
Accessible Word Docs: Guidelines

Guidance from UKAAF

Why format quality matters

"When organisations send me information in formats that I can read myself it allows me to be independent, feel informed and appreciated - just like every other customer."

End-user

"Producing consistently high quality accessible formats helps us to maintain our reputation, to gain new customers and to retain existing ones."

Transcription agency

"We are committed to ensuring that our customers with print disabilities receive the same information, of the same quality, as everyone else."

Service provider

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Who is this guidance for?

This guidance from the UK Association for Accessible Formats (UKAAF) is primarily aimed at anyone that creates documents using Google Docs to ensure they are made accessible for candidates with print impairments. This document is guidance, for experienced desktop publishers: it is not a detailed training manual.

Disclaimer

This guidance may include references to external websites, services or products for which UKAAF accepts no responsibility. This information is given without any representation or endorsement of those websites, services or products.

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1 Introduction

By obtaining these guidelines you are demonstrating your commitment to helping people with a print disability to read your materials if they find reading standard print materials difficult or impossible.

UKAAF guidance concentrates specifically on materials suitable for blind and partially sighted people - such as large print, audio, braille and electronic file formats. However, this guidance is intended to support the provision of material for individuals with other print disabilities, such as dyslexia.

The provision of accessible information is a key requirement of the Equality Act which service providers must follow, but good customer service and business practice includes communicating with your customers and staff in ways which meet their reading needs. By providing accessible format materials, you not only demonstrate your commitment to equality and inclusion, but also increase your reach and customer base. It therefore makes good business sense.

This guidance will help you and your organisation to incorporate good practice into your business and provide good quality accessible format materials in a timely and appropriate way.

2 About UKAAF

The UK Association for Accessible Formats (UKAAF) is the industry association whose mission is to set standards for accessible formats that meet end-user needs through:

- development, delivery and promotion of codes, standards, and best practice for the production and provision of accessible formats

- consultation and collaboration with transcribers, service providers and users of accessible formats.

Members of UKAAF include organisations and individuals with an interest in the provision of quality accessible formats, such as service providers, transcribers, educators, researchers, print services, publishers, and end-users.

Through its leadership and representation, standards-setting, and by fostering a spirit of cooperation between members, UKAAF ensures that the needs and requirements of end-users are understood by service providers and transcribers to help improve the quality of accessible formats.

Please see the section on "Where to get further help" (Page 33) at the end of this document for more information about the benefits of being a member of UKAAF.

3 Definition of print disability

A print-disabled person is anyone for whom a visual, cognitive, or physical disability hinders the ability to read print. This includes all visual impairments, dyslexia, and any physical disabilities that prevent the handling of a physical copy of a print publication.

Source: Copyright Licensing Agency Print Disability Licensing Scheme, Guidelines for Licensees 2010.

4 Document Accessibility Guidelines

4.1 Creating Accessible Documents in Microsoft Word

Microsoft Word is a commonly-used application among individuals with a variety of disabilities, and is reasonably accessible. The text within Word documents can be read by assistive technologies such as screen readers and Braille devices. However, in order for Word documents to be fully accessible, authors must follow the core principles outlined in

