



**CROHN'S &  
COLITIS UK**

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# Health literacy in the charity sector

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## What is health literacy?

*“Health literacy refers to the personal characteristics and social resources needed for individuals and communities to access, understand, appraise and use information and services to make decisions about health.”* - World Health Organisation

BUT...

- The responsibility to ensure health literacy also rests on the information provider
- Health literacy can change over time - e.g. may decrease with new diagnosis, at crisis, when it's the person themselves who needs the help, when it's a culturally taboo issue etc
- Motivation is the biggest overlooked barrier - some people have all the tools and skills, but don't want to engage

## Finding the feeling



## Finding the feeling

### BEFORE

Could this passage be a bit more uplifting?

If you've recently been diagnosed with Crohn's Disease or Ulcerative Colitis (the two main forms of Inflammatory Bowel Disease, or IBD) you may be feeling relief that you can finally put a name to your symptoms.

But you might also be anxious about what happens next and what living with IBD will mean for you.

We're determined that you should have all the information and support you need to help you manage your IBD.

This opening paragraph is overly-cautious. If they haven't been diagnosed, they won't be here. If they have, they'll know what the condition is.

In general, this piece is quite effective at recognising the likely fears of the reader. Though it could perhaps do more to assuage them.

This is practical and constructive. But there's no real reassurance or hope here.

### AFTER

How does it look now?

Being told you have Crohn's or Colitis can be a shock. You might be feeling anxious about what comes next and how your life will change.

Because it will change. But it can also improve.

Now that you've put a name to your symptoms, you can start to manage them. And we're here to help, every step of the way.

This is authoritative and assured, without being aggressive.

This combines optimism with realism. It delivers a positive message without insistence or exaggeration.

Again, the positivity is simple and softly spoken.

## Be the knowledgeable friend

### BEFORE

Living with Crohn's Disease or Ulcerative Colitis may mean that you have to adapt your life to manage your condition.

But this doesn't mean you can't still enjoy life. Many people with Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) do well in their studies and are able to work and have successful careers. Read on for inspiration, information and support.

Sounds a little formal and wooden. Like a doctor talking to a patient, not a friend.

Very negative framing

Devotes a lot of space to definitions.

Watch out for false positives. This is meant to be supportive but it could have the reverse effect. ("Many people" may not sound very reassuring.)

### AFTER

Living with Crohn's or Colitis will mean you have to make some changes. But you can still get the most out of life. Here's how.

This version is shorter and more assured. It doesn't seek to qualify or labour the point.

Short-form names. We can assume that someone reading about how to manage life with the conditions is familiar with them.

This is clear, candid and confident.

This is simpler and more succinct. It's how a friend would talk.

## Reducing the reading age

The average reading age in the UK could be as low as 9-11 years old.

We use the [Flesch-Kincaid score](#) as a rough measure of how easy the text is to read. If the score is high, the sentence is more readable.

We aim for a minimum score of 60 – but are ideally looking for above 80

To try it out on your own Word doc:

1. Go to **File > Options > Proofing**.
2. Under **When correcting spelling and grammar in Word**, make sure the **Check grammar with spelling** check box is selected.
3. Select **Show readability statistics**.
4. Open your file, check the spelling by pressing F7 or going to **Review > Spelling & Grammar**. When Word finishes checking the spelling and grammar, it displays information about the reading level of the document.



# What does this look like?



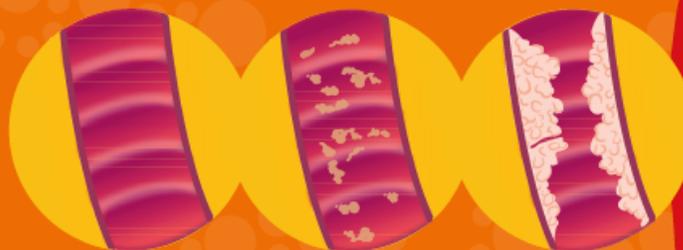
## The gut

To understand Crohn's and Colitis, it can be helpful to understand how the gut works.

The gut is the part of your body that takes food and nutrients in, and carries poo out. The gut starts at your mouth, when you eat, and ends at your bottom (anus), where poo passes out of your body.

The gut is also called the digestive system, because it digests (breaks down) food.

- 1 Oesophagus
- 2 Stomach
- 3 Small bowel
- 4 Colon } Large bowel
- 5 Rectum }
- 6 Anus

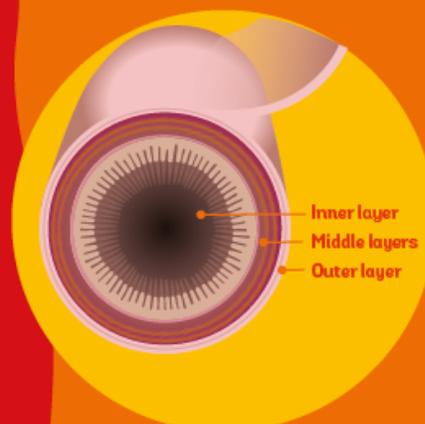


Healthy intestine    Ulcerative Colitis    Crohn's Disease

## The bowel

The bowel is an important part of the gut. It is a long tube, coiled up inside you, made up of your small bowel (small intestine), colon and rectum. The colon and rectum are called the large bowel (large intestine). At the end of your rectum is your anus, where poo passes out of your body.

