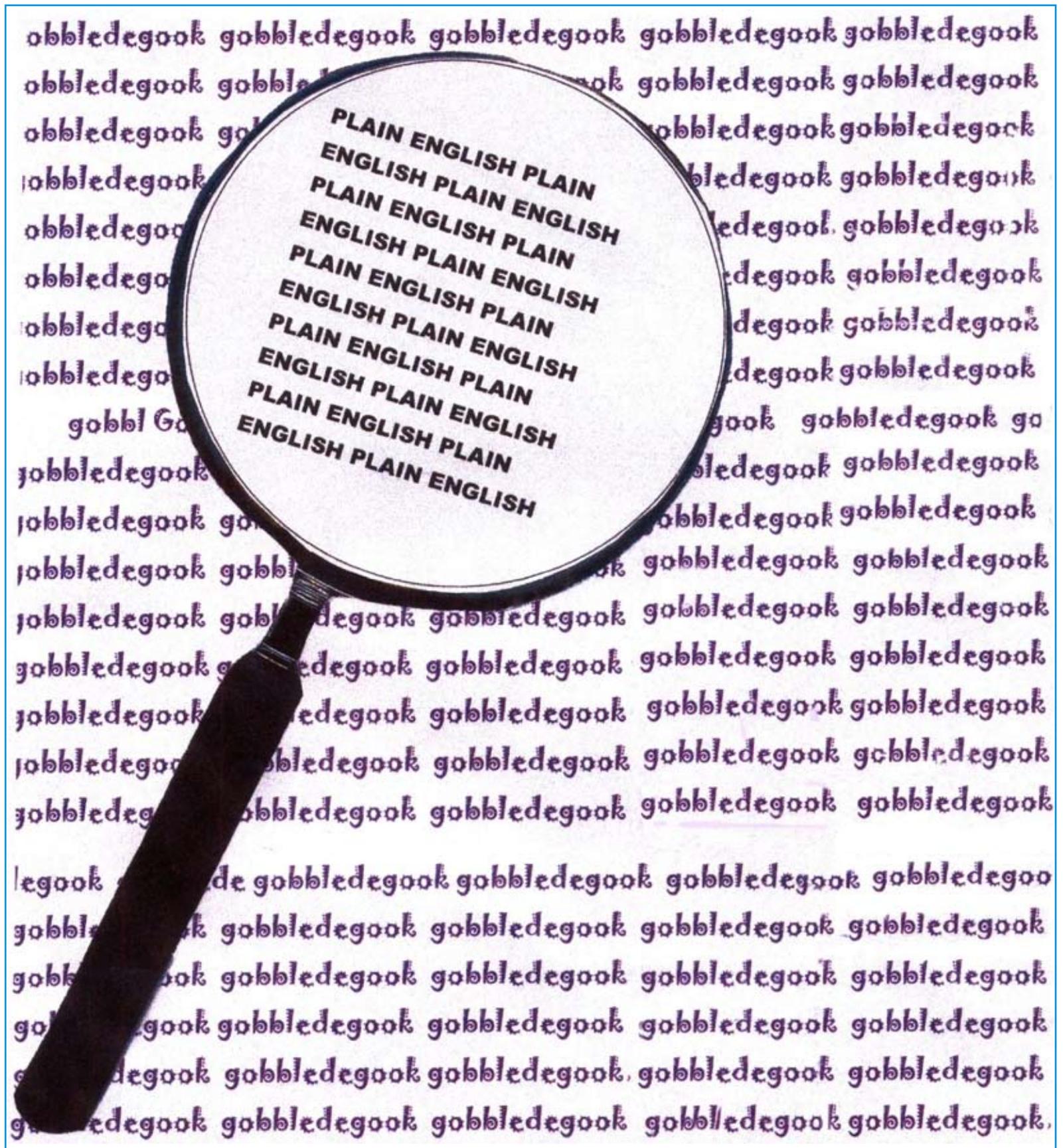
Shredding government documents in Parliament Square, London

Over the years those words have become something of a motto for the campaign. Chrissie still stands strong in her belief that every individual should have clear public information that can be understood in a single reading. This gives them the power and responsibility for making their choices in daily life.

Chrissie says, "Every person who finds the confidence to ask for information they can understand is a success story for the campaign and a step closer to a fairer world."

Sign the Plain English Charter on our website to show your support. [www.plainenglish.co.uk/plainenglishcharter](http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/plainenglishcharter).