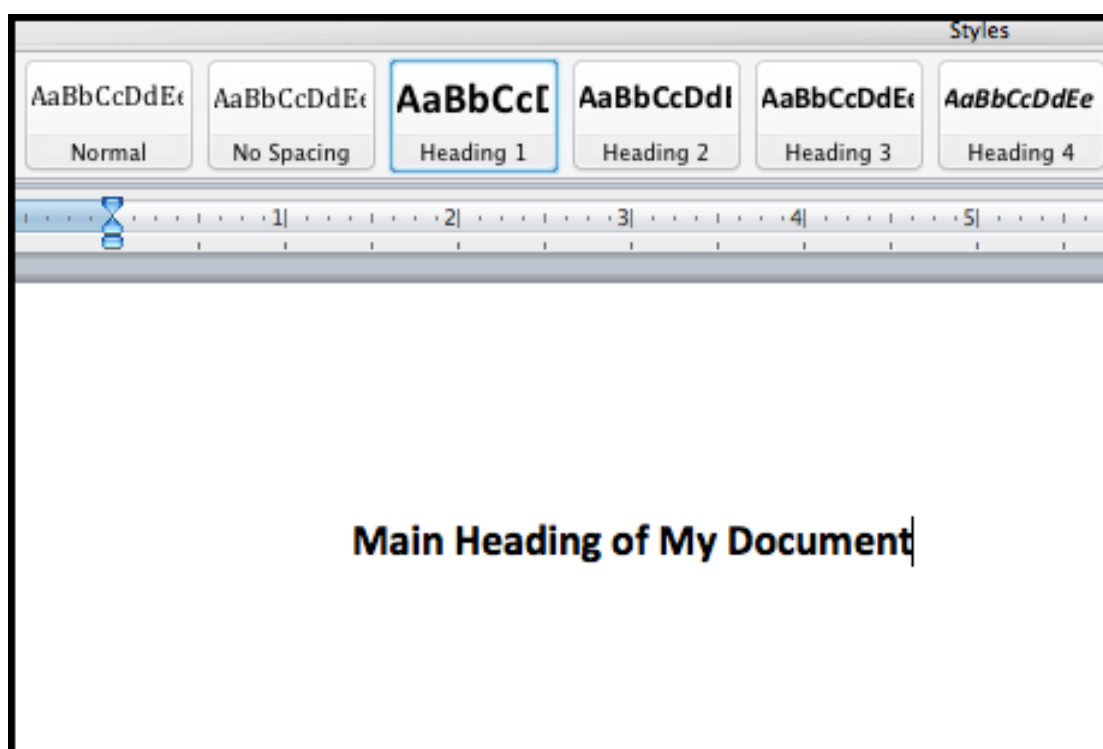
the [Overview of Accessible Documents](#). Below are the basic steps for implementing these core accessibility principles.

4.2 Use Headings

Using good heading structure helps people without eyesight to understand how the document is organized. Screen reader and Braille users can also jump between headings, which makes navigation much more efficient than if there are no headings.

Making text larger and bold does not make it a heading. In order to convert text to a heading in Microsoft Word, you must use the built-in Heading styles like “Heading 1” and “Heading 2”, available under *Styles* in the *Home* tab.

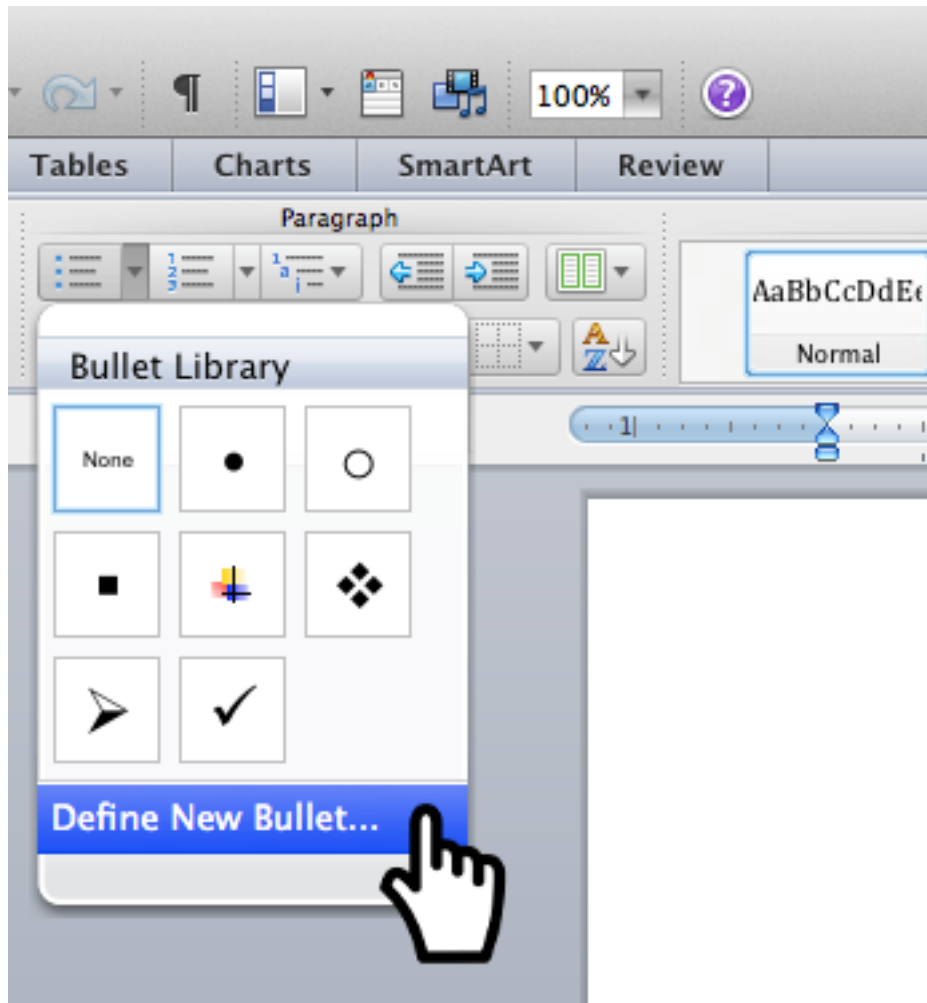
Visit Microsoft website for more information about [creating Headers in Word](#).