The walls of your bowel have layers. The layers take in nutrients from food, and help get rid of waste.



Bowel layers

# Online improvements

Home > About Crohn's and Colitis > Our information > Steroids

If you've started or are considering treatment with steroids, you're not alone. Steroids, also called corticosteroids, are a common medicine for Crohn's Disease and Ulcerative Colitis, with 4 out of 5 people with the conditions taking them at some point.

[Download \(pdf, 311 KB\)](#)

Our information can support you to make an informed decision about treatment that's right for you. It looks at:

- how steroids work
- what you can expect from treatment
- possible side effects
- stopping or changing treatment

Expand all

Expand all and print page

Other names for this medicine



Why you've been offered steroids



How steroids work



How effective steroids are in Crohn's and Colitis



Budesonide: Why it's different from other steroids



How long steroids take to work



How to take steroids



Dosage information



How long you'll take steroids for



Special precautions



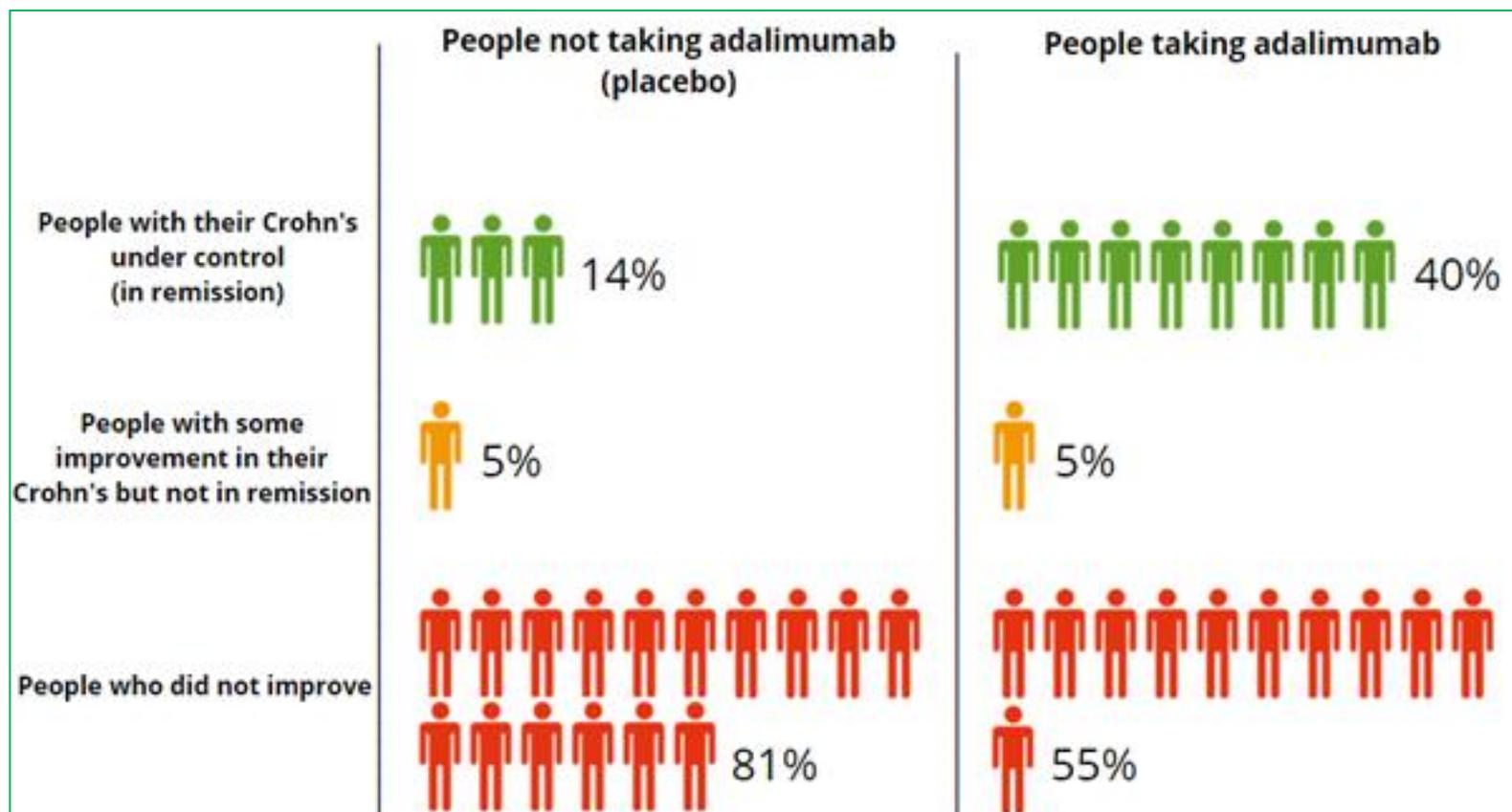
## Numeracy levels

### BEFORE

#### Crohn's Disease

In large studies, around 6 out of 10 people responded well to adalimumab initially. And of those, more than 1 in 3 remained in remission after one year.