# Plain English Campaign 30th annual awards in 2010



'Plain English is clearer to read'

Artwork created by Lorenz Jones aged 13 years - art student at Chetham's School of Music

# Plain English Campaign annual award winners 2010

Every year the workers and volunteers at Plain English Campaign brace themselves for the award nominations. It's a mixed bag of laughter, frustration and the occasional stunned silence as we wade through the examples of good and bad communications. These examples have been sent to us throughout the year by members of the public.

The awards are a chance to praise the efforts of clear communicators and to show the jargon masters where they can save time and money and get a clearer message across.

It is also a time to say thank you to all our corporate members, clients and supporters of plain English around the world.

With 30 years of annual awards it seems that there is no end to the Golden Bull nominations. But equally, there is a better understanding of our right to clarity in public information.

When Plain English Campaign started in 1979, Chrissie thought it would be great idea to have all information in plain English. She also thought it would only take a few years before everyone was using plain English.

Along with our award winners today, it is the people who refuse to climb the 10-foot wall of gobbledegook, and enjoy the benefits of plain English, who are the real winners of the campaign.

We look forward to as many years of annual awards as necessary to keep the gobbledegook monster at bay.



## Plain English Diploma

Helen Watters

Barbara Iwinska

Marian Garvey

Lisa McIntyre

Jackie Milligan

Graeme McLatchie

Jill Lambert

Nigel Goldsmith

Elinor Bostock

Hayley Daniels

Joanne Groenenberg

Joanne Henry

Tara Webster

Elaine Pilmoor

Meg Woollam

David Hayhoe

## Plain English Media Awards

Best National Newspaper

Daily Mail

Best Regional Newspaper

York Press

Best National Television

BBC Breakfast  
BBC Reporting Scotland

Best Regional Television

ITV Granada Reports

Best National Radio

Radio Five Live 606 Robbie Savage

Best Regional Radio

Rock Radio for their five-word weather report

International Award

Korea Herald

## Plain English Written documents

Liverpool Housing Trust - 'Keeping you safe from abuse'

Debt Advice network - 'Where to go for debt help'

TOP Tax Help for Older People - Tax help booklet

The 4tAction Plan - 'Erection problems (ED)'

Bladder and Bowel Foundation - 'Do you worry where you'll find the next one?'

Radical Services - 'Newcomers' Handbook'

The National Society for Epilepsy - 'Epilepsy? Supporting you'

Citizens' Advice - series of self-help leaflets

ASA Advicenow - 'Singled out? Sort it out!'

The venue for this year breaks with tradition, as does the front cover of our awards programme, which has been specially designed by Chetham's art student, Lorenzo Jones.

We are honoured to have access to the beautiful medieval venue of Chetham's School of Music in Manchester. This is also the site for the UK's first public library stocked with 'plain books', at the request of patron Humphrey Chetham.

The school makes a fitting location for our awards as we bring together the wonderful variety of communication

## Our new location for this year

and expression in language, music and art. We can also build on the important links of education and clear communication. We have continued to work with the world of business and public services and we are now also focusing on young people as they move into the adult world full of jargon.

To raise awareness in young people of the need for plain English, we have been working with Jane Jones' students of Chetham's Art department to demonstrate the need for clear instructions and interpretations.

Jeremy Pike, Head of Composition, has guided students Joseph Davies and Frankie Perry in creating two new pieces for our afternoon recital. This project shows how the language of music, like words, can take different forms for different audiences.

And finally, we look forward to adding to the plain English skills of Gill Simpson's English department, for both the students and the school staff.

---

Also highly commended are:

Metropolitan Police - 'News from the local police' (Bexley Sidcup Safer Neighbourhoods Policing Team)

Keighley Council - 'Keighley Town Plan 2010'

McDonald's - Ronald McDonald House charities 'What if'

Bucrana Tidy Towns committee - 'Swan Park Riverside Walk'

---

### Plain English Online documents

ChildLine (NSPCC) - 'Neglect matters'

Connexions West of England - 'Parents and carers - your guide to what connexions is all about'

NHS Leeds Community Healthcare - 'Nerve damage to feet in diabetes'

Food Standards Agency - 'The eatwell plate'

NSPCC - 'Handle with care - a guide to keeping your baby safe'

---

### Plain English Internal documents

The Defence and Science Technology Laboratory in-house magazine - Distil

NHS Barking and Dagenham - The Loop internal weekly newsletter

JBW Group - Bailiff pocketbook

---

### Plain English certificates of recognition

Prudential Malaysia/BSN - Takaful documents - being the first in their industry to consider using plain English

Aviva UK Health

NHS Barking and Dagenham

---

### Web Award

[www.bupa.co.uk](http://www.bupa.co.uk)