Headings should form an outline, using the “Heading 1” style for the main heading, and “Heading 2” for sub-headings. If there are additional levels of headings within the document’s outline, using “Heading 3”, “Heading 4”, etc.

4.3 Use Lists

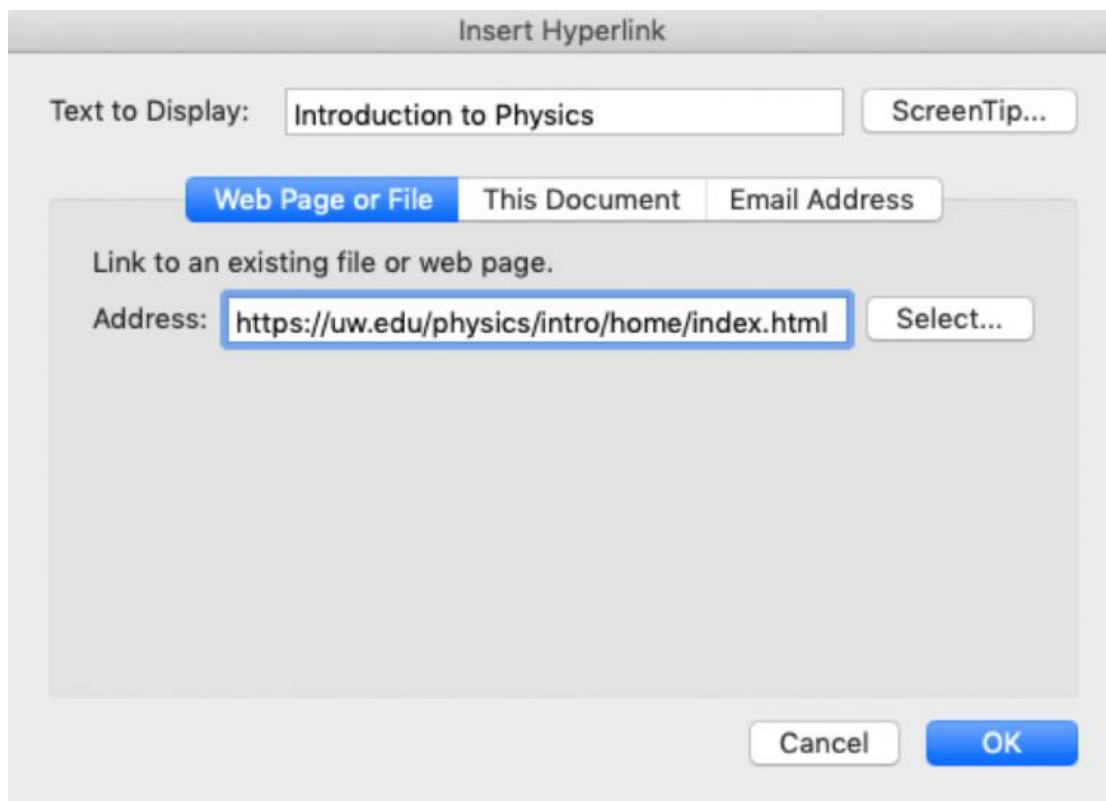
Lists should be created using Word's built-in tools for ordered (numbered) and unordered (bulleted) lists. Without using these tools, a list is not *really* a list, which makes the content more difficult for screen reader users to fully understand.