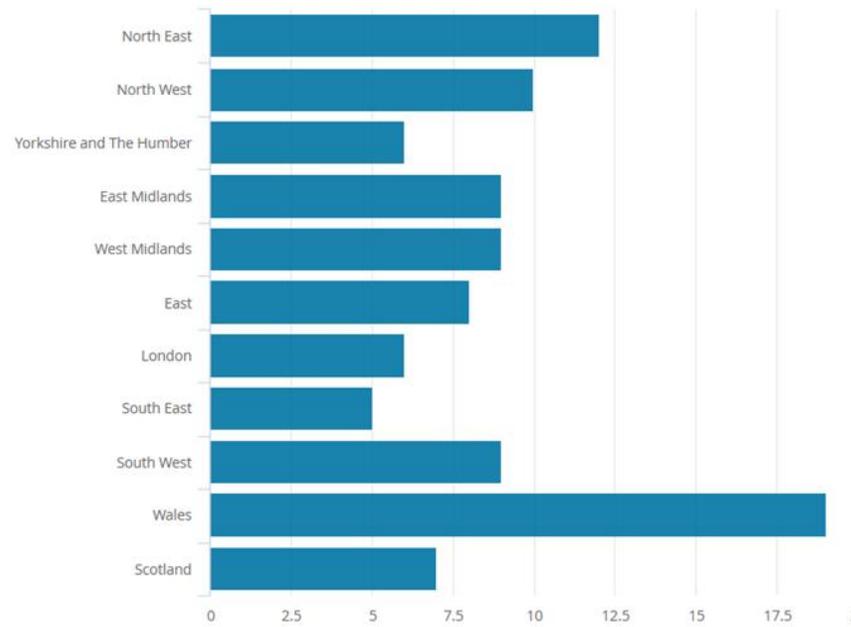
### AFTER



# The digital divide - more than just the elderly

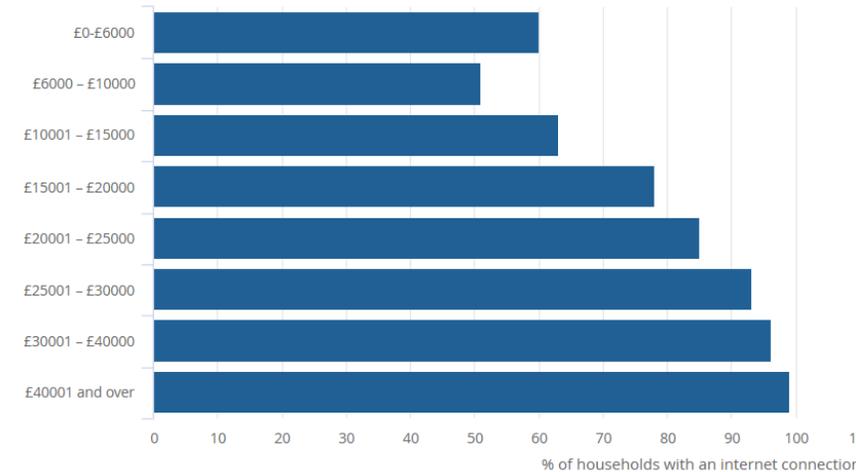
**Figure 6: Regional variation in proportion of population with zero basic digital skills**

Percentage population by region, UK, 2018



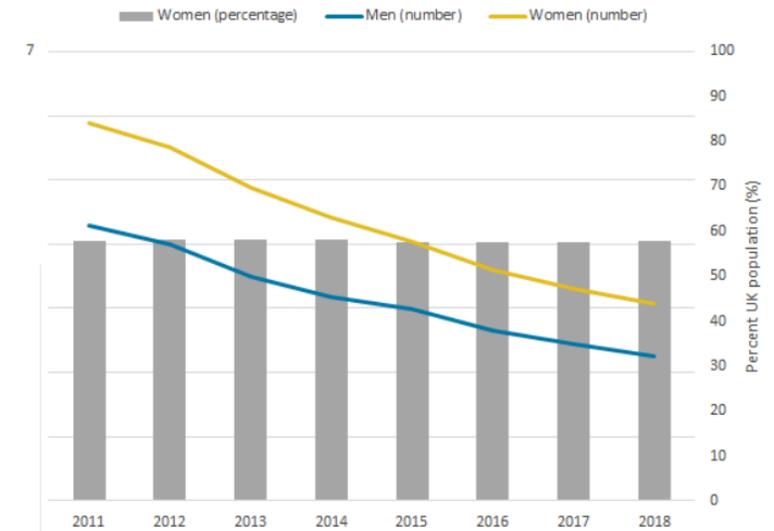
**Figure 15: The percentage of households with an internet connection increases with income**

Percentage of households with internet connection by annual household income band, Scotland, 2014



**Figure 7: Women have consistently made up over half of internet non-users, although the overall number has declined over time**

Number in millions by sex and percentage of women adult internet non-users, UK, 2011 to 2018



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# Thank you.

Get in touch:

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