---

### Plain English Communicator Award

Sport - John McCririck

Arts - Peter Grant

Business - John Timpson

---

### Osborne Award

US Representative - Bruce Braley (Iowa)

---

### Every Body Matters Award

James McKenna

---

### Chrissie Maher Award

British Petroleum (BP)

---

### Pat on the Back Award

Metropolitan Police Service

---

### Kick in the Pants Award

Financial Services Authority

---

### Foot in Mouth Award

Jamie Redknapp

# Some of our Golden Bull winners



The Australian Business School

'This new program reflects the need for a more holistic perspective on risk as well as specialisation in discrete areas of risk management. It views organisations as complex structures interacting with one another and with the wider system, and with people being a component of both. Its core courses address concepts of globalisation of risks and the super structure necessary to manage them; complexity and diversity of new classes of emerging risks; system-wide responses under conditions of uncertainty, and resilience as a mechanism to enhance a systems ability to manage unknown risks.'

Wandsworth Council  
Adult Social Services Charging  
Policy Consultation

Percentage to be applied to Personal  
Budgets

It is proposed that 100% of an individual's personal budget be subject to an assessed contribution i.e. a means tested charge towards the cost of an individual's care. This is consistent with the charging policies developed by the London Boroughs of Richmond and Ealing. Other local boroughs are still in the process of policy development. The application of 100% to the calculation of a service user's maximum assessed contribution will act to promote choice; a key principle of the personalisation regime.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

A Foreign and Commonwealth job advert contains the following explanation of the duties of a 'reputation manager':

'Maintenance and development of job narrative around FCO and its value proposition, using insights from research and evaluation as well as knowledge of the evolving FCO strategy to inform resonant messaging....'

The Association of Revenue and  
Customs

On the underside of a coaster supplied by this trade union

'Non Reflective Surface  
Wipe Away Dust and Dirt'

Surrey County Council Local  
Committee

Part of the 'Q and A' in the agenda for the Surrey County Council Local Committee:

'Why is Charlton Lane the most suitable site for the Eco Park?'

'Charlton Lane is located in location that is proximate to the majority of the population of Surrey.'

NHS Lanarkshire

"These are cascaded to senior staff across the organisation through to frontline staff via a structured mechanism to facilitate ownership of data."

Boris Johnson's Transport for  
London cycle hire scheme

A cyclised city of pioneers

**NICS HR Connect website**

**Taking a half-day holiday**

'If the annual leave request that you are entering is less than a full day on the First Day or the Last Day, then please select Hours from the drop down list of values in the Part Days Unit of Measure field. Then select the amount of hours absent on the first day in the Fraction of Start Date field or the last day in the Fraction of End Date field. If the absence is only for one day, use the Fraction of Start Date field to record the hours absent.'

Argyll & Bute Council

'For 2010-the additional GAE that was allocated to the Council through the secondary indicator for primary school teaching staff was £2.644m. The Council understands the separate components of how this is made up. The secondary indicator element of GAE effectively comprises 2 parts. The first is a contribution into a pot for redistribution which amounts to a reduction in GAE calculated by the primary indicator of 5.25% in the case of Argyll and Bute Council this amounts to £0.755m. The second element is a share of that redistribution pot based on the percentage of pupils in small rural schools. In the case of Argyll and Bute Council for 2010-11 the percentage of pupils in small rural schools was 21.8% and this led to an allocation from the redistribution pot of £3.399. The net effect of both elements is the secondary indicator GAE effect of £2.644m (a contribution to the redistribution pot of £0.755M and an allocation from the redistribution pot of £3.399m). The financial impact paper simply states the net effect. The Council is aware of both elements and has modelled the GAE reductions in the financial impact paper Annex 4 Appendix 2 (page 50 of the papers) to take account of both elements.'

Lord Jackson's report 'Review of  
Civil Litigation Costs': Final Report

'Personal injuries litigation is the paradigm instance of litigation in which the parties are in an asymmetric relationship, as discussed in chapter 9 above.'

EMS (Emergency Medical Services)  
news report in Calgary, Canada.

EMS spokesman Adam Loria reported it like this: "He was missing a body part to the side of his head due to the assault. Luckily he was (in) stable and non-life-threatening (condition)."