Note that both ordered and unordered lists are highly customizable. Just click on the arrow adjacent to the desired list button to design a list that meets your needs.

4.4 Use Meaningful Hyperlinks

Adding meaningful hyperlinks in Word is simple. Include language in your document that conveys relevant information about the destination of the link, highlight that text and right click and select *Hyperlink*. Include the URL in the *Address* field and select *OK*.



Visit Microsoft website for more information about [creating accessible links](#).

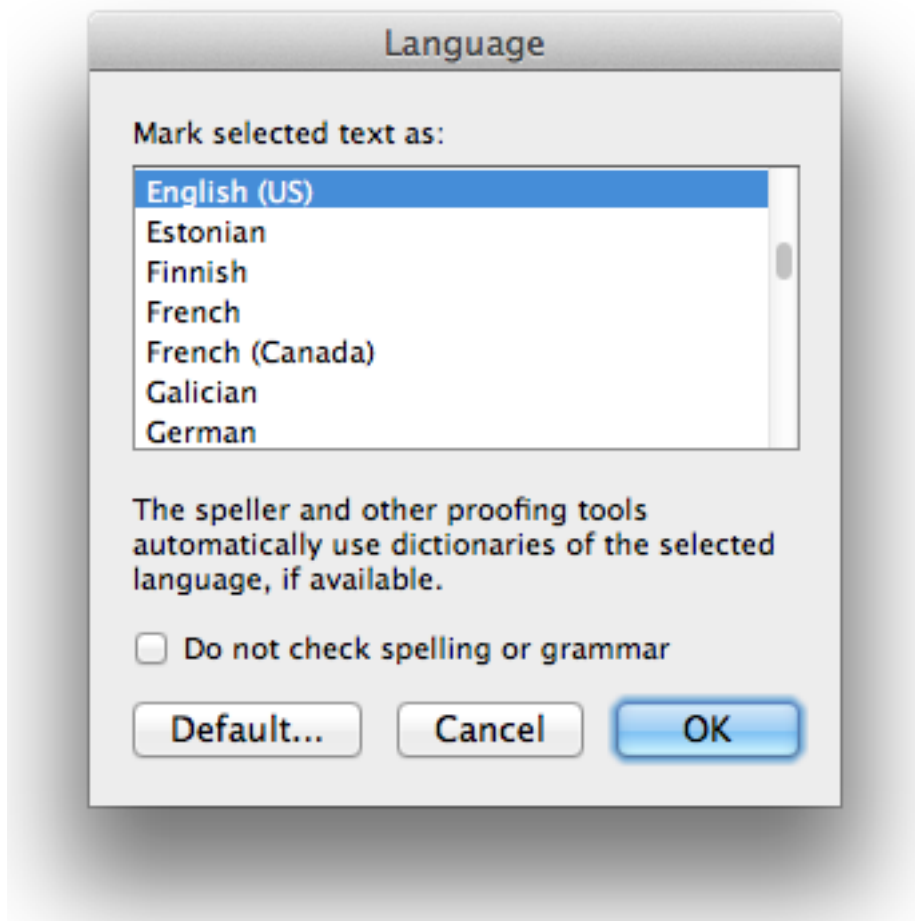
4.5 Add Alternate Text for Images

In most versions of Word, you can enter alternate text by right clicking an image and selecting *Format Picture*. Within the *Format Picture* dialog, select *Alt Text* and enter information in the *Description* field.

To enter alt text in Office 2007, right click an image and select *Size and Positioning*. Then select *Alt Text*.

4.6 Identify Document Language

In Office, select Tools > Language from the application menu to define the default language. To define a different language for part of the document, select each foreign language individually, then select Tools > Language to define the language for each.



