Before you start

Consider: is a poster the best way to get your message across? If you are sure that it is, think about the information you need to include.

If you are telling your patients about a meeting for example, make sure that you have not forgotten the date, time, venue and anything else that the patients may need to bring with them.

Plan out your poster on a rough piece of paper. Decide what is the most important piece of information and make this more prominent. Colour is good but ‘WordArt’ should be avoided as it can make your poster look childish and unprofessional.

Where will the poster be viewed?

If your poster will only be seen from afar or glanced at on passing, you should keep the information to the bare minimum and make the text as large as possible. This is particularly important if your poster is going to be printed out onto A4 paper.

How many posters do you need and how will they be printed?

It is no good designing a beautiful A3 coloured poster, if you can only print it out in A4 black and white.

Contact the Patient Information team who will help you locate an A3 colour printer. Make sure you provide your own paper. The Patient Information Team have details of companies who can professionally print posters.

Laminate

Posters become tatty very quickly. If your poster will be displayed for some time then it is worth going to the trouble of laminating your posters. If you are getting your poster professionally printed they can do this for you or contact the Patient Information Team who will point you in the direction of a laminator. Most departments will charge you for this service as the pouches are expensive.

Design tips

Make sure the ‘feel’ of the poster is appropriate for the content. ‘Childish’ pictures are fine if you are wanting children to read your poster but not if you are wanting to grab the attention of adults/professionals.

Avoid fancy fonts as these are often difficult to read and may make your poster seem light-hearted when you are trying to get a serious point across.
Consider what software you are going to use - Microsoft Word will not accept paper size as big as A0 (in Word no dimension can be greater than 55.8cm). Use PowerPoint instead. Open PowerPoint, select Design and then Page Setup.

Choose what orientation (portrait or landscape you want) and then set the paper sizes as shown:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size</th>
<th>cm</th>
<th>inches</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A3</td>
<td>29.7 x 42.2</td>
<td>11.69 x 16.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISO A0</td>
<td>84.09 x 118.92</td>
<td>33.11 x 46.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISO A1</td>
<td>59.46 x 84.09</td>
<td>23.41 x 33.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use pictures where possible

An image is always more eye catching than plain text. If you are planning to use a picture of a 'real' patient, make sure that you gain the consent of the patient first. Guidance on this aspect is available on ICID under ‘Consent’.

Remember

✓ be concise.
✓ the minimum font size you use should be 16 (for A4).
✓ use the NHS logo – this should appear in the top right hand corner. If you are working within HAS, type ABC, select this text and change the font to Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust. Increase the font size to a suitable size for your poster.
✓ use different sizes and colour of font for emphasis – make the most important piece of information stand out.
✓ print your poster out from time to time as you work (and remember to save it). The real thing always looks slightly different from what you see on the screen.
✓ never use WordArt and avoid Clip Art.
✓ search Google Images for appropriate pictures; check that the picture you choose is not copyright protected, obtain permission and acknowledge your source as appropriate.
✓ Put your poster up on a wall and see if it is clear from the other side of the room. If not, consider how it could be improved.
✓ print your poster out onto yellow paper if you want your poster to be easily read by those with eyesight problems.
✓ include your contact details so the patients can contact you if they want more information.
✓ include the date that the poster was written.
✓ include the date that the poster will be reviewed by.

Don’t

× centre your text all the way down the middle of the page. Use text boxes and the text wrap facility to make the best use of space and make your poster look more interesting.
× DON’T USE CAPITAL LETTERS for emphasis – it is difficult to read and looks as if you are shouting. Use bold and larger font sizes instead.
× avoid using too many different fonts and colours as your poster will look messy.
× use pale coloured text on a white background as it won’t show up.

Remember

✓ make sure that you remove your posters from display if they are only relevant for a fixed period.
✓ check your posters periodically and replace if they are getting tatty.
✓ adhere to the Trust’s Notice Board Policy if you are planning to display your poster in any of the main corridors throughout the hospital.

All patient information posters must be submitted to the Patient Information Team for approval before they are printed and displayed around the hospital.

Send a copy of your poster to Patient Information, Quality Directorate, Admin Block 24.

Your poster may be sent to the Readership Panel for their comments. Once comments have been received (please allow 2 weeks) and changes made (if appropriate) then you will be able to display the poster.

NHS logo

• The recommended size of the NHS logo on A4 posters is 10mm, on A3 posters it is 12.5 mm and on A2 posters it is 17 mm.

Need help?

The Patient Information Team can be contacted on ext 4401 and 2940 or email: 
patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk

The NHS Brand guidelines offers general guidance as well as specific guidance on producing posters:  ww.nhsidentity.nhs.uk/tools-and-resources/other-resources/producing-posters