# 30 years of Plain English presenters



- 2009 Lenny Henry
- 2008 Rory Bremner
- 2007 Lenny Henry
- 2006 Mary Nightingale
- 2005 Matthew Pariss
- 2004 Ian Hislop
- 2003 Fiona Bruce
- 2002 Sandi Toksvig
- 2001 John Humphrys
- 2000 Sir Richard Wilson
- 1999 Dermot Murnaghan
- 1998 Martin Lewis
- 1997 Edward Enfield
- 1996 Sir Michael Angus
- 1995 Toyah Willcox
- 1994 Pam Ferris
- 1993 Jack Dee, David Mellor  
and John Ward
- 1992 Gyles Brandreth
- 1991 Graeme Garden
- 1990 Willie Rushton
- 1989 Lord Soper
- 1988 Hilary Crowson
- 1987 Michael Cashman
- 1986 Esther Rantzen
- 1985 Gian Sammarco
- 1984 Julie Walters
- 1983 Paul Eddington
- 1982 Lord Denning
- 1981 Mrs Ethel Owen and  
Tom Vernon
- 1980 John McGrath



Princess Anne presenting The Inside Write awards to the Civil Service

# Bose sound systems are loud and clear

We challenged sound-system market leaders Bose to put their latest 'plain English' technology to the test with user instructions that should bring painless and plain instructions to the world of sound systems.

The digital age of technology often promises simplicity, but complaints received at our offices from members of the public are often about the technical jargon companies use just to tell us how to switch on the power.

Chrissie Maher, founder of Plain English Campaign says, "These days we have little choice but to accept much of the technology that is thrust in front of us, whether it's digital switchovers or online banking.

"The recession has meant falling sales of many consumer products. Manufacturers need to take into account the frustrations of their customers, cut down on customer complaints and increase their sales by using plain English in their information



New Mills School students and Head of English Peter Wells review instruction leaflets and instructions. Bose, as one of the market leaders of quality sound systems, have risen to this challenge with their latest product and are making all the right sounds – on the road to plain English."

# Awards galore



It's already been a busy year for awards. After Chrissie's surprise at receiving an Honorary Fellowship from Liverpool John Moores University in July, she was stunned to win two categories of the Dods and Scottish Widows 'Women in Public Life' awards in September. Sian Williams, the BBC presenter, (pictured left) handed over the weighty trophies to our Press Officer, Marie Clair, who attended the ceremony on Chrissie's behalf.

As Chrissie points out, "Every success for the campaign is a recognition of the public's right to clear information and I intend to get our shelves strengthened ready for the events of 2011!"

In early November, we were invited to present an award at the 'How-do



Bristol comedian Paul Parry

Public Service Communications Awards' at Manchester's Comedy Store. In turn, we invited one of our young supporters, Bristol comedian Paul Parry, to entertain the audience with his routine based on the misuse of the word 'literally'.

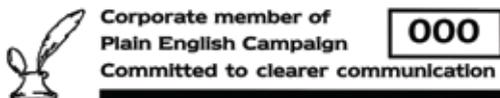
# 'Arty farty' language is no more than hot air

Plain English Campaign are the first to agree that language is creative and fun and should have free rein – with the appropriate audience. But we have been surprised to receive an increasing number of enquiries from the worlds of art and music, where pleas for plain english have led us to

investigate the language of creative industries. As Mike Marcus, the artist, says "What is the point of the 'nuances' and 'subtleties' in creative language if the audience miss the point altogether. Surely any creative work should speak for itself, without the need for unfamiliar language that

can alienate the audience or get in the way of personal interpretation? Any background explanations should be clear and understandable to anyone with an interest in art, and not the privilege of a few." Mike's work will be shown at our annual awards. [www.mikemarcus.co.uk](http://www.mikemarcus.co.uk)

# Corporate membership still excellent value at 1998 prices



The value of the membership fee is soon appreciated when taking the allocated training courses for any membership level.

Despite the recession, we are pleased that there has been little change in the membership applications from private organisations. And joining fees are unchanged from our 1998 price. Also, our editing and training charges have only seen minimal increases.

And remember that if you choose to upgrade to a higher membership level, we will deduct any previous membership fees already paid in previous years.

## Plain English training kit offer

If you have your own trainer, you can run your own courses with one of our plain English training kits. If you order more than one, we are offering a 10% discount on every kit you buy.

# Crystal Marks for your online documents

Now that a website has become more than just a shopfront for organisations, we are seeing technology being used to its full extent, with information and many services accessed online. This has resulted in a vast reduction in the amount of printed information being distributed. It saves resources to offer online versions that can be printed at the user's convenience.

Our Internet Crystal Mark will give accreditation for websites that have been reviewed for overall usability, accessibility, design and format. It would be unrealistic for this to cover every word on numerous webpages, that are possibly updated every day.

The style of writing for webpages is often governed by different needs to those of printed information. There is a danger that specific documents added to webpages and needing action by the public could be written with insufficient clarity or inappropriate language.

Of course, any documents or forms can be added to a website in a file format, such as a pdf (portable document format), so that what the user sees on the computer screen is exactly what prints out.