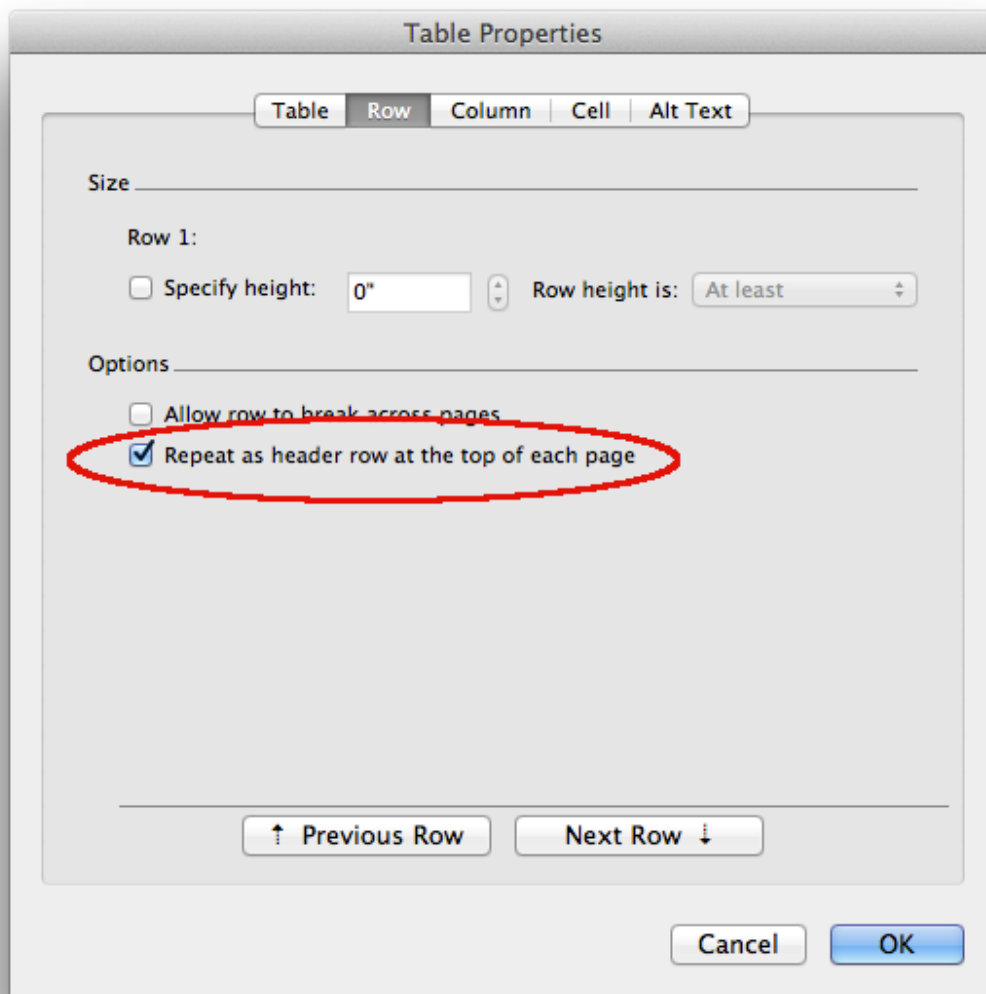
NOTE: Currently language settings only effect accessibility of the Word document itself. They do **not** survive when exported to PDF. If PDF is the final format in which you intend to distribute your document, you will need to define language in the PDF directly using Adobe Acrobat Pro. For help see [Fixing Inaccessible PDFs Using Acrobat Pro](#).

4.7 Use Tables Wisely

Word has limitations when it comes to making tables accessible. As explained in the [Overview of Accessible Documents](#), tables can be very difficult for screen reader users to understand unless they include markup that explicitly defines the relationships between all the parts (e.g., headers and data cells). For a simple table with one row of column headers and no nested rows or columns, Word is up to the task. However, more complex tables can only be made accessible within HTML or Adobe PDF (accessible table markup can be added to the PDF using Adobe Acrobat Pro).

Often complex tables can be simplified by breaking them into multiple simple tables with a heading above each.