Forms can be a particular problem when downloaded by the user. Something that looks fine on your computer screen can become a jigsaw puzzle of words and boxes when you print it out to fill it in.

Adding documents to your webpages in this way is a practical way of extending the web user's access to any documents that have been edited or even gained the accreditation of a Crystal Mark. Just be sure that any Crystal Marked documents are within their two-year review period.

You may have pages on your website that are regularly printed by the public. These could be website terms and conditions or the organisation's background as featured in the 'About Us' section of your websites. It might be worth contacting us for an estimate to edit and Crystal Mark this information.

# Compact plain English course

Do you need to train your staff on a budget? Then try our compact plain English course. This new course caters for people in a hurry.

We know that many people would like to go to one of our one-day training courses but lack the time to commit a full day. So, we have taken some of the main parts of the one-day course and put them into a three-hour session. In that time you will learn the basics of plain English, and you will take away the same workbook we give to delegates on our full one-day course.

You can then practise your new plain English skills, and extend your knowledge of plain English techniques, in your spare time.

The price for up to 15 delegates is £795 + VAT. (We may charge travelling expenses if our trainer has to travel more than 50 miles.)

For more details, or for details about any of our other courses, contact Terri Schabel on 01663 744409.

## Editing offers

We will edit and Crystal Mark several documents of up to 4500 words in total for £995. As an indication of savings, editing and Crystal Marking three documents of up to 4500 words would normally cost £1995. The savings would be even greater if you send us four or more short documents with a word count of up to 4500.

# Open course training dates

Thistle Euston Hotel (London)

2011

Wednesday 19 January (Grammarcheck)  
Thursday 20 January (Plain English)  
Thursday 27 January (Writing for websites)  
Thursday 10 February (Plain English)  
Thursday 17 March (Plain English)  
Wednesday 13 April (Plain English and forms design)  
Tuesday 19 April (Grammarcheck)  
Wednesday 20 April (Plain English)  
Tuesday 17 May (Plain English)  
Wednesday 18 May (Writing for websites)  
Wednesday 15 June (Advanced Grammar)  
Wednesday 22 June (Plain English)  
Wednesday 13 July (Grammarcheck)  
Thursday 14 July (Plain English)  
Wednesday 10 August (Plain English)  
Tuesday 13 September (Plain English)  
Wednesday 21 September (Plain English and report writing)  
Wednesday 28 September (Writing for websites)  
Wednesday 5 October (Plain English and forms design)  
Wednesday 12 October (Grammarcheck)  
Thursday 13 October (Plain English)  
Thursday 27 October (Advanced Grammar)  
Wednesday 2 November (Plain English for medical writers)  
Thursday 10 November (Plain English)  
Tuesday 6 December (Plain English)

Thistle Hotel (Birmingham City)

2011

Wednesday 16 March (Grammarcheck)  
Thursday 17 March (Plain English)  
Wednesday 14 September (Grammarcheck)  
Thursday 15 September (Plain English)

Thistle Hotel (Manchester)

2011

Tuesday 8 February (Grammarcheck)  
Wednesday 9 February (Plain English)  
Thursday 17 February (Advanced Grammar)  
Wednesday 13 April (Plain English)  
Wednesday 8 June (Plain English)  
Thursday 11 August (Plain English)  
Wednesday 19 October (Grammarcheck)  
Thursday 20 October (Plain English)  
Tuesday 6 December (Plain English)

Thistle Hotel (Edinburgh)

2011

Wednesday 23 March (Grammarcheck)  
Thursday 24 March (Plain English)  
Wednesday 5 October (Grammarcheck)  
Thursday 6 October (Plain English)

Thistle Hotel (Glasgow)

2011

Thursday 23 June (Plain English)

## About our courses

We offer a range of training courses to teach you how to write in plain English.

In-house courses

Our trainers will come to your organisation's offices where your staff can take the course.

Online courses

We offer some of our training, including our business-writing course, online.

Open courses

We hold these courses regularly at various hotels around the country.

Plain English Diploma

This is a course that you take over a period of a year.

If you have any questions about our range of courses, please phone us on 01663 744409 and ask for Terri Schabel, our training administrator.

## Help the public to understand your documents - with a Crystal Mark

More than 20,000 documents now carry our Crystal Mark as a sign of clarity.

We will not allow the Crystal Mark to appear on any document unless our testing shows that the intended audience understand and can act on it.

If you have a document you would like us to look at, and would like a quote for the work, please e-mail [info@plainenglish.co.uk](mailto:info@plainenglish.co.uk) or phone Tony Maher on 01663 744409.