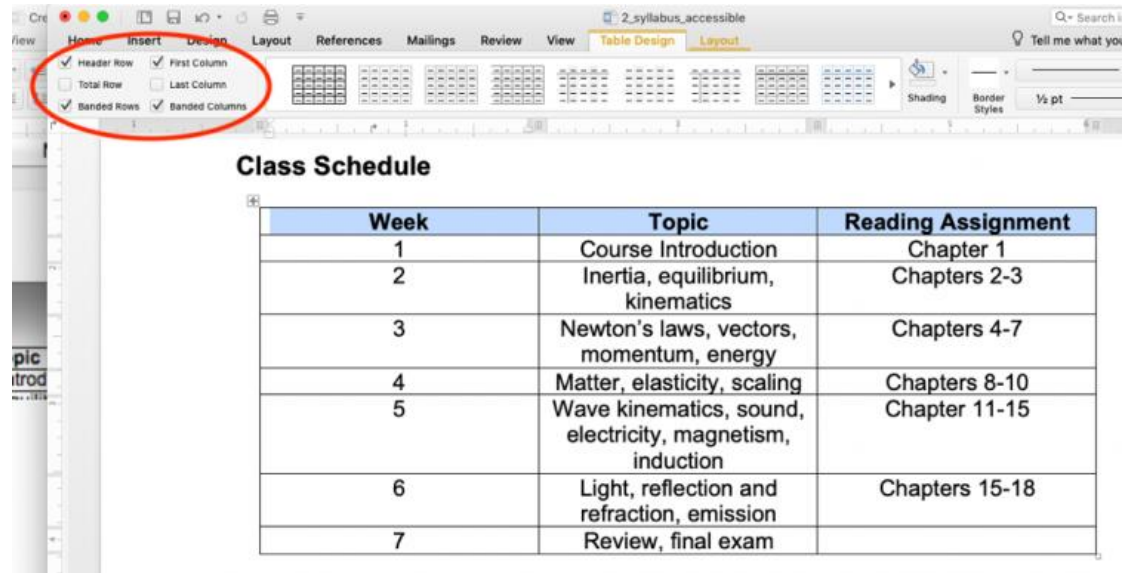
For simple tables, the only step necessary for accessibility is to identify which row contains the column headers. To do this in Word, select that row (Table > Select > Row), then right click the row and select “Table Properties”. This brings up the *Table Properties* dialog. In this dialog, click the *Row* tab, and check the checkbox that says “Repeat as header row at the top of each page”.



Class Schedule

Week	Topic	Reading Assignment
1	Course Introduction	Chapter 1
2	Thermodynamic Equilibrium	Chapter 2, 3

In addition, when creating a table two new tabs will appear in the ribbon. Selecting the *Design* tab will reveal the *Table Styles Option* group where you can define your Header Row.



Visit Microsoft website for more information about [creating Accessible Tables](#).

4.8 Use the Accessibility Checker

Microsoft products have a built-in accessibility checker which can help the document author test the overall accessibility of the document. The checker provides Inspection Results, feedback about the importance of each item, and tips on how to repair issues.



5 Where to get further help

UKAAF assists businesses and organisations by advising how to meet the needs of customers and clients with print disabilities; providing guidance on how to source and provide quality accessible formats like large print, audio, braille, electronic file formats and Easy Read; and helping you to understand your responsibilities as a service provider.

Through our website and magazine, members will also gain access to:

- findings from public consultations and end-user research
- research and innovation in accessible formats
- information on suppliers of transcription services
- guidance and advice on standards for accessible formats
- opportunities to review and help to develop standards and guidance.

In addition to supporting service providers and transcribers, UKAAF also represents people with print disabilities. We believe that because format quality matters, end-users should have genuine input into the development of standards for accessible information. By collecting and sharing users' views with service providers and transcribers we can help them to deliver a quality service which meets users' needs.

There are many benefits of being a member of UKAAF, not least to demonstrate your commitment to quality accessible formats. For more information visit us at www.ukaaf.org.

6 Your feedback is welcome

We would welcome your views on this guidance, any suggestions for additions, or case studies of how this guidance has helped you. You might like to share your experience in an article in our magazine 'Format Matters'.

You can phone, email or write to us - our details are at the back, or use the feedback form on our website www.ukaaf.org.

If you find UKAAF's guidance valuable, please encourage others to join by visiting our website.

Document reference information

Document title	Accessible Google Docs: Guidelines
Publisher	UK Association for Accessible Formats (UKAAF)
Document ref	G0XX
Version number	1.0
Publication date	Nov 2018
Review date	Nov 2018
Document purpose	Good practice guidance protocol for producing accessible Google Docs
Primary contributors	UKAAF Electronic Documents subject group Jeff Mills - GrackleDocs
Board approval	
Acknowledgements	Google, GrackleDocs
Superseded documents	N/A

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Registered charity number: 1126966

Registered as a company in England and Wales number: 6748